



**JOUR 206: Reporting and Writing  
Practicum (Live Reporting)  
1 Unit**

**Fall 2020 – Thursdays**

**8-11:50 a.m./11-2:50 p.m./2-5:50 p.m.**

**Sections: 21020R/21022R/21024R**

**Location: Online**

**Instructor: Christine (Kris) Kelley**

### **I. Course Description**

This course gives journalism majors hands-on experience in broadcast, radio, and digital news. Students work four hours a week in a virtual newsroom with Annenberg TV News, Annenberg Radio News and annenbergmedia.com to fulfill this lab shift, which runs concurrently with the core journalism courses Reporting and Writing I and Reporting and Writing II. The practicum is credit/no-credit.

### **II. Student Learning Outcomes**

Identify elements that make a story newsworthy for different audiences

Research and verify information for use in news stories on TV, radio and digital platforms including social media

Write news briefs and stories for radio and TV on deadline and in accordance with professional industry standards under the guidance of student editors and faculty

Shoot photographs and video and record and edit audio and video for use in news stories on deadline and in accordance with professional industry standards

Collaborate with other student reporters and editors to cover stories across platforms

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. You can also access Annenberg online resources.

Some Zoom Etiquette to consider:

1. **Be mindful of your location.** Avoid distracting backgrounds. If outdoors, try not to be in a windy spot. Try to get best reception possible.
2. **Mute is your friend.** Unexpected noises happen even in a great spot. Just make sure to unmute when you speak!
3. **Turn video on.** We don't always like to, and understandably sometimes we can't! But broadcasting yourself on Zoom will make it easier to engage and get to know each other. If you can, please put your video on, or at least put up a picture of yourself.
4. **Headphones are helpful.** You will hear and be heard much more clearly with headphones.

5. **Make sure the name on your Zoom reflects how you want to be called!** If you sign off with your sister's or brother's account/name, that's how student leaders will call you.

### **Classroom norms**

*As your instructor, I am committed to affirming 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 preferred gender pronouns, and any other feedback that contributes to a positive classroom atmosphere. If you feel 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 (i.e., 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*
- *Accept feedback in the positive spirit with which it is given as a means of development*
- *Show respect to your peers and the instructor.*
- *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.*

## **IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments**

Students in this course participate in the production of a daily TV news broadcast, twice-weekly radio broadcast or frequently updated digital platforms including social media. Class work will consist of on-the-job training and experience that mirrors the real world. Student reporters will work on tasks as assigned by student editors and with the support of faculty and coaches. Every week students are responsible for bringing in story ideas and writing a hand-off note at the end of their shifts. Failure to submit a hand-off 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 for radio, TV and digital platforms including social media
- Finding sources and conducting interviews
- Shooting video and photos and gathering audio for use in news stories
- Editing video, photos and audio for use in news stories
- Writing news briefs
- Writing for radio and TV broadcasts

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 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 leave the Media Center. 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 leave the Media Center. 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.

You can complete your assignments with a smartphone, computer and headphones. Please reach out to your instructor if you are having trouble completing your assignments.

## **IX. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (13 weeks: 8/17/20 – 11/13/20)**

**Friday, September 4:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, September 4:** Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001

**Friday, September 4:** Last day to drop a class and receive a refund to avoid a mark of "W" on student record and STARS report

**Friday, September 4:** Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall

**Friday, October 2:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript only. Mark of "W" will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply. [Please drop any course by the end of week three for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, October 2:** Last day to change a Pass/No Pass course to letter grade

**Friday, November 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. 17**

- Introductions, onboarding and overview. You will be trained and do hand-on exercises to prepare you for the newsroom.

### **Week 2 — Aug. 24**

- Training and hand-on exercises to prepare you for the newsroom.
- 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.

### **Week 3 — Aug. 31**

- Training and practice
- 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. 7**

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. 14**

Newsroom production continues.

### **Week 6 — Sept. 21**

Newsroom production continues.

### **Week 7 — Sept. 28**

Newsroom production continues.

### **Week 8 — Oct. 5**

Newsroom production continues.

### **Week 9 — Oct. 12**

Newsroom production continues.

### **Week 10 — Oct. 19**

Newsroom production continues.

### **Week 11 — Oct. 26**

Newsroom production continues.

### **Week 12 — Nov. 2**

Newsroom production continues.

### **Week 13 — Nov. 9**

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 when possible during your shift. Otherwise, you may contact me by email. I'll return your messages within 24 hours. You can also text me in emergency situations.

## **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](http://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](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**

*Counseling and Mental Health* – (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://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](http://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 and Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://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](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://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 which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual 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](http://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](http://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*

[uscса.usc.edu](http://uscса.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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://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](http://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.

## **XII. About Your Instructor**

**Kris Kelley** is the Executive Director of the nonprofit Boyle Heights Beat, a hyper-local high school journalism project based in East Los Angeles. A former television news writer and producer for KCAL in Los Angeles, she also works as an adjunct professor at the Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California where she has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in live television production, and served as a television writing coach in the Media Center.

Kris earned her bachelor’s degree in English from University of California, Berkeley and a master’s degree in broadcast journalism from USC.