



JOUR 307: Writing and Reporting II **3 Units**

Prerequisites: JOUR 207 and JOUR 321

Spring 2020 – Wednesdays – 9-11:30 a.m.

Section: 21124D

Classroom: ANN 307

Instructor: Saba Hamedy

Office: ANN classroom or meeting area

Office Hours: Before or after class, by appointment

Contact Info: hamedy@usc.edu

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Instructor: Graham Robertson

Office: ANN classroom or meeting area

Office Hours: Before or after class, by appointment

Email: gjr@usc.edu

Phone: 818-263-7625

I. Course Description

JOUR 307: Reporting and Writing II is a continuation of the spring semester's JOUR 207: Reporting and Writing I. You will report, write and produce longer and more sophisticated stories from a Los Angeles community that will serve as your reporting "home" for the length of the semester. In addition, you will learn how to find story ideas, gather information, interview people and write effectively for different types of stories across different platforms, including radio and television. The course will integrate other journalism skills and concepts, including news judgment, ethics, diversity, copy editing/AP style and technological competence.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Apply professional standards of news judgment
- Report, write and revise news stories, including features, profiles, news features and analysis that are close to professional standards for content on digital and print platforms
- Report, write, shoot and edit video and audio news stories for radio and television
- Use social media, particularly Twitter, in the gathering, consumption and dissemination of news.
- Recall current events through weekly quizzes.
- Apply professional journalistic ethics to real-life situations

Concurrent Enrollment: JOUR 206

III. Description of Assignments

Your assignments in this course are both text and video/audio stories, including a "vox pop," written and video profile story, a feature story and a final longer news feature. Most assignments will include revisions. Students must incorporate instructor revisions into the final version of assignments. There will be a written in-class midterm to review concepts learned and evaluate your writing progress. There are also homework assignments as well as frequent news quizzes to test your media consumption habits.

Students will also analyze and present stories from mainstream news organizations in a media “tear-up” that look critically at news and information from professional sources, as well as ethical case studies.

IV. Grading Breakdown:

Assignment	% of Grade
Quizzes & ethics case study	15%
Homework Assignments, including drafts	15%
Story #1 – Vox pop/text story	10%
Story #2 - 750-word profile and 1:00 video profile	15%
Story #3 – 1000-word feature story and 1:30 reporter package	20%
FINAL Story #4 1200-word news feature and 2:00 reporter package	25%
TOTAL	100%

b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

Journalism

All assignments will be judged first on the accuracy, fairness and completeness of your stories.

“A” stories are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor copyediting (i.e., they would be aired or published). Video work must also be shot and edited creatively, be well paced and include good sound bites and natural sound that add flavor, color or emotion to the story.

“B” stories require more than minor editing and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission. For video, there may be minor flaws in the composition of some shots or in the editing. Good use of available sound bites is required.

“C” stories need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many spelling, style or omission errors. Camera work and editing techniques in video stories are mediocre or unimaginative, but passable. Sound bites add little or no color - only information that could be better told in the reporter’s narration.

“D” stories require excessive rewriting, have numerous errors and should not have been submitted. Camera work is unsatisfactory or fails to show important elements.

“F” stories have failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, are late, have numerous errors or both. Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. Any misspelled or mispronounced proper noun will result in an automatic “F” on that assignment. Any factual error will also result in an automatic “F” on the

assignment. Accuracy is the first law of journalism. The following are some other circumstances that would warrant a grade of “F” and potential USC/Annenberg disciplinary action:

- Fabricating a story or making up quotes or information.
- Plagiarizing a script/article, part of a script/article or information from any source.
- Staging video or telling interview subjects what to say.
- Using video shot by someone else and presenting it as original work.
- Shooting video in one location and presenting it as another location.
- Using the camcorder to intentionally intimidate, provoke or incite a person or a group of people to elicit more “dramatic” video.
- Promising, paying or giving someone something in exchange for doing an interview either on or off camera.
- Missing a deadline.

V. Assignment Submission Policy

All stories must include a list of sources (people on your source list must have titles, affiliated organizations, phone numbers and e-mail addresses; websites must have URLs; printed sources must have bibliographic information: author, title of article, name of book, news outlet or publisher).

You may not interview friends or family for any assignment.

You will work under deadline pressure on in-class assignments, and homework assignments must be handed in on, or before, deadline. Your text stories and video and audio scripts should be posted to Blackboard in a Word document. Broadcast scripts must be written in the double column format with the narration and sound appearing on the right (all sound bites written out verbatim) with editing cues on the left. All video packages must be submitted to Xchange. Please refer to this Xchange tutorial for submission details:

<http://www.annenbergdl.org/tutorials/xchange-student/>

Do not miss your deadline. Late stories will be dropped a minimum of one full letter grade per day.

You must shoot your own video. Do not turn in video shot by anyone else without prior permission from the instructor. All assignments must follow AP style. Points will be deducted for AP style errors. Do not turn in single source stories unless that is specifically assigned by the instructor. Do not turn in a story for this class that you are also turning in for another class without prior instructor approval.

Revisions:

Writing for a publication, broadcast or online outlet involves writing, rewriting and rewriting again. You will be asked to revise stories until they are polished and publishable as professional work. In making revisions, you will be expected to go beyond “cosmetic” corrections (e.g., fixing typos or spelling errors.) Your rewrite should fundamentally improve your story; it may require additional reporting.

You can expect written feedback on your assignments within one week. Please incorporate this feedback into subsequent drafts and stories. Don’t ignore the feedback; you will be penalized more for errors as the semester progresses.

Students are encouraged to submit their work for consideration to Annenberg Media or the Daily Trojan, or pitch it to mainstream media outlets. Visit <http://bit.ly/SubmitAnnenbergMedia> for more information about that submission and review process and email Daily Trojan news editors at dt.city@gmail.com for more on how to pitch your work to the campus newspaper.

News Consumption and Knowledge of Current Events:

As journalists, it is crucial for you to keep up with what is happening on campus, in the Los Angeles area, in the United States and around the world. You should read The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and The Washington Post. Keep up with campus news by reading the Daily Trojan and checking annenbergmedia.com. Students should listen to NPR and news radio stations and watch local and national news on television. Develop a list of other news sources you check daily and sign up for email newsletters and push alerts. Follow news organizations on Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

By following the news media, you will sharpen your news senses, and you will learn from good (and perhaps bad) examples of journalism. There will be news quizzes to check your news consumption habits.

VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Title: *News Now, Visual Storytelling in the Digital Age*

Author: The Cronkite Team: Susan C. Green, Mark J. Lodato, Carol B. Schwalbe, B. William Silcock. Publisher: Pearson Education
ISBN-13: 978-0205-69591-1

Title: *Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism* (2012)

Author: Tim Harrower.

McGraw-Hill, 3rd edition, 2012

VII. Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

VIII. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/13/20 – 5/1/20)

Friday, January 31: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, January 31: Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, February 4: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, February 28: Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, February 28: Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Friday, April 3: Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001

IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: *Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

Week 1 January 15

Review syllabus and expectations, state of the media.

Introduction to the community the class will report from for the semester.

Review basics of journalism and reporting safety

Newsworthiness. What's important to your audience?

Review writing a hard news text brief. How is hard news different from a feature?

Learning about broadcast for radio and TV. Broadcast writing basics. Short sentences, action verbs and writing for the ear. How different stories work in different formats – VO, VSV, etc.

In class:

Students will write a hard news text brief from an assigned fact sheet. This is a diagnostic exercise. Students will write broadcast leads and review together.

Homework:

Broadcast leads. Write 10 broadcast leads from material supplied by instructors. **Due next week.**

Readings: News Now pp 1 – 9 (state of the audience,) 15 – 20 (news consumption,) pp 52 – 55 (social media,) 130 – 139 (rules for broadcast writing.)

Harrower, pp 84-85 (attribution) and pp 94- 95 (covering a beat)

Pew State of the Media

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/07/23/key-takeaways-state-of-the-news-media-2018/>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/375688/how-is-social-media-changing-journalism/>

Annenberg Media social media guidelines <https://goo.gl/wNrQzJ>

Week 2 -- Jan. 22 – Learning about a community

Due: Broadcast leads

Learning about a community. How do you find out who's who in a community?

Sourcing: How do you know who to talk to? How many sources are enough? Review attribution

Using social media to identify sources

Broadcast: Vox pop and MOS basics. Review how to do vox pops

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5BeaGr5SDk> Radio Rookies

<https://ww2.kqed.org/education/vox-pop-curriculum/> KQED Vox Pops

In Class Assignment: In an in-class exercise, we use Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, search for groups by using your city's name and following leaders and organizations whose contact information is often linked to city social media sites.

During class, you will be assigned to pairs. With your partner, you should research some key issues in the community and agree on a place to go for the homework assignment.

Homework: In pairs, you will collect, write and edit audio "vox pops" from community members about the biggest problems they face. You will write an introduction for an audio script and edit your vox pops. You must have full names for all participants interviewed and interview a minimum of five people. Include at least three voices in the final vox pop. The other member of your team will write a 500-word description of the problems you're hearing about from the community. Due next week. You must upload the completed audio to Exchange and Blackboard and the script to Blackboard.

Readings:

Harrower, pp 44 – 51 (Beyond the basic news lead and story structure)

Handout on vox pops from Professor Willa Seidenberg

<http://resources.uscannenbergmedia.com/2016/08/the-what-why-and-how-of-vox-pops/>

Week 3 -- Jan. 29 -- Story Pitches, nut grafs and vos

Due: Vox pop/mini-text description stories

How do you pitch stories and find new angles?

Nut grafs. What's important about this story for your audience?

In class: Find the "nut grafs" in stories

In class: story pitches. How do you go from a general topic – “housing” – to a specific story with a fresh news angle? What makes a good video story, and how is that different from a text only story?

In-class: Practice VO and writing to picture

Homework: Same assignment but with roles reversed. In pairs, you will collect, write and edit audio “vox pops” from community members about the biggest problems they face. You will write an introduction for an audio script and edit your vox pops. You must have full names for all participants interviewed and interview a minimum of five people. Include at least three voices in the final vox pop. The other member of your team will write a 500-word story describing what you’re hearing from the community. Due next week. You must upload the completed audio to Exchange and Blackboard and the script to Blackboard.

Readings : News Now pp 40 - 45 (Finding sources / who to interview) and 130 – 144 (broadcast writing)
Harrower pp 78 – 85 (Interviewing, quotes and attribution)

Week 4 -- Feb 5 – Interviews

Due: Vox pop stories/ mini-text

Review vox pop stories. What’s hard about asking people for interviews? What’s different with different kinds of interviews?

Interviewing and finding sources, taking notes, observations

Interviewing practice in class.

Broadcast: What makes a good soundbite in tv or radio?

Broadcast: Review VOs. Setting up an interview, writing in and out of sound.

Homework: **Research a feature story from the community for a 750-word feature/VSV. Write a VO using material supplied by the instructor Due next week: pitch for feature story.**

Readings: Harrower Pp 48 8 (Story structure and rewriting)

Week 5 -- Feb. 12

Due: story pitch

Review copy editing

Structuring a feature story

In class: Copy editing practice

Practice writing VSV

Homework : work on your feature/VSV story. Draft is due next week.

Readings: Harrower pp 124 – 125 Profiles

News Now pp 33 (video sequences); 81 – 95 (Interviewing)

Week 6 -- Feb. 19 Profiles

Due: Feature story draft

Review story drafts

Profiles – text and video

What makes someone newsworthy?

Broadcast: shooting sequences and telling a story with pictures.

In class: Research people for a profile and share with class. Peer feedback.

Homework: Finish your feature story/VSV.

Think about your profile pitch. You will write a 750-word profile and shoot and edit a VSV feature story

Readings:

News Now chapter 13

<https://knightfoundation.org/articles/newsroom-diversity-efforts-have-failed-its-time-to-take-a-structural-approach>

Week 7 -- Feb. 26

Due: Profile pitch and feature story/VSV

Watch VSV in class

Review pitches and approve in class

Diversity. Reviewing the Fault Lines method for sources and stories.

Homework: Create a list of diverse sources from your community. Consider a wide variety of diversity. Write three paragraphs. How has the community you're covering been covered in the past? What gaps exist in coverage? What intersectionality exists in this (and all) communities? How do you cover this community as a reporter?

Continue to work on your profile story

Week 8 – March 4

Due: Draft of your profile is due today and diversity written assignment

Readings: Harrower 116 – 133 (features and other story styles)

Individual meetings with instructors

Week 9 -- March 11

Final profile is due today

Review in class

Second-day stories, sidebars and localizing national stories

Reporter packages

What goes into a reporter package? How is it different from a VSV?

Homework: Work on your pitch for story #3, a 1000-word feature/ news analysis story and a reporter package, due next week

Final version of your profile is due next class – a 750-word text piece and a 1:00 – 1:30 video

Readings: Tomkins, Write from the Heart (handout)

March 18 – Spring break!

Week 10 – March 25

Due: Story pitch for story #3. Draft is due in two weeks, final due week 13

Pitches will be reviewed and approved in class

Broadcast: adding reporter track to your story - hands-on edit workshop (45 minutes)

Readings: News Now, Chapters 11 and 12

Homework: Students will present ethical case studies. More details from instructors

Week 11 – April 1 – Ethics

In class ethics case studies.

Building trust with an audience.

Readings: News Now, Chapter 12

https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/trust-in-media-down.php

<https://www.niemanlab.org/2018/10/heres-how-much-americans-trust-38-major-news-organizations-hint-not-all-that-much/>

https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-06/DNR_2019_FINAL_0.pdf

pp 10 – 30

<https://medium.com/trusting-news/what-would-happen-if-every-journalist-defined-their-mission-e85738df31dd>

Homework: News feature draft due next week. Text story of 1,000 words and video reporter package. **Drafts will be graded and peer reviewed. Do not miss your deadline.**

Readings: News Now Chapter 6

Week 12 -- April 8

Peer review your news feature story drafts

What's missing? What additional reporting do you need?

Broadcast: Reporter standups and visual storytelling

Homework: News Feature stories due next week – 1,000-word news feature and reporter package. Stories will be reviewed in class. Do not miss your deadline.

Readings:

<https://thewholestory.solutionsjournalism.org/how-a-tweet-and-a-leap-of-faith-led-to-a-solutions-journalism-class-focused-on-metoo-f70340509b5a>

Week 13 -- April 15 – Solutions journalism

Due: News feature and reporter package

Review story #3 in class

Solutions Journalism – looking at news coverage through a different lens, and trying to provide answers for communities.

Homework: Final story pitch for your final story, a 1,200-word news feature and reporter package. This is a story about an issue or news event that goes beyond event coverage. It should advance a story or break news. You have the option to look at a “solutions” story

Additional details will be posted by your instructors.

Readings: tba

Week 14 -- April 22 – Live shots

Due: story pitch for final story, which will be approved in class

Broadcast: Live video and live shots

Homework: Continue reporting your final story.

Revise your pitch based on instructor feedback if necessary. Draft of your final is due week 15, April 29. The final story for text and broadcast is due May 8th at 8:00 a.m.

Week 15 – April 29

Due: Draft of final story. Review in class

In class: Fill out course evaluations. You will also provide feedback on the following questions:

- What is one activity or reading that best facilitated your learning and why?
- What is one activity or reading that was least useful to your learning and how would you change it?

Draft for final story due – 1,200-word news feature story and reporter package.

FINAL EXAM Friday, May 8, 8-10 a.m.

You will meet during the final exam and review your reporter packages and final text stories

X. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

Please review the policies and procedures listed above. You must use Blackboard and Exchange for your assignments. You must check your USC email regularly.

Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words - is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct (<http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>).

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

"Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an 'F' on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators."

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

b. Support Systems

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421

studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

XI. About Your Instructors

Graham Robertson is a national EMMY Award winning producer for NBC Network News. I have worked for NBC News three times in my career, in Los Angeles and Chicago. I’m currently a producer-assignment editor in Los Angeles. I began working for Los Angeles-based City News Service/Radio News West before I entered broadcasting at an all-news radio station in Phoenix. In local news, I’ve been an anchor, reporter, producer, assistant news director and news director. My local news career has taken me from Phoenix to Syracuse to Seattle. Along the way I’ve also taught part-time at Arizona State University and Syracuse University. This is my 19th year at USC. I hold a B.S. from Northern Arizona University and an M.A. from Arizona State University.

Saba Hamedy is a West Coast-based news editor for HuffPost. Previously, she worked as a breaking news reporter in Washington, D.C. for CNN Politics, where she also co-authored "The Point" newsletter with Chris Cillizza. Prior to CNN, Hamedy worked at Mashable as a digital entertainment reporter. Hamedy kicked off her career at the Los Angeles Times, where she covered national and entertainment business news, including the massive Sony Hack in 2014. She graduated Boston University with degrees in political science and journalism.