



JOUR 552: Television Reporting and Production

2 Units

Fall 2020 – Mondays – 9 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

Section: 21686D

Location: ANN 406 and Online

Instructor: Barbara Pierce

Office: Online

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., on Zoom or by appointment

I. Course Description

Good timing. You're studying journalism during a pandemic, a revolt, and an election with sky-high consequences. There may not be a more important and more challenging time to be a journalist. Our work this semester must recognize this responsibility.

This course is designed to develop the skills needed to produce professional quality video stories. Students will work on every phase of the process—pitching, shooting, writing, editing, on camera presence, and vocal delivery. This course is designed for students who have taken J528 Summer Digital Immersion (or are taking the fall version this semester).

These will be Enterprise stories—different from breaking news. Students will be able to do more in-depth reporting and have time to revise and improve their work without the pressure of a same-day deadline. The aim is for the work to be seen on Annenberg Media and by the semester's end, to have a body of work that would impress an employer. The portfolio should include stories that reflect the diversity of our communities.

The course also includes the basics of creating a newscast—designing the look, learning how to create a rundown, how to write teases and transitions, and how anchors can improve their presentation. For the Final Project students will work on a team to produce a newscast.

For the foreseeable future, which is like driving a curvy road in the fog, classes will meet on Zoom. Students will receive a link which will be the same each week.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Research, write and deliver newsworthy story pitches
- Shoot and edit professional quality videos
- Write scripts that work with audio and video
- Produce a pre-recorded newscast

Prerequisite: J528 Summer or Fall Digital News Immersion

Recommended Preparation: Familiarity with Adobe Premiere

III. Course Notes

The classroom expectations are similar to a newsroom. During reporting, it's not unusual for a story to stray from the original pitch. The key is to keep your instructor informed. News directors and instructors welcome some kinds

of surprises—like a story that turned out better than expected. But don't surprise a news director or this instructor by turning in a story that is NOT what was pitched. Communicate. It's what we do for a living.

Slides and other relevant material from class will be posted on Blackboard.

All students are encouraged to keep their computer cameras on during class. If this is difficult for any reasons (technical or otherwise), please let your instructor know.

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

A pitch for each of the three required enterprise stories will be presented in writing and in person to the class and must be approved by the instructor. Successful pitches will be timely, well-documented, and original.

The videos shot for the three enterprise stories should be framed well and in focus. The editing should be clean with no glitches and audio levels adjusted. Allowances will be made for video shot and/or provided by others—sometimes necessary when reporting during an epidemic.

Scripts should be conversational, well-structured, have no grammatical errors, work with sound and video, and every name and location must be spelled correctly.

A successful final Group Project will look professional and everyone will contribute. Everyone in the group will get the same grade for 80 percent of the final project. The remaining 20 percent of the Final Project grade will reflect a student's individual contribution.

Pitches are considered HW and will be graded based on:

Quality of the idea

Research

Organization

Oral Presentation

The Grading Standards (see below) will determine how the Enterprise Stories are assessed. Students will have one week after they receive the instructor's notes to revise their work.

V. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENT OF GRADE
PACKAGE 1	20%
PACKAGE 2	20%
PACKAGE 3	20%
IN CLASS, HW	10%
PARTICIPATION	10%
GROUP PROJECT-PILOT	20%
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
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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 broadcast style, editing, production value, 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). Video work must also be shot and edited creatively, be well paced and include good sound bites and natural sound that add flavor, color or emotion to the story.

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

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

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

“F” stories have failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, are late, have numerous errors or both. Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. Any misspelled or mispronounced proper noun will result in an automatic “F” on that assignment. Any factual error will also result in an automatic “F” on the assignment. Accuracy is the first law of journalism. The following are some other circumstances that would warrant a grade of “F” and potential USC/Annenberg disciplinary action:

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

d. Grading Timeline

Students can expect feedback on their work within a week if not sooner.

VI. Assignment Rubrics

See Grading Standards

VII. Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments are due before class starts Mondays at 9 a.m.

Attach assignments as a Word Doc and email them to the instructor. The label on the file starts with the student’s last name followed by the assignment name. For example: Jones Package 1

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

There is no textbook for this course.

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.*

WEEK 1-AUG. 17

- Introductions
- Reporting during a pandemic
- Course Overview and Syllabus Highlights
- Discuss Themes for Enterprise Stories
- The Anatomy of a video story
- Finding and pitching stories

READING

<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2012/6-questions-journalists-should-be-able-to-answer-before-pitching-a-story/>

HW DUE NEXT WEEK

Write TWO PITCHES of no more than a page each for Enterprise Package 1. One pitch may be your favorite and more developed than the other but you need two because stuff happens. Don't wait. Good stories take time to research and develop. Finding the best people to interview takes time.

-Read a lot. The written pitch should contain links to at least ten articles, reports, and/or other documents. Scour social media.

-Contact sources. Who will you interview on camera?

-Your story can be pegged/tied to an upcoming event but an event itself is **NOT** an enterprise story.

-Start with a headline describing your pitch

-What other video will you shoot?

- What other elements will you include such as a graphic
- Email the pitch as a Word Doc attachment (not a PDF). Label the file: Last Name PCK 1 Pitch
- Prepare to pitch your stories to the class. Be convincing, confident, and ready to answer questions.

WEEK 2-AUG. 24

DUE TODAY BEFORE 9 a.m.

Two written pitches for Enterprise Package 1

IN CLASS

Oral pitches for Enterprise Package 1

Shooting video tips

–Examples of good storytelling with video

–Sequences

–Natural sound

–How to shoot an interview

–How to shoot an interview on Zoom

HW DUE NEXT WEEK

1) Written Progress Report Enterprise Package 1 (Length 2:00-2:15)

2) Shooting exercise:

Shoot a brief Zoom interview with a class member

In addition to the Zoom recording, the interviewer will set up a camera (iPhone fine) on a tripod and shoot him/herself conducting the interview. Try different angles.

The interviewer should check the shot of the person being interviewed on Zoom and suggest adjustments.

Consider eye level with camera, lighting, framing, background, audio quality.

Switch roles and repeat

Edit together the various shots and email the video to your instructor as a YouTube link.

WEEK 3-AUG. 31

DUE TODAY BEFORE CLASS

1) Enterprise 1 Progress Report

2) Zoom interview shooting assignment

IN CLASS

Screen Zoom interview exercise

Review Basics of Video writing

Writing exercise

Discuss Enterprise 1 Progress Report

HW DUE NEXT WEEK

CONTINUE TO WORK ON ENTERPRISE 1

NOTE—Monday Sept 7 is the Labor Day holiday so no class.

WEEK 4-SEPT. 7 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY NO CLASS

WEEK 5-SEPT. 14

DUE TODAY BEFORE CLASS

Enterprise 1 (2:00-2:15) Email script as Word Doc attachment and include a YouTube link to the video at the top of the script. Label file: Last Name PCK 1

IN CLASS

Screen Enterprise 1 Packages

Media Center Tips

–Writing stories in the Rundown

–Workflow

–Examples of good packages on Annenberg TV News

–Shooting a standup

–Story idea exercise for ATVN

HW DUE NEXT WEEK

Two pitches for Enterprise 2

WEEK 6-SEPT. 21

DUE TODAY BEFORE CLASS

Two written pitches for Enterprise 2

IN CLASS

Live shot tips

Live shot exercise

DUE NEXT WEEK

Work on Enterprise 2

GUEST SPEAKER ON COVERING CONFLICTS (Reading and watching list to come)

WEEK 7-SEPT. 28

DUE TODAY

Enterprise 2 written progress report

IN CLASS

Guest Speaker: Former CBS News VP and Bureau Manager in London, Paris and Los Angeles

DUE NEXT WEEK

1) Written Progress Reports on Enterprise 3

2) Live shot critique

One of the best ways to learn about live shots is to study the pros. Watch a half hour national newscast **AND** a half hour local newscast. For EACH STORY in BOTH newscasts, write the name of the reporter and the subject. Write your observations about the live shot and/or recorded standup—include comments about the location, framing, delivery, appearance, movement (camera and/or reporter), and content. Are there differences between network and local reporters? What lessons did you learn about what to do and what NOT to do? You may write as an essay or bullet points. One page should be sufficient.

WEEK 8-OCT. 5

DUE TODAY

1) ENTERPRISE 2 (2:00-2:15) Email script as Word Doc attachment and include a YouTube link to the video at the top of the script. Label file: Last Name PCK 2

2) Live shot critique (see description above under DUE NEXT WEEK)

IN CLASS

Discuss live shot observations

Live shot exercise

Guest Speaker—Live shot and vocal delivery coach

HW DUE NEXT WEEK

Two written pitches for Enterprise 3

WEEK 9-OCT. 12

DUE TODAY

Two written pitches for Enterprise 3. Email as a Word Doc attachment (not a PDF).
Label the file: Last Name PCK 3 Pitch

IN CLASS

What's a Producer?

Pilot Season:

- Examples of student news pilots
- Discuss ideas for themes, topics
- Examples of show opens
- Team responsibilities
- Teams selected
- Peer/Self Evaluations
- Team members meet/share ideas

Meet a Producer – Guest speaker is a USC Alum and TV news producer

Work on Enterprise 3

Team ideas for news pilot

WEEK 10-OCT. 19

IN CLASS

WRITTEN PROGRESS REPORT ON ENTERPRISE 3

Team discussion of ideas for Group Project

Live shot exercise with roll cue

Guest Speaker –USC alum reporter

DUE NEXT WEEK

GROUP PROJECT PROPOSAL

ENTERPRISE 3

WEEK 11-OCT. 26

DUE TODAY

ENTERPRISE 3 (2:15-2:30) Email script as Word Doc attachment and include a YouTube link to the video at the top of the script. Label file: Last Name PCK 3

IN CLASS

Screen Enterprise 3

GROUP PROJECT PROPOSAL

–Includes name of newscast, logo, open, reporters, anchors, music-, rundown, transitions, locations

DUE NEXT WEEK

The open of the newscast edited, logo created, music selected, everything written

WEEK 12-NOV 2

The day before Election Day

MC Election Coverage

WEEK 13-NOV 9

IN CLASS

Teams work on final adjustments to Group Project

USC Course Evaluations

FINAL EXAM PERIOD-NOV. 23, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Screen Final

There is no Final Exam. We'll screen the Final Projects

XII. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

If you have to be absent or late, let the instructor know as far in advance as possible.

Communication

Please know that you may always contact your instructor about any problems or confusion or stress or even if you have no concerns or complaints. Email, Slack, text or try all three if it's urgent and we'll figure out a time to confer.

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

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) 442-120 – 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.

XIII. About Your Instructor

Barbara Pierce has been teaching graduate and undergraduate courses at USC Annenberg School of Journalism since 2011. She's also been a writing coach in the student-run newsroom. For more than 25 years, she was a producer for CBS News, working primarily for the CBS Evening News. She also produced segments for Sunday Morning, CBS This Morning, and 60 Minutes II. She covered breaking news and produced investigative reports as well as features. She was Senior Producer for the documentary, "The Lavender Scare," about the federal government's persecution of gays starting in the McCarthy era (PBS). She (with Annenberg's Vince Gonzales) received an Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Award and two National Emmys for Investigative Reporting. She has a Master's Degree from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and a Bachelor of Arts from Williams College.