

**Fall 2020 – Thursday – 6-9:20 p.m.**

**Section:** 21283R

**Location:** Online

**Instructor:** Cristina Daglas

**Office:** Remote

**Office Hours:** By appointment

### I. Course Description

We are in the middle of a journalistic reckoning – social unrest, newsrooms in crisis, extreme diversity issues, a pandemic. All of this adds on to an already complex sports landscape, one that has converged with racism, sexism, drugs, discrimination and corruption. To put it simply, sports are human, and sports are political. As Howard Bryant writes in his Introduction to Best American Sports Writing (a reading assignment for Week 2), “Despite the ubiquity of the phrase ‘stick to sports,’ sports has never quite known how to stay in its lane, never allowed itself to be relegated to the kids’ table, even when newspapers would derisively refer to it as the ‘Toy Department.’” This course will explore those complexities, delving into reporting, writing, editing, access, source-building and social media. We will critically examine the different styles of sports writing, focusing on the social context of sports and writing and the relationship between sports and politics. And we will analyze how outlets approach these subjects differently. In an election year, there will be plenty to keep us busy and plenty to discuss.

The course will be reading, writing and research intensive. It will require a deep level of critical thinking. And it will require thoughtful and consistent participation. Classes will include lively group discussions, respectful debate and exercises designed to make you question even the most basic journalistic principles. You will be asked to challenge your own opinions and those of your classmates, working together to refine your perspectives on sports and sports journalism. And you will have the opportunity to learn from award-winning writers and editors. They will join us to discuss their work and specific topics, providing individual case studies as we work our way to final presentations.

### II. Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will:

- Have a stronger understanding of the current state of sports journalism
- Be able to differentiate between styles of sports writing, and when each is applied
- Identify in-depth reporting techniques and challenges
- Think critically about the role of sport in society, particularly the intersection of sport and politics
- Develop the skills to analyze an outlet’s coverage

### III. Description and Assessment of Assignments

Students will spend the semester reading, participating in conversation and debate, and analyzing sports coverage at a variety of news outlets. Each assignment will build toward the final project – the pitch letter, midterm assessment of one outlet’s coverage, final project of how that outlet’s coverage differs from its competition and a presentation to show your findings. Students will learn qualitative and quantitative research techniques while also hearing from some of the best sports journalists in the business, understanding their approach to their jobs in an evolving media climate.

### IV. Grading

### a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Pitch letter	100	10%
Questions for guest speakers and reading reflections	100	15%
Presentation	100	10%
Midterm essay	100	25%
Final project	100	40%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 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

All assignments will be edited on a professional basis and you will be judged first on the accuracy, fairness and objectivity of your stories. You will then be evaluated for writing style, editing, originality and the ability to meet deadlines.

**“A” stories** are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor copyediting (i.e., they would be aired or published).

**“B” stories** require more than minor editing and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission.

**“C” stories** need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many spelling, style or omission errors.

**“D” stories** require excessive rewriting, have numerous errors and should not have been submitted.

**“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 an article, part of an article or information from any source.
- Telling interview subjects what to say.
- Promising, paying or giving someone something in exchange for doing an interview.
- Missing a deadline.

#### d. Grading Timeline

Assignments will be graded and returned the week after they are due.

#### V. Assignment Submission Policy

- A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be docked 50% of the points awarded. If you know you need extra time, contact me at least two days before the assignment is due.
- B. Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard.
- C. Every student must give a presentation. Failure to do so will result in an incomplete for this course.

#### VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

This course will carry a heavy reading load each week, both in assigned readings and those required for your midterm and final projects. All assigned readings will be made available on Blackboard. Other readings for your project may require subscriptions.

#### 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 (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

#### 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.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
<b>Week 1 Thurs., Aug. 20</b>	Journalism's Reckoning and How We Got Here	"A Reckoning Over Objectivity, Led by Black Journalists" (Wesley Lowery); "Marty Baron Made The Post Great Again. Now, the News is Changing." (Ben Smith); "What Went Wrong at the Los Angeles Times"	+ Read before class

		(Laura Wagner); “NYT opinion editor resigns after outrage over Tom Cotton op-ed”; “ESPN Anchor Sage Steele Claimed Black Colleagues Excluded Her From Race Special”	
<b>Week 2 Thurs., Aug. 27</b>	The Many Forms of Sports Reporting	“Introduction” (Howard Bryant, BASW 2017); “Michael Jordan Has Not Left the Building” (Wright Thompson); “Kaepernick is asking for justice, not peace” (Bomani Jones); “Lawdy, Lawdy, He’s Great” (Mark Kram); “The Passion of Muhammad Ali” (Leonard Shecter)	+ Read before class + Pitch letter
<b>Week 3 Thurs., Sept. 3</b>	The Politics of In-depth Reporting and the art of the tick-tock w/ Ramona Shelburne	“Inside the tension between Kawhi Leonard and the Spurs” (Ramona Shelburne, Michael C. Wright); “How LeBron’s decision instantly changed the Lakers, Cavs and NBA” (Shelburne); “Big Baller Brand rift emerges as Lakers’ Lonzo Ball severs ties with co-founder over money allegations” (Shelburne, Paula Lavigne) Plus: Listen to Episode 1 of the Sterling Affairs	+ Read before class + Three thoughtful and specific questions for Ramona about these stories and/or process
<b>Week 4 Thurs., Sept. 10</b>	Race & Sports w/ Howard Bryant	“Full Dissidence: Notes from an uneven playing field” (Howard Bryant)	+ Read before class + Three thoughtful and specific questions for Howard about his work and/or process
<b>Week 5 Thurs., Sept. 17</b>	The Politics of Boxing w/ Mark Kriegel	“The Great (Almost) White Hope” (Mark Kriegel); “Why Joet Gonzalez wants to beat up Shakur Stevenson, his sister’s boyfriend” (Kriegel); “What Maxim Dadashev was fighting for” (Kriegel)	+ Read before class + Three thoughtful and specific questions for Mark about these stories and/or his process

<p><b>Week 6</b> <b>Thurs., Sept. 24</b></p>	<p>Politics &amp; Sport w/ Kevin Arnovitz</p>	<p>“An Oral History of the Day Everything Changed” (Garrett M. Graff); “Why President Trump Ignites Gregg Popovich” (Kevin Arnovitz); “Inside the NBA’s silent tension surrounding Daryl Morey” (Arnovitz); “How NBA executive Jeff David stole \$13 million from the Sacramento Kings” (Arnovitz)</p>	<p>+ Read before class + Three thoughtful and specific questions for Kevin about these stories and/or his process + Midterm essay</p>
<p><b>Week 7</b> <b>Thurs., Oct. 1</b></p>	<p>Getting it So, So Wrong</p>	<p>“Dr. V’s Magical Putter” (Caleb Hanan); “SB Nation Removes Article Criticized as Sympathetic to Convicted Rapist” (Sydney Ember and Daniel Victor); “A Rape on Campus” (Sabrina Rubin Erdely)</p>	<p>+ Read before class + Reading reflection: 300-500 words on what went wrong in these stories. What are the biggest issues at play?</p>
<p><b>Week 8</b> <b>Thurs., Oct. 8</b></p>	<p>Politics of Editing</p>	<p>“How Reche Caldwell Googled his way from the Patriots to prison” (David Fleming); “The Unkillable Demon King” (Mina Kimes); “Why did Derrick Gordon make history and then suddenly shun the spotlight?” (Pablo Torre); “The courageous fight to fix the NBA’s mental health problem” (Jackie MacMullan)</p>	<p>+ Read before class</p>
<p><b>Week 9</b> <b>Thurs., Oct. 15</b></p>	<p>Politics of Access and Event Coverage</p>	<p>“Bearing witness to the disaster at 12” (Kevin Van Valkenburg); “Watching Drake is almost as exhausting as being Drake” (Tim Keown); “Almost There” (Roger Angell); “In Chicago, the final wait for a Cubs World Series win mixed joy</p>	<p>+ Read before class + Assignment: Tomorrow, Oct. 16, is the NBA Draft. It’s virtual, you have no traditional access. Given what you’ve read in these pieces, craft a pitch for an assigning editor. What can you observe? How do you execute? What reporting could you realistically do to support the scene you can write? Deliver that pitch in 200-300 words.</p>

		and sorrow" (Wright Thompson)	
<b>Week 10 Thurs., Oct. 22</b>	Politics of ... Opinion // On commentary, analysis and point of view w/ Kirk Goldsberry	"Carmelo Anthony is the last great American ball hog" (Kirk Goldsberry); "Seven ways the NBA has changed since Michael Jordan's Bulls" (Goldsberry); "Remembering Kobe Bryant: Relentless, curious and infinitely complicated" (Jackie MacMullan); "Kobe Bryant's greatness was both beautiful and maddening" (Zach Lowe); "The longest flight in Los Angeles Lakers history: When the team learned of Kobe Bryant's death" (Dave McMenamin)	+ Read before class + Three thoughtful and specific questions for Kirk about these stories and/or his process
<b>Week 11 Thurs., Oct. 29</b>	Covering this current moment, from social unrest to the bubble w/ Malika Andrews	"How close are we to live sports? Where the world's biggest leagues stand right now;" "How the NBA bubble has become a platform for social justice;" "Basketball's Ongoing Fight for Social Justice"	+ Read before class + Three thoughtful and specific questions for Malika about these stories and/or her process
<b>Week 12 Thurs., Nov. 5</b>	Politics of Source-building w/ Adrian Wojnarowski	"Clippers to land Leonard, George" (Woj); "Sources: Fear of Lakers dynasty drove Clips' deal" (Woj); "The coronavirus pandemic shut the NBA's doors – here's how the league is determining its next steps" (Woj); "Woj Was the Real Star of the 2018 NBA Draft" (Bryan Curtis)	+ Read before class + Three thoughtful and specific questions for Woj about these stories and/or his process
<b>Week 13 Thurs., Nov. 12</b>	Politics of Social Media	"LeBron is (fire) online" (Scott Cacciola); "The Curious Case of Bryan Colangelo and the	+ Course evaluations

		Secret Twitter Account” (Ben Detrick)	
<b>FINAL EXAM PERIOD</b> Thurs., Nov. 19, 7-9 p.m.	Presentations and Reflection		+ Final project and presentation

## XII. Policies and Procedures

### Additional Policies

As we only meet once a week as a full group, attendance and participation are essential. If you need to miss a class, please reach out so we can discuss solutions.

### Communication

I am reachable via email and will always respond within 48 hours. If urgent, however, please feel free to call or text. If not urgent, email is preferred, as I spend most of the day in meetings or working with writers and editors. That being said, I want to talk through your work, help wherever I can and ensure you are getting what you need out of this class, especially in an all-virtual environment. I am always available by appointment and eager to chat. Please, please, please reach out.

### 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 or public relations class.

## 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](https://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](https://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](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenbergsuccessfund.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.

### **XIII. About Your Instructor**

Cristina Daglas is a senior deputy editor for ESPN.com, overseeing NBA, MMA and boxing coverage. She previously held the role for MLB and led ESPN’s extensive coverage of the Chicago Cubs ending their 108-year drought for a World Series championship. Daglas joined ESPN in 2014 as a senior editor at ESPN The Magazine where she primarily covered NFL. Prior to ESPN, she was the editor of D Magazine and Milwaukee Magazine. Daglas holds a B.A. in journalism from the University of Wisconsin and an M.A. in journalism from the University of Missouri, where she was awarded the Thurgood Marshall Fellowship.