USCAnnenberg

JOUR 206: Reporting and Writing Practicum (Community Reporting)
1 Unit

Fall 2020 – Wednesday
8-11:50 a.m./11 a.m.-2:50 p.m./2-5:50 p.m.
Sections: 21015/21017/21019
Location: Online

Instructor: Henry Fuhrmann
Office: Online
Office Hours: By appointment

I. Course Description

This course gives journalism majors hands-on experience in writing digital news for publication on uscannenbergmedia.com. Students work four hours a week for Annenberg Media to fulfill this lab shift, which runs concurrently with the core journalism courses JOUR 207 and JOUR 307, Reporting and Writing I and Reporting and Writing II.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

- Identify elements that make a story newsworthy for different audiences.
- Identify and maintain diverse sources and develop story ideas in a specific community.
- Write news briefs and stories on deadline and in accordance with professional industry standards under the guidance of student editors and faculty and in collaboration with other student reporters and editors.
- Create content for digital and social platforms on deadline and in accordance with professional industry standards and in collaboration with other student reporters and editors.
- Apply principles of ethics in real-life news situations.

Concurrent Enrollment: JOUR 207 Reporting and Writing I or JOUR 307 Reporting and Writing II

III. Course Notes

The practicum is credit/no-credit. This semester, we will work from a virtual newsroom via Zoom meetings and extensive communication through Slack. Please stay engaged while on the Zoom calls. You don't need to have your camera on all the time, but please be respectful and attentive during the virtual newsroom meetings, in your comments and in chat.

All reporting will be done remotely. Your instructor and Media Center staff will assist and support you to do this.

Classroom Norms

As your instructor and journalist colleague, I am committed to affirming the identities, realities and voices of all students, especially those from historically marginalized or underrepresented backgrounds. Please let me know how to pronounce your name correctly, your gender pronouns and any other feedback that contributes to a positive classroom atmosphere. If you believe that the classroom norms are not being followed by me or one of your classmates, please reach out.

Sharing our ideas, practices and plans with others and opening ourselves to critique (or peer feedback) can be a vulnerable process. To model the expectations of a professional work environment in our field, and promote a respectful classroom environment, I ask all students to make their best effort to follow these norms:

- Do not interrupt when someone else is speaking.
- Critique ideas and practices, not people.
- Support critique with evidence from course texts or speak from personal experience.
- Allow everyone to participate (that is, don't dominate or be engaged in unrelated activities).
- Keep a positive tone when engaging in class discussions and group work.
- Equitably share group work across group members. At the same time, be generous in crediting your colleagues.
- Accept feedback in the positive spirit with which it is given as a means of development.
- Show respect to your peers and the instructor.
- If you are writing a chat, email or discussion post in anger, the content of your text will probably come off as disrespectful. Give yourself time to calm down and show respect.
- Reflect kindness and concern for your peers. You never know when someone else is having the worst day of their life.
- Let others know how you would like to be addressed and address others as they would like to be addressed.
- Avoid using ALL CAPS. It is commonly interpreted as yelling.
- Check your spelling and grammar before hitting "send" or "submit." This is an academic community, and part of being professional is checking and double-checking your work.

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

Students in this course fulfill a weekly lab shift of four consecutive hours via Zoom. Students will report and write news stories as assigned by student editors and with the support of faculty and coaches for publication on uscannenbergmedia.com and Annenberg Media social media platforms. At the beginning of the semester, students will participate in mandatory newsroom training. Students will write a handoff note at the end of their shifts describing what they did during their time. Failure to submit a handoff note in Trello (the newsroom system) means a student will not get credit for that shift and must repeat it.

Student duties include:
- Generating story ideas.
- Finding and maintaining source lists.
- Conducting research and interviews.
- Writing news briefs, social media posts and longer stories.
- Writing handoff notes for other reporters and editors summarizing their progress on stories.

Students are required to keep up on the news by reading a variety of news outlets, listening to local and national radio or podcasts, and watching local and national news.

Learning how to become a good journalist means understanding and questioning your own biases and assumptions and considering the "fault lines" present in most stories. As a reporter, you must strive for a diverse range of sources and voices in your stories.

V. Grading

This class is about hands-on learning. It is designed to give you practical experience in a newsroom. In order to succeed in this class, you will need to attend your shift and complete the tasks assigned to you, including a shift handoff note to be done before you sign off from Zoom and Slack. The student-led news outlets that make up Annenberg Media are counting on you. If you must miss a shift because of documented illness or emergency, you must notify your instructor and student editors via the newsroom Slack channel and make up the session within two weeks (religious holidays are exempt, as are some other limited circumstances). Please arrive on time. If you are late, you will not get credit for the shift and must make it up. Do not schedule interviews or assignments for other classes during this time period or you will not receive credit and must make up the shift.

Grading Standards
This class is a credit/no-credit class. You will not receive a letter grade for this class. You will be assessed on your effort and output, and the aim is to produce publishable work. That work could help you if you are seeking a job in a newsroom or as a student manager with Annenberg Media in subsequent semesters. You cannot pass this class without doing the hands-on work.

VI. Assignment Submission Policy
Students will work under the guidance of student editors and with the support of faculty, instructors and coaches. Every week, you should arrive with your own story ideas. Instructors will discuss current stories and review the previous week's work. All students must complete shift handoff notes in Trello before they sign off from Zoom and Slack. You must check in with your instructor and student editors before you leave. If you do not complete a handoff note, you will not receive credit for your shift.

VII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
You will be expected to arrive for your shift with a knowledge of what is happening in local and national news. You will write in accordance with AP style. **You must check Slack and your USC email regularly**.

VIII. 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.

IX. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (13 weeks: 8/17/20 – 11/13/20)
Friday, Sept. 4: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001.
Friday, Sept. 4: Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001.
Friday, Sept. 4: Last day to drop a class and receive a refund to avoid a mark of "W" on student record and STARS report.
Friday, Sept. 4: Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall.
Friday, Oct. 2: Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript only. A mark of "W" will still appear on the student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply. [Please drop any course by the end of Week 3 for Session 001 (or the 20% mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]
Friday, Oct. 2: Last day to change a Pass/No Pass course to letter grade.
Friday, Nov. 6: Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001.

X. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change. Students are required to attend all shifts beginning the first week of classes. Many workshops will be presented during your shift; some will require you to view a recorded presentation *before* you arrive.

Week 1 — Aug. 19
- Onboarding and overview: Meet the Media Center director and executive editor. Review previous student work and Annenberg Media's greatest hits.
- Getting organized: Obtain a log-in for the Annenberg publishing system. Get on Slack and Trello. Follow Annenberg Media on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.
- Lecture: "News Writing for the Media Center." Topics include ledes, the nut graf and basic story structure. We'll review examples from outside publications and analyze a sample breaking news story for a brief writing exercise.

Week 2 — Aug. 26
- More introductions: Meet your student editors for your weekly shift.
- Lecture: "Tips for Handoffs." We'll use the sample breaking news story from Week 1 to show how to summarize basic facts, use quotes and develop "story-fied" text for handoffs to Media Center reporters and editors working later in the news cycle.
- Lecture: "So You're a Reporter ... Now What?" Topics include identifying yourself as an Annenberg reporter; setting up and conducting interviews; reviewing Media Center ethics guidelines; covering sensitive topics; dealing with legal issues; mastering style and language basics.
- Bookmarks: Media Center guides (click the links):
  - USC Annenberg Media Resources — links to schedules, tools, guidelines, etc.
  - Legal Guide — writing about crime, minors, courts. Using anonymous sources.
  - Guide to Thoughtful Language — writing about age, disability, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality. Cautions on using obscenities, profanities, vulgarities.
  - 11 Style Rules to Know Now: Review of AP style. Using Amy the Stylebot in Slack.

Week 3 — Sept. 2
- Getting started in the Arc Composer publishing system: File a sample story using dummy copy and photos. Write a headline, subheadline, caption, hyperlink.
- Lecture: "How to Pitch a Story." What is an Annenberg Media story? Who is our audience? How does this translate into a pitch? Other topics: the typical shift schedule, filing pitches and reviewing story assignments in Trello, how to find stories.
- Lecture: "Annenberg Media Ethics and Guidelines." Topics include anonymous sources, corrections, conflicts of interest, privacy rights, personal politics, verification.
- Bookmarks: Media Center resources from the day's lectures (click the links):
  - Media Center Ethics Guidelines — a guide to practices and the workplace environment.
  - Resources and Links: Pitching and Researching Stories — writing a solid pitch, working with polls, tips for fact checking and verification, USC contact and expert lists.

Week 4 — Sept. 9
The student-led Media Center newsroom is up and running fully (and remotely). You will work on stories as assigned by the editors. You are also encouraged to file your own story pitches to Trello the night before or arrive for your weekly shift prepared to share your story ideas. You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift.

Week 5 — Sept. 16
Newsroom production continues.

Week 6 — Sept. 23
Newsroom production continues.

Week 7 — Sept. 30
Newsroom production continues.

Week 8 — Oct. 7
Newsroom production continues.

Week 9 — Oct. 14
Newsroom production continues.

Week 10 — Oct. 21
Newsroom production continues.

Week 11 — Oct. 28
Newsroom production continues.

Week 12 — Nov. 4
Newsroom production continues.

Week 13 — Nov. 11
Last week of newsroom production. There is no final for this class, but there will be a wrap party.

XI. Policies and Procedures
Additional Policies
Please see the clearly stated policies above. You will need to check your USC email and Slack regularly as well as follow the preceding rules about lab shifts.

Communication
Please contact me by Slack or text message when possible. Otherwise, you may contact me by email. I'll return your messages within 24 hours.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems
a. Academic Conduct
Plagiarism
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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards," 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, 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
Counseling and Mental Health — (213) 740-9355 — 24/7 on call
studenthealth.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, seven days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) — (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) — (213) 740-5086 | Title IX — (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by 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 that may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, nonconsensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment — (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures 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
uscsa.usc.edu
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) 442-1200 — 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund
https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards
The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for nontuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only; suspended due to COVID-19]
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.

XII. About Your Instructor
Henry Fuhrmann joined USC Annenberg as an adjunct instructor in fall 2016. He has taught graduate students in the summer immersion session and in the spring capstone course. As a writing coach in the Media Center, he advises on matters of story structure, copy editing, grammar, usage, fact checking and taste. Before arriving at USC, Fuhrmann worked for 25 years as an editor at the Los Angeles Times, retiring as assistant managing editor for the copy desks and standards. He led the first group of editors assigned to serve the paper's website, latimes.com, and helped develop newsroom guidelines for publishing online. Before entering the news business, Fuhrmann studied engineering at Caltech and UCLA and worked as a science writer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He holds two degrees in journalism: a B.A. from Cal State Los Angeles and an M.S. from Columbia University. He serves on the executive committee of ACES: The Society for Editing and the national governing board of the Asian American Journalists Association. Fuhrmann was born in Japan and grew up in Ventura County.