**JOUR 510 Special Assignment Reporting:**

**Health and Medical Reporting (Special**

**Edition: Coronavirus 2020)**

**2 Units**

**Fall 2020 – Fridays – 10-11:50 a.m.**

**Section:** 060-21699D

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

**Instructors: Joe Saltzman and Michelle Levander**

**Office:** Zoom

**Office Hours:** By email, Zoom or phone

**Contact Info:**

[Saltzman@usc.edu](mailto:Saltzman@usc.edu) - 310-377-8883

Levander@usc.edu

**I. Course Description**

This Specialized Reporting class in Health and Medical Reporting: Special Edition: Coronavirus 2020 allows students to spend the Fall Semester developing stories and sources in health and medical reporting. While students will be free to focus on non-COVID-19 topics for their class assignments, we expect that most students will choose projects that have an emphasis on the impact and overriding influence of COVID-19. COVID-19 is the biggest story of our times and reporting on it opens up possibilities for stories on health policy, health equity, the disproportionate toll of the coronavirus on Blacks and Latinos, and the public health response. There are also opportunities to do investigative reporting on topics such as illness and deaths in nursing homes.

You will have to edit and rewrite your stories and they will go through several drafts and multiple revisions. You may also have to go back and do more reporting. The goal will be for you to do professional work in a topic area in which you have gained expertise. Much of journalism involves teamwork, a back-and-forth process in the newsroom that results in accurate, authoritative and timely stories.

Throughout the semester, we will emphasize the basics of good journalism: interview techniques, multimedia journalism, ethics, point of view, critical practice, diversity of thought. We will also discuss how to find a story – and how to write that story.

**II. Student Learning Outcomes**

While engaged in this class and covering your chosen story, it is expected that you will spend weeks, if not a whole semester, on your assignment. The point is for you to delve deeply into a subject area of your choice while honing story development, writing and reporting skills. You will have the time and opportunity to educate yourself about the context and controversies of your topic area – as well as to gain an awareness of the history, public actors and uncertainties surrounding the key issues.

Familiarity with a story’s subject matter will empower students to find archived information and reliable sources quickly. You will learn how to conduct knowledgeable interviews and discern who can be trusted to provide truthful, helpful information.

You will also gain the ability to stay current on your topic – how to manage your time and stay focused in a 24/7 news environment. After completing this course, you will be able to use critical thinking and technical skills to tell compelling stories on multimedia platforms and will be capable of engaging interactively with the public through social media related to your beat.

This course does not have a final exam. Your performance will be assessed on the basis of your accumulated semester work and your final story. Your story will go through three stages: first draft, second draft, third draft, and “final examination”: the final draft. We do not expect you to produce professional stories from Day One. We are looking for rapid improvement, which you can achieve by working closely with your instructors who will be helping you to bring your journalism up to professional standards. Our expectation is that by the end of the semester, you will be contributing stories that require few changes.

The goal: professionalism. You can do the job. And put your own enviable and high-standard twist on it.

**III. Course Notes**

This will be a Zoom class in which Blackboard will list all of the assignments and documents for use in the class. A major resource will be the [**Center for Health Journalism**](https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/about-us), especially the section on coronavirus seminars, <https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/webinars> There will be assignments based on those seminars, but for the most part, the Center for Health Journalism provides enormous resources and ideas for your story.

**IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments**

Students will complete three drafts of an improved story, ending with a final version of the story considered your final project or examination. All of these pieces still involve revisions and multiple drafts, more reporting and more rewriting. The secret of good writing is rewriting, rewriting and more rewriting.

Although the lectures will teach you many aspects of multimedia reporting, the projects will be text-only, emphasizing writing and reporting.

A word on Fall projects and the Capstone Project: Please bear in mind that a good story can be the basis for your Spring Graduate Capstone Project. Consult your Fall Digital News Immersion instructor about your fall projects and, in the spring, talk to your Capstone instructors about stories you would like to build on. You can add the audio and video elements to your final text piece as part of that project.

**V. Grading**

**a. Breakdown of Grade**

| Assignment | Points | % of Grade |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class participation | 50 | 5 |
| First Draft | 100 | 10 |
| Second Draft | 200 | 20 |
| Third Draft | 300 | 30 |
| Final Story (Final Examination-Project) | 350 | 35 |
| **TOTAL** | **1000** | **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**

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 proper style, editing, creativity and the ability to meet deadlines.

**“A” stories** are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor copyediting

**“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 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 rule 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.

• Missing a deadline.

**d. Grading Timeline**

Corrected stories will be returned to the student the week after the deadline to turn in that story. Individual zoom conferences will be held with each student to go over the editing of each story.

**VI. Assignment Rubrics**

No special rubrics other than stated elsewhere in the syllabus.

**VII. Assignment Submission Policy**All assignments are due on the date(s) listed in the syllabus. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of “F.” You must email the story to [Saltzman@usc.edu](mailto:Saltzman@usc.edu) at the stated deadlines.

**VIII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

We will work together in this course to make it, as much as possible, a paperless experience.

**Required Textbooks:**  *AP Stylebook*

The AP offers a text version, which is available at the USC bookstore. The online and mobile versions of the stylebook can be purchased at <https://www.apstylebook.com/>

The AP also offers other products, such as AP style quizzes and automated style corrections. If you buy a used stylebook, be sure it is the 2019 edition.

*2020 AP Stylebook: (*<https://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://www.apstylebook.com/usc_edu/> (NOTE:USC STUDENTS HAVE FREE ONLINE ACCESS. CLICK LINK)

**Required Website:** Michelle Levander and the Center for Health Journalism:

[**Center for Health Journalism**](https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/about-us), especially the section on coronavirus seminars, <https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/webinars>

The syllabus will be posted on Blackboard prior to the first class meeting.

All other reading assignments and additional materials/links will be announced in class or made available on our class Blackboard site (<http://blackboard.usc.edu>). You should monitor Blackboard and let your fellow students know if something new has been posted. Your instructor may use email to assign specific readings and webinars to you throughout the semester, especially on-line content that applies to a story you are working on.

**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**](http://www.annenbergdl.org/) for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s [Information Technology Services](http://itservices.usc.edu/wireless/support/) 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 possibly 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: 8/21 | Review Syllabus  Picking your story.  Orientation for: <https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/webinars>, especially the section on coronavirus seminars, <https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/webinars>  List of Objectives  Nut Graph | Look over all of the coronavirus information on the Center for Health Journalism.  Develop a story idea based on your research and personal interests. |  |
| Week 2  Date: 8/28 | NO CLASS | Write a nut graph on your approved story idea.  Watch “Street Reporting Without the Street” -- <https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/content/covering-crisis-street-reporting-without-street>  Come up with a reporting set of strategies based on your story idea. Source and interview possibilities | **List of Objectives due on WEDNESDAY, August 26**, 2020 – email to all instructors.  **Nut Graph due August 28,** 2020 – email to all instructors |
| Week 3  Date: 9/4 | Putting the story together.  Lists: People, Locations, Actualities, Video, Audio,  Question-Statements  The Story Map. | Your lists for your story.  Your story map | **Story Map due on WEDNESDAY, September 2, 2020 – email to all instructors.** |
| Week 4  Date: 9/11 | Multimedia Interview Techniques. | Work on updating Lists and DRAFT NO. 1 | **Lists due on September 11** |
| Week 5  Date: 9/18 | Guest Lecture: Steve Padilla, Los Angeles Times | Work on updating Lists and DRAFT NO. 1 | **DRAFT NO. 1 DUE ON September 25,** 2020 – email to all instructors. |
| Week 6  Date: 9/25 | Putting together the Multimedia story – editing techniques. | **DRAFT NO. 1 IS DUE** | **DRAFT NO. 1 IS DU**E |
| Week 7  Date: 10/2 | Discussion of Draft No. 1  Individual Conferences |  |  |
| Week 8  Date: 10/9 | Guest Lecture: Health Reporter | Begin Draft No. 2 | **DRAFT NO. 2. DUE ON**  **October 16**, 2020 |
| Week 9  Date: 10/16 | Putting together the story  Multimedia selection and editing | **DRAFT NO. 2 IS DUE** | **DRAFT NO. 2 IS DUE** |
| Week 10  Date: 10/23 | Discussion of Draft No. 2  Individual Conferences |  |  |
| Week 11  Date: 10/30 | Discussion of story – general problems, solutions | Begin Draft No. 3 | **DRAFT No. 3 DUE ON**  **November 6**, 2020 |
| Week 12  Date: 11/6 | Analysis of long-form multi-media structure and editing | **DRAFT NO. 3 IS DUE** | **DRAFT NO. 3 IS DUE** |
| Week 13  Date: 11/13 | Discussion of Draft No. 3  Individual Conferences |  | Reminder to fill out course evaluations. |
| FINAL EXAM PERIOD  Monday, 11/23, 8-10 a.m. | Summative experience  **FINAL PAPER IS DUE ON;**  **MONDAY, 11/23/2020 AT 10 A.M.** |  | **FINAL PAPER IS DUE ON;**  **MONDAY, 11/23/2020 AT 10 A.M.** |

**XII. Policies and Procedures**

**Additional Policies**

Since the class will be a Zoom class, you must do the following to get full credit for participation and for the course:

\*You must have your video on continuously. Not having your video on will constitute an absence. Two absences without a legitimate excuse means you will have to drop the class.

\*If you have a legitimate excuse to be late to class or to miss class, you must notify us by email before that class begins.

\*Although the class begins at 10 a.m., one of us will be in the Zoom classroom at 9:30 a.m. to talk with you about any subject you want to discuss. We’ll also stay late for the same reason. If you want an individual, private session, wait until all the students leave the class and then we can talk for as long as you want, or you can set up a private Zoom class or phone conversation with any instructor.

**Communication**

Feel free to email us at any time. If you want to set up a specific zoom or phone appointment, email your availability and we will immediately get back to you.

**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 by 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](https://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](https://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://www.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](https://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](https://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](https://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*

[uscsa.usc.edu](https://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](https://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.

**XIII. About Your Instructor**

**Joe Saltzman**, professor of journalism and communication at USC Annenberg, has been a prolific print and electronic journalist for more than 50 years. He created the broadcasting sequence for the School of Journalism at the University of Southern California in 1974. Saltzman, who this August begins his 53rd consecutive year of teaching at USC Annenberg, is a tenured professor at USC and the winner of several teaching awards, including the Scripps-Howard National Journalism and Mass Communications Professor of the Year and the USC Associates Teaching Excellence Award. He is currently the Director of the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC), a project of the Norman Lear Center, USC Annenberg, and a former associate dean of the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

Before coming to USC, Saltzman was a senior writer-producer for the CBS owned-and-operated stations based in Los Angeles. His documentaries and news specials have won more than 50 awards, including the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award in Broadcast Journalism (broadcasting’s equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize), two Edward R. Murrow Awards for reporting, five Emmys and four Golden Mike awards. Saltzman is listed in Who’s Who in America, the International Who’s Who in Literature, Who’s Who in California, Who’s Who in the West, Who’s Who in Education and International Biography.

**Michelle Levander** is the founding director of the Center for Health Journalism at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School of Journalism; editor-in-chief of its online community; and co-founder of Boyle Heights Beat, a hyper-local youth development and community news project in an immigrant neighborhood of Los Angeles.

The Center partners with journalists and their newsrooms to support ambitious journalism on health policy and health conditions in underserved communities. The Center’s Fellows, more than 800 reporters and editors nationwide, have published more than 1,500 articles that have won distinction and changed laws, reinvigorated policy discussions and provoked new community discussions across the country. Levander launched the Center for Health Journalism in 2004 after more than 15 years as a staff reporter and editor in New York, California, Hong Kong and Mexico, working for Time Magazine Asia, the Asian Wall Street Journal and the San Jose Mercury News. She has received journalism awards from the Overseas Press Club of America (Best Reporting in Latin America), the Inter-American Press Association and the Society of Professional Journalists L.A. (Distinguished Work in New Media). As a former Inter American Press Association fellow, she spent a year in Mexico, studying at Mexico City's El Colegio de Mexico and researching and writing about migrant culture from rural Mexico. She has a bachelor’s degree in history and literature from UC Berkeley and a Master of Science degree in journalism from Columbia University.