



JOUR 323: Journalism and the Audience **2 Units**

Fall 2020 – Tuesdays – 4-5:40 p.m.

Section: 2128D

Location: Online

Instructors: Laura E. Davis, Gabriela Fernandez

Office: Zoom

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3-4 p.m. or by appointment

I. Course Description

Journalism today is so much more than finding, verifying and publishing facts. To succeed in the modern media landscape, journalists nowadays must do all those things, plus engage directly with their audience and understand who will consume their stories and why and how they will consume them. This class is designed to increase your understanding of how news and information flow online and to help you find your place in the media ecosystem.

We will accomplish this by first studying the realities of media today, critiquing news organizations' current practices and output and becoming consumers of news products to further understand and critique that experience. You will also better define your own social media presence.

Then, you will draw on your established abilities as a reporter to create journalism that serves a specific audience. You will do this by completing a semester-long project focused on a beat and published on a platform of your choosing. (Examples of project platforms are a newsletter, a YouTube channel, an Instagram Stories series, etc.) You must identify your audience at the outset of your project, and you will assess the effectiveness of your efforts through analytics tools and audience surveys.

As you are building an audience, you must consider your role in shaping your audience's perception of the topics you cover. This means checking your bias, including diverse sources and thinking carefully about word choice and sentence structure. Avoid reinforcing stereotypes with your language and images, and ask yourself whose view of the world you are defaulting to when presenting your work.

By the end of this class, you should have an online presence that's impressive to potential employers: robust and professional social media profiles befitting of a modern journalist and a growing audience that's engaged with your reporting on a specific story or beat. You will also demonstrate a keen understanding of the realities of online publishing today and develop the critical thinking skills necessary to allow you to adapt throughout your career.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

This course will teach you:

- To critically analyze our current media landscape and an evolving media ecosystem
- To create, edit and distribute audience-friendly content using best practices for journalism products
- To identify a specific journalism audience and use appropriate strategies to engage with that audience
- To use social media best practices to develop sources and construct an online presence as a professional journalist

By the end of the semester, you will:

- Use basic product thinking principles and audience engagement strategies to create and execute an original, semester-long reporting project for a specific audience
- Manage your own online presence and your semester-long project using website analytics and applying social media best practices

III. Course Notes

We care about each of our students and consider it our responsibility to create a welcoming, inclusive environment for everyone, especially for students from historically underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds. This is a larger societal responsibility, as well as a particular responsibility tied to our role as journalists. Everyone who enters our classroom space (IRL or virtual) should feel it is for them and should feel comfortable expressing themselves, their identities and their lived experiences. Affirming everyone in a journalism classroom is an important step toward creating more diverse newsrooms, and more diverse newsrooms are better able to reflect the realities they cover. Accuracy is often referred to as the "first law of journalism," and a newsroom that includes a variety of perspectives, experiences and identities is going to produce more accurate work and contribute to a more inclusive and thoughtful society.

You are expected to treat all your classmates with respect and reflect on your own thoughts and behaviors in the classroom and when you are doing your work for class. None of us is perfect, and we should all do our best to have thoughtful and empathetic discussions in class. If there is something you do not feel comfortable discussing in class, [this form](#) is available to you – it's a space for you to ask any question and to hold your instructors accountable.

As we begin the semester, this course will be conducted completely online taught by two instructors. As we are a relatively small group, you are still expected to participate in class, though you are not required to turn on your video. In addition to Zoom, we will use Slack, email and Blackboard. It's possible that as the semester progresses, we will switch to hybrid instruction. It's definite that one of your instructors, Laura, will take parental leave by Sept. 21, and you will finish the course with one instructor.

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

Weekly assignments

The bulk of this class focuses on the development of a semester-long project that showcases your reporting and embodies best practices of audience engagement and journalism product thinking. Therefore, weekly assignments have two components: traditional reporting where you will draw on skills, and possibly sources, you've built during your time at Annenberg, and the application of in-class lessons on product, social media and audience development. This project will comprise the bulk of your grade. You will also be required to complete weekly readings that cover these and other topics.

You should expect to be reporting every single week after your project pitch is approved – and the more aggressive you are as a reporter, the better your project will be. However, weekly lessons will not be focused on reporting, and while reporting is listed as homework, you will be responsible for being a self-starter in this area, as the class will mainly focus on topics related to audience growth and engagement.

However, you cannot expect to build an audience without good journalism. The techniques you learn in class will not be effective if your underlying content isn't accurate, thoughtful, well-sourced, unique, engaging and reflective of broader societal contexts. Your stories should include a diversity of sources, all of whom you should treat with respect and be fair to even when your job requires you to challenge them. You should also plan to copy edit your stories, with an eye toward technical mistakes as well as serious attention to word choice and sentence structure, particularly when you cover topics or events that involve power and authority or historically marginalized groups. Do not rely on adjectives or phrases just because you see them used elsewhere in journalism. There are myriad style guides listed on these [Guidelines for Inclusive Journalism](#), courtesy of Prof. Kia Gregory at the New School, that can help you with specific guidance. Annenberg's own style guide, Stylebot, is incorporated into our Slack workspace (and was created by one of your professors).

You will also be required to complete other assignments – both in and out of class – and written reflections based on class lectures and readings. Assigned reading begins before the semester starts, and reading assignments are geared toward the next week's lectures. Readings are crucial to class discussions and must be completed before class begins.

Midterm and final

The midterm and final each require you to publish, write a reflection on your experience and present your project to the class. You must publish a minimum of two times for your semester-long project, but you may be advised to publish more frequently depending on your platform choice. For example, publishing two photos with short captions to Instagram is not the same as publishing two long-form stories on Medium. So you if you choose a platform that better supports short-form content, you should plan to publish more than twice. Furthermore, for platforms such as Instagram and newsletters, long periods of silence go against best practices for building an audience. Therefore, you should publish more not just for parity with your classmates but to fully implement the lessons of the class.

Attendance

It is expected that students will schedule classes to minimize the number of classes that may be missed. Further, it is expected that whenever possible, students will inform the course instructor in advance of any absences related to scheduled events and take responsibility for any missed work.

V. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Weekly assignments, reporting drafts and social media report	35%
Semester-long project launch and reflection (midterm)	20%
Final project reflection and presentation	15%
Final assessment of semester-long project	30%
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

In addition to the concepts above and those covered in lectures and readings, all assignments will be edited on a professional basis and you will be judged on the accuracy and fairness of and the evidence presented in your stories. All material (information, photo, video, etc.) that is not your own original reporting must be verified and clearly cited and sourced. As discussed above, it is important to keep in mind that accuracy and fairness extend to the diversity of your sources and your word choices. You will also be evaluated on your ability to execute the principles outlined in class for making your stories clear and accessible to your audience and providing them with a service that helps your work stand out in a crowded media landscape.

“A” stories are accurate, clear and comprehensive and are audience-focused. They do not confuse readers/viewers or require the audience to jump through hoops to get the story. Writing should be conversational, and on-camera work should have a casual, internet-friendly style.

“B” stories require more than minor editing and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission. They lack some elements of audience friendliness.

“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. They are not audience friendly or require considerable work on the user’s end to understand or even read/view the story.

“D” stories require excessive rewriting, have numerous errors and should not have been submitted. They clearly lack fundamental principles outlined in class about serving your audience.

“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 story, part of a story 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.

d. Grading Timeline

You can generally expect feedback within one to two weeks of the assignment due date.

VI. Assignment Rubrics

Rubrics used for stories, reflections, presentations and the final assessment of your semester-long project will be available in our class Slack workspace.

VII. Assignment Submission Policy

- All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, **late assignments will automatically be recorded as a zero.**
- Assignments must be submitted via Slack or email in a document format that your instructors can edit – that is, not a file such as a PDF. In addition to publishing your work, you must also submit an editable document to your instructors using Word or Google Docs. If your project includes photos, this document should contain the photos and photo captions as well. If you are turning in a video, you should turn in a script.
- Assignments are due before the start of class on the date indicated unless otherwise indicated by your instructor.

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.

VIII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

As a journalist, you must be familiar with the news of the day. Please read, view or listen to the daily reports of the news organizations listed below not only for the news, but also how each platform reports, writes and delivers the news. There are subtle and significant differences in how news is delivered on the air, on digital platforms and in print.

Los Angeles Times: latimes.com

The New York Times: nytimes.com

BuzzFeed News: buzzfeed.com/news

NBC News: nbcnews.com

Follow @BuzzFeedNews, @AP and @WashingtonPost on Twitter

Download these apps and sign up for push alerts:

New York Times

Washington Post

BuzzFeed News

Watch at least one national or local newscasts:

NBC Nightly News, CBS Evening News, ABC World News, KABC, KCBS/KCAL, KNBC, KTLA, KTTV

Listen to NPR:

KPCC/Southern California Public Radio

Add these news organizations on Instagram and watch their Stories:

The Guardian

CNN

New York Times

In addition to keeping up with the news in detail, staying current on industry trends is vital to this class and your evolution as a journalist. You should budget time each day to read about industry developments. The below newsletters come strongly recommended.

Newsletters:

Pew Research Center Daily Briefing of Media News: <http://bit.ly/readthisdaily>

API's Need to Know: <http://bit.ly/readAPItoo>

Nieman Lab: <http://bit.ly/andniemantoo>

IX. 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.

X. 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

XI. 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
Week 1 Date: 8/18	Syllabus review and introductions Your role and obligations as a modern journalist	Assignments: 1. Take journalism user experience survey. 2. Your “mission statement” Reading: <u>“The Platform Press: How Silicon Valley reengineered journalism”</u> (Columbia Journalism Review)	Clay Shirky, Ch. 3 of “Here Comes Everybody”; American Press Institute, <u>“The elements of journalism”</u> ; Wesley Lowery, <u>“A Reckoning Over Objectivity, Led by Black Journalists”</u> (New York Times); Lewis Wallace, <u>“Objectivity is dead, and I’m okay with it”</u> (Medium)
Week 2 Date: 8/25	The distributed news landscape: Where your content goes and who it reaches	Assignment: 1. Interview three friends about how they get news and their impressions of the news media. Also, keep a media journal for one week, observing your own news consumption habits. Write 750 words comparing your habits to those of your friends and reflecting on what you need to do to keep your friends engaged in news you produce. Due week 4. Reading: Jelani Cobb, <u>“When Newsrooms Are Dominated by White people, They Miss Crucial Facts”</u> (The Guardian); Indira A.R. Lakshmann, <u>“‘Lone wolf’ or ‘terrorist’? How bias can shape news coverage</u> (Poynter); Issac J. Bailey, <u>“How Implicit</u>	Due: User experience survey and mission statement draft

		Bias Works in <u>Journalism</u> " (Nieman Reports)	
Week 3 Date: 9/1	Who is your audience and how can you find and best serve them?	<p>Assignment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a story/series/beat pitch for your semester-long project. This means you need to demonstrate established sources and/or identify potential sources. You must also identify an audience for your project and explain why this audience will be interested in your reporting and how you plan to accurately inform them with your project. <p>Reading: Tom Huang, "<u>6 questions journalists should be able to answer before pitching a story</u>" (Poynter)</p>	
Week 4 Date: 9/8	Audience first: Product thinking as it applies to journalism	<p>Assignments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify an appropriate platform/medium for your project. Does it fit the story and the potential audience you've identified? 2. Refine your mission statement so that you answer Facebook's 3 product Qs about your project. 3. Begin reporting once your project idea is approved. 4. Look up upcoming guest speaker and read stories assigned in class. Come prepared with questions. 	<p>[Labor Day: Monday, September 7]</p> <p>Due: Interview/media journal assignment</p> <p>Project pitch</p>
Week 5 Date: 9/15	Building an audience for reporting Guest speaker: TBD	<p>Assignments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a news organization's project or person to follow or 	Due: Platform pitch; refined mission statement

		<p>review (ideas will be presented in class). Come prepared to discuss in class.</p> <p>2. Continue reporting.</p> <p>Reading: Kendra Pierre-Louis, "<u>It's time to change the way the media reports on protests. Here are some ideas.</u>" (Nieman Lab); Laura E. Davis, "<u>The Word You Should Think About When Sending A Push Notification</u>" (BuzzFeed); Laura E. Davis, "<u>Important To Us Doesn't Have To Mean Important To You</u>" (BuzzFeed)</p>	
<p>Week 6 Date: 9/22</p>	<p>Reflect on the "value add" of what or who you followed</p> <p>Writing for a journalism product: "Your headline is a user experience"</p>	<p>Assignments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the first draft of the first iteration of your project. You should make sure your writing, etc., embodies the principles discussed in class and the readings. 2. Prepare your in-class presentation about your project. 	<p>Due: Analysis of person or project you followed to discuss in class – no written assignment to turn in</p>
<p>Week 7 Date: 9/29</p>	<p>Project pitches</p>	<p>Assignment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Launch your project! (Incorporate feedback from your peers and professor.) 	<p>Due: First draft of the first iteration of your project; in-class project pitch (email link or slides ahead of class)</p>
<p>Week 8 Date: 10/6</p>	<p>The business of freelancing</p> <p>Guest speaker TBD</p>	<p>Assignments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress report 2. Next story pitch <p>Reading: "How Vox uses Facebook Groups to build community" (Lenfest Institute); "Behind the Velvet Ropes of Facebook's Private Groups" (New York Times)</p>	<p>Due: Link(s) to your project</p>

<p>Week 9 Date: 10/13</p>	<p>Strategies for engaging your audience</p> <p>Online communities + UGC</p>	<p>Assignments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Join an online community related to your project and engage (Ex ask a question of your audience.) 2. Continue reporting/publishing. <p>Reading: <u>ONA Social Newsgathering Ethics Code</u>; <u>Verification Handbook, Chapter 1: "When Emergency News Breaks," Chapter 1.1: Case Study, Chapter 2.1 Case Study; Chapter 2 of the Verification Handbook: "Verification Fundamentals: Rules to Live By"</u></p>	<p>Due: Progress report/story pitch</p>
<p>Week 10 Date: 10/20</p>	<p>Social media reporting and verification</p>	<p>Assignment:</p> <p>Continue reporting and publishing.</p>	<p>Due: Online community insights</p>
<p>Week 11 Date: 10/27</p>	<p>CrowdTangle training</p>	<p>Assignment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a pitch for your final reflection. 2. Continue reporting and publishing. 	<p>Due: Reporting progress report</p>
<p>Week 12 Date: 11/3</p>	<p>Individual meetings with professor on final project progress</p>	<p>Assignments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start on a final reflection report for your project. 2. Continue reporting/writing your final story. 3. Start putting together your final presentation. <p>Reading: Peter Hamby, <u>"The News is Dying, but Journalism Will Not": How the Media Can Prevent 2020 from Becoming 2016"</u> (Vanity Fair)</p>	<p>Due: Final reflection pitch</p>
<p>Week 13 Date: 11/10</p>	<p>Course evaluations</p>	<p>Assignments:</p>	

	Looking ahead: How you can adapt along with the media landscape	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish the last edition of your project. 2. Gather all links from your project into one document. 3. Complete your reflection. 4. Complete your final presentation. 	
FINAL EXAM Date: 11/18, 4:30-6:30 p.m.	Final presentations		Due: Final story, links to all parts of your semester-long project, final reflection, final presentation

XII. Policies and Procedures

Communication

We will communicate with you on email and Slack. If you will be absent from class, please communicate with us on one of those platforms. If you email me questions about class or assignments or to book an office hours appointment, you can expect an answer from me during regular business hours. If you have a question about an assignment, do not depend on a quick response when deadline is approaching.

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. 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, 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

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 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

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

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

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.

XIII. About Your Instructors

Laura E. Davis is an assistant professor of professional practice at the USC Annenberg School of Journalism and the founder of Stylebot — a copy editing chatbot used by newsrooms nationwide. She has worked as a reporter at The Associated Press, a homepage, social media and politics editor at Yahoo News, the deputy mobile editor at the Los Angeles Times and a mobile editor at BuzzFeed, where she was on the team that launched the award-winning BuzzFeed News app. At USC, she spearheaded digital innovation in the student newsroom, winning awards for an Instagram show, newsletter and app. She is also a coach for the Trusting News project.

Gabby Fernandez is a audience engagement editor at the Los Angeles Times. She focuses on making the Times' news digestible and as widely read as possible on social platforms. Her work emphasizes the importance of news aggregators, online news presentation, and bringing quality journalism to bilingual readers. Prior to working at the Times, she worked on the audience team at The Atlantic. She graduated from the USC with degrees in broadcast and digital journalism and narrative studies.