

# USC Annenberg

**ASCJ 200: Navigating Media & News in the Digital Age**  
**Fall 2020 T/Th 2-3:20pm + Required Lab Sections 21910/11, 4 units**

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## **Course Overview:**

This interdisciplinary cross-school course is designed to engage students as discriminating media and news *consumers* and *contributors* at a time when the digital revolution is spawning an unprecedented daily flood of content. This revolution is transforming notions of journalism as a series of practices designed to produce news as well as supporting the growth of large networked systems which are focused on broader notions of communication. This media environment is evolving rapidly, creating a new set of powerful players and challenging the legitimacy of social institutions. These transitions are taking place around the world and in an entire range of platforms, settings and behaviors.

An important mark of a well-educated person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the ability to *critically navigate* this contested and integrated terrain: to thoughtfully understand, employ, enjoy and help build and shape the media landscape we now inhabit. Only by understanding our own roles as consumers and producers of media can we begin to make sense of the environment around us.

Democracies relies on enlightened and engaged citizens who can critically analyze the range of information and content disseminated from an equally wide range of sources and platforms. The course will examine new avenues of civic participation and the critical importance of ethical standards in communicating messages. Students will learn how to apply their critical-thinking and analytic skills to a range of media and news production and consumption. The critical thinking skills developed in this course will be applicable to many fields of study, from science to the arts.

## **Course Objectives:**

The course is designed at the intersection of theory and practice. Students will

- **develop** critical thinking and analytic skills for evaluating the barrage of media, information, and news content we face in this digital age, from advertising, film and television images to news and opinion.
- **discern, distinguish and evaluate** different types of media and news (e.g. opinion/commentary, news reports, documentary, entertainment, satire,

expository/informative), as well as the different media formats and platforms in which they circulate.

- **learn** how to become full and active participants in the new digital culture, traveling beyond the role of passive consumers to emerge as highly-engaged critics, thoughtful citizens and co-producers of information.
- **produce** and manipulate media using various software while taking into consideration the construction of argument, potential implicit bias, and the value in sharing and distribution.

### **Course Attendance and Participation Policies:**

We design each lecture and lab to provide a unique and meaningful academic experience for students. Students will have the most learning environment when they are able to participate in each lecture and lab setting.

Remote learning, paired with the fact that USC students are spread across time zones, presents a number of challenges related to attendance and participation in synchronous class sessions. In general, students should plan to attend every synchronous session for the classes in which they are enrolled, irrespective of when it occurs in their time zone. In other words

Students are required to do all of the reading, attend all classes (including labs), complete all assignments, and participate fully in class discussion. Attendance is mandatory. Students should expect questions during the live sessions and they should be prepared to answer drawing upon the readings and out of class assignments. Simply showing up to class does not guarantee a perfect attendance/participation score. Participation grades will begin with an average grade (i.e., C) and then adjusted based on the individual student performance in both live course sessions as well as asynchronous course content. Students who miss lectures or lab sections without prior and documented excuses will be at risk of lower participation grades.

All of these expectations remain fully in force for any student for whom the class time falls within reasonable learning hours in the student's time zone, defined as 7:00am to 10:00pm. If the class falls outside those hours, students should contact us immediately to develop specific accommodations. All students will be required to actively participate with the class based on either these norms or specific accommodations developed at the start of the semester.

### **Participation and Camera Policy**

The strongest classroom dynamic takes place when everyone in class is prepared and fully participating in the live sessions, including students having their cameras on during synchronous online sessions. We also recognize that some students may be facing challenging situations, such as internet connectivity, illness, or home environments that make this difficult or impossible. To alleviate these concerns, we encourage students to consider using virtual backgrounds, which will eliminate most privacy concerns, and earphones or headsets to improve audio quality. Virtual backgrounds will, however, consume more bandwidth so if anyone has a concern with their camera being on at any point, please contact your instructor.

### **Course Recordings and Transcripts**

All course sessions will be recorded and made available to students throughout the semester. USC ITS has set up Zoom to automatically record and transcribe class sessions, which are then made available to students and faculty for all classes in Blackboard.

These recordings and transcripts are made available to support student learning and are only authorized for sharing or distribution to enrolled USC students. USC SCampus policies regarding class notes (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>) clearly states that students that they are not permitted to create their own class recordings, share this content with non-enrolled students or invite others to class without the instructor's permission. Violations of these policies will be met with the appropriate disciplinary sanction, including referral to USC SJACS.

### **Course Readings:**

Course readings can be found on Blackboard, as PDFs/online links and *Create to Learn* by Renee Hobbs, an e-book you may purchase online at [wiley.com](http://wiley.com). The Blackboard site will also include a list of useful links and resources used throughout the term. We will regularly incorporate topics and developments that come up in the popular press and current events to allow for "in the moment" analysis.

### **Lab Sessions:**

Weekly lab sessions are an **essential** and **mandatory** part of this course. Labs work in conjunction with lecture content and to train you in general design principles and the general use of digital tools so that you are equipped to maintain your WordPress site and complete your digital DIY assignments. Additional help is available at the Digital Lounge helpdesk which is providing remote support for Fall 2020. Software tutorials and all of their services can be found on their website: [www.AnnenbergDL.org](http://www.AnnenbergDL.org). You may also look at Lynda.com on USC's IT site for online tutorials on a range of software here: <https://shib.lynda.com/InCommon>

### **Required Equipment for Labs and Assignments:**

In accordance with the Annenberg mandatory laptop policy, you will need a laptop with the following recommended specs:

- MAC: multicore Intel processor with 64-bit support, MacOS X 10, at least 8GB RAM (16 recommended)
- Windows: multicore processor with 64-bit support, at least Windows 7 with 64-bit service pack. 8GB of RAM (16GB recommended)
- 8GB of available hard-disk space for software installation

You will also need a smartphone with the following specifications to complete your DIY assignments:

- Apple: iPhone 5 or higher, must be running iOS 8.1 or later
- Android: Needs to have 1080p for video, must be running Android 4.4
- Storage: 16GB minimum, 32GB recommended

Additionally, you will need at least 10GB of dedicated media storage for this course. An external hard drive is highly recommended. For more information, please visit

<http://www.annenbergdl.org/adobe/>

If for any reason you do not have the required equipment or have problems with your equipment during the course of the semester, please get in touch with the instructors ASAP. Accommodations can be made to support you. A selection of digital tools for DIY assignments will be discussed in lab and linked on Blackboard.

### **Assignments and Grading:**

All assignment prompts will be distributed via Blackboard. Assignments must be completed via Blackboard on time to avoid a grade reduction. If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide documentation that will allow you to be excused, or discuss your situation with us in a timely manner. We all recognize these are very challenging times, please make sure to stay in touch with your faculty as early as possible whenever you are experiencing challenges.

You are responsible for the material covered in class and in the reading. You will be evaluated on the following:

- 1) the level of your engagement with the class materials (as demonstrated in your written work, projects, and class participation)
- 2) your capacity to articulate and explain your ideas and analysis in well-written blog posts and digital media projects
- 3) your ability to analyze and apply the theories and methodologies of the class
- 4) your ability to demonstrate intentional design choices and execution of your projects

All of your work will be graded on two primary evaluative scales:

- 1) how well it demonstrates an understanding of the theories and methodologies of the class
- 2) how well it articulates and structures its argument (in written and digital media formats)

### **The final course grade will be based on the following distribution:**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Lecture Participation and course progress assessments<br>(May include quizzes and progress assignments)                  | 10% |
| Lab Participation  | 5%  |
| WordPress site (see below)<br>Including posting and clear categorization of all assignments                              | 5%  |
| DIY Assignments (2 total, 20% each)<br>Each DIY assignment will have mandatory check-ins<br>worth 5% of assignment grade | 40% |
| Blog Posts (2 total, 10% each, see below)  | 20% |
| Final Exam   | 20% |

Students must complete all of the assignments in order to earning a passing grade. Assignments will be detailed in specific prompts distributed throughout the course of the semester. All assignments are due on the date indicated. Each item will be reduced one grade per calendar day late.

### **WordPress Site**

Students will create blogs (via WordPress.com) at the beginning of the semester that will:

- Serve as a clearly **organized and categorized repository for your assignments** throughout the semester. General categories/menu items should include: “About,” (including a list of 5 news sources and 5 personal interest links), “Blog Posts,” “DIY Projects.” ALL posts should be categorized.
- Offer a place for you to create a **public and digital identity** tied to your assignments.
- Demonstrate **intentional design choices** (decisions re: colors, fonts, layout, etc. should be cohesive and align with your assignments and the identity you are trying to convey to your public/audience).

### **DIY Assignments and Final Project**

You will have two (2) DIY assignments over the course of the semester. All DIY projects will offer arguments supported by evidence and analysis, and will be accompanied by brief written analysis (250-300 words) that explains design choices and ties to course readings/lectures. Each assignment will also require pre-production exercises and rough drafts in lab section (see schedule). These rough drafts will be part of your assignment grade.

1. Image manipulation
2. Audio OR Video vox pop, remix OR PSA

### **Blog Posts**

There will be two (2) written blog assignments (approximately 500 words each):

1. Media Consumption
2. SMELL Test /Photo Forensics

Best practices for blogging will be covered in class and you may see some samples on BB, but in general keep the following in mind:

- Use a catchy headline and post title (i.e. not “Blog Assignment”)
- Use a clear opening statement that sets up your position, indicating how you plan to frame your commentary or analysis
- Offer appropriate set-up or context so a reader outside of our class can understand what you are writing about
- Use evidence (analysis of text, direct quotes, photos, etc.) to support your conclusions
- Use succinct, clear, and straightforward prose
- Include compelling images/video to help keep your reader engaged or to illustrate/substantiate the points you are making. Any media you reference should be embedded in your post.
- Include hyperlinks where appropriate to reference other sites and sources. NB: hyperlinks should be descriptive copy, not clickable URLs.
- Proofread for spelling and grammar

A blog in this class is **not** a diary entry or an opinionated rant. It can be casual and somewhat informal (in your own voice, first person), but should adhere to the above criteria.

**Course Progress Activities** – As a way to reinforce course progress in an online setting, we will periodically use diagnostic efforts, such as quizzes or course progress assignments to help students stay on track with course material. These may occur in live sessions and/or use as asynchronous formats.

### **Course Grading Policy:**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

“A” Outstanding, thoughtful and insightful work and analysis, showing an ability to think beyond the basic course material. A grade of A+ (97-100) *may* be given to *individual* assignments in *rare* instances where expectations are exceeded.

- “A-/B+” Above average work, demonstrating effort and keen understanding of conceptual ideas
- “B/B-” Average work, needs improvement on ideas, execution, and argument
- “C+/C” Shows little effort, lacks clarity and/or argument
- “C-” Fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material
- “D” No understanding of the material and/or does not meet bare minimum criteria
- “F” Failure to meet minimum criteria.

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned to each. Your percentage scores on the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade per the scale shown below:

|    |  |    |         |
|----|--|----|---------|
| A+ | = 97-100 (only applicable to individual assignments, NOT course grade) |    |         |
| A  | = 96-94  | C  | = 76-74 |
| A- | = 93-90  | C- | = 73-70 |
| B+ | = 89-87  | D+ | = 69-67 |
| B  | = 86-84  | D  | = 66-64 |
| B- | = 83-80  | D- | = 63-60 |
| C+ | = 79-77  | F  | = 59-00 |

**Grievance Procedure** - Occasionally, students are dissatisfied with evaluation of their work or some other dimension of a course. For concerns with specific grades, students should first provide a written argument in support of their position to the appropriate laboratory section instructor. All grade appeals on specific assignments must be made within one week of the return of the assignment. The laboratory instructor will then review that petition and evaluate its merits. Dr. Stables will consider grade appeals only after this process has been completed. You may, of course, approach any of the instructors with any general concerns.

## Tentative Weekly Schedule (open to revision)

*Reading/assignments are all due on the specified day/week.*

### Week 1: Introduction: Media & News in our Everyday Lives

#### Learning Objectives:

- How do we produce and consume media and news?
- How are media and news content central to and integrated into our daily lives and habits, constructing our identities and understandings of the world?
- How is the emerging volume of information influencing trends of production and reception of facts, data, opinion? How are these trends influencing institutional legitimacy?
- How do we decipher, deconstruct and respond to media and news content, focusing on the range of meanings (intended, negotiated, and oppositional)?

#### Topics and Readings:

**8/18:** Course introduction: mapping literacies and making meanings

**8/20** Introduction to digital identity in an era of Truth Decay

- Renee Hobbs, *Create to Learn*, chapter 1 + 7 “Create to Learn: Consider Your Identity as a Digital Author” and “Blogs and Websites” (3-14, 107-121)
- Kavanagh, Jennifer and Michael D. Rich, *Truth Decay: An Initial Exploration of the Diminishing Role of Facts and Analysis in American Public Life*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018. Chapters 1-2.

#### Lab Sections:

**Lab Topics:** *Intro to WordPress, constructing online identities*

#### Assignments:

- ASSIGNED: Create a **WordPress site** for the semester.
- ASSIGNED: **Blog #1:** Media Consumption Diary and 500-word blog post on your consumption habits.

### Week 2: Conventions & Constructs of Global Information Systems

#### Learning Objectives:

- What is the ideological power of media and news?
- How are these ideologies shaped by our institutions and technologies?
- How do we see an evolution of separate “realities” based on ideological differences?
- How do we construct content in order to convey meaning, truth, credibility, authenticity, etc.?

#### Topics and Readings:

**8/25**

- Greg M. Smith, Chapters 1, 2, 4 from *What Media Classes Really Want to Discuss*
- Renee Hobbs, *Create to Learn*, “Accessing and Analyzing Ideas” (45-68)

**8/27**

- John McManus, “The SMELL Test”
- Kavanagh (et al) Truth Decay, pages. 70-131 (this is portion of chapters 3 & 4).

Why Russia will keep poking America’s racial wounds into the 2020 election

<https://www.axios.com/russian-interference-2020-election-racial-injustice-7fa6a49b-03b4-4dc6-898d-fa589f9f0e6a.html>

A Newsroom at the Edge of Autocracy

<http://feedproxy.google.com/~r/AtlanticInternational/~3/HPWN3qVX1r4/>

### **Lab Sections:**

**Lab Topics:** Basic skills assessment. Design basics and what does it mean to be “intentional”?

### **Assignments:**

- **DUE by 11 pm pst 8/31** WordPress URL + Blog #1

### **Week 3: Media Frames and Norms**

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- What does normalization mean and what role do media and news play in creating and perpetuating norms?
- How do ideas and ideologies get normalized through our daily communication and sharing of information?
- How does new/digital media play a role in crafting what is normal and what isn’t, and how has that changed over time?
- *How do we define ‘mainstream’ and ‘extreme’ or ‘conspiratorial’ frames?*

#### **Topics and Readings:**

**9/1:**

- Wesley Lowery, “A Reckoning Over Objectivity, Led by Black Journalists.” The New York Times, June 23, 2020.
- Sadie Graham, [“#MeToo, a Movement Reliant on Reporting, Reveals the Limits of Journalism”](#) Vice, October 5, 2018.
- Sean Illing, Interview – “Masha Gessen on American politics after the death of “truth” “We can’t do politics if we can’t talk to one another.” Vox.com, August 6, 2020.

Take a test here: Project Implicit



9/3:

- D.M. McLeod & James Hertog, "Social Control, Social Change and the Mass Media's Role in the Regulation of Protest Groups"
- Adrienne LaFrance, "[The Prophecies of Q: American conspiracy theories are entering a dangerous new phase.](#)" The Atlantic, June 2020.

## Lab Sections

**Lab topics** - Taking pictures, setting frames, making meanings (framing, cropping, and what gets left out, composition, rule of thirds, etc.)

### Assignments:

- ASSIGNED: Blog #2 SMELL Test
- ASSIGNED: DIY #1 Image Manipulation

## Week 4: News Literacy & the Implications of Lost Credibility

### Learning Objectives:

- How does the business behind media determine the news we receive?
- We will discuss the ideological power of media, the construction of alternative facts, and the evolving of separate "realities" based on ideological differences.
- How do we engender trust in news media?
- How do news publishers convey or erode trust?
- What is the role of transparency?
- What do we look for and how are we shaped as consumers?

### Topics and Readings:

9/8:

- Clay Shirky, "Truth Without Scarcity, Ethics Without Force," chapter 2 of "The New Ethics of Journalism: Principles for the 21st Century." SAGE/CQ Press, 2013.
- Kavanagh, Jennifer, et al, Truth Decay, p. 132-190 (Remainder of chapter 4)

9/10:

- Carolyn Jack, "Lexicon of Lies: Terms for Problematic Information."
- Sarah Repucci, "[Freedom and the Media 2019: Media Freedom: A Downward Spiral.](#)" Freedom House, June 2019.

### Lab Sections:

**Lab topics:** Photo editing—making meaning + commentary through altering form (color, lighting, saturation, contrast)

**Assignments:** DUE by 11 pm pst 9/14 Blog #2 SMELL Test

## Week 5: Visual Literacy

### Learning Objectives:

- Why do certain images have power; how do they become iconic; why do they spread or go viral; how are they appropriated for different uses and practices?
- We will explore how meaning is visually constructed in an age of traditional photography as well as an age of remix and reuse.

### Topics and Readings:

#### 9/15:

- Robert Harriman and John Louis Lucaites, “The Borders of the Genre: Migrant Mother and Times Square Kiss” (excerpt)
- Renee Hobbs, Create to Learn, “Images” (p. 139-153)

#### 9/17:

- Ryan Milner, “The Fundamentals of Memetic Participation”
- Renee Hobbs, Create to Learn, “Creating Ideas” (pp. 69-86)
- Tracy Ma, “[Why Protest Tactics Spread Like Memes](#)” The New York Times, July 31, 2020.
- Neal Rothschild, Sara Fischer, “[Instagram morphs into an information powerhouse](#)” Axios, August, 1, 2020

### Lab Sections:

**Lab Topics:** Making meaning through manipulation; incorporating the recognizable, iconic, conventional with intention (layering, mixing, etc.)

#### Assignments:

- DUE IN LAB - WordPress check-in during lab section
- DUE IN LAB - Photo manipulation rough draft during lab section

### Week 6: Data Literacy – Understanding the Pandemic

### Learning Objectives:

- How do we read and communicate with data?
- We will explore how data design and visualization are important to strategic communication and a key part of visual literacy.
- What is data journalism and how should we evaluate it? Does it provide a sound basis for conveying “truth”?
- How do these principles and practices manifest in the public communication regarding COVID-19?

### Topics and Readings:

#### 9/22:

- Maria Popova, “How to Be An Educated Consumer of Infographics” Brainpickings 10/8/13

- Renee Hobbs, Create to Learn, “Infographics and Data Visualization” (155-168)
- Excerpts from W.E.B. DuBois’s Data Portraits Visualizing Black America: The Color Line at the Turn of the Century

**9/24:**

- Timothy Graham, et al, “[Like a virus: The coordinated spread of coronavirus disinformation.](#)” The Australia Institute Centre for Responsible Technology, May 2020.
- Amelia Thomson-DeVeaux, “[Republicans And Democrats See COVID-19 Very Differently. Is That Making People Sick?](#)” FiveThirtyEight, July 23,2020.

**Lab Sections:**

**Lab Topics:** Photo manipulation rough draft during lab section

**Assignments:**

- DUE by 11 pm 9/28 - DIY #1: image manipulation

## **Week 7: Representation and Witnessing as News and Information**

**Learning Objectives:**

- What does it mean to witness?
- How is witnessing an act of representation?
- How does witnessing make visible what is often otherwise invisible or unheard?
- How can witness testimony be used/abused?
- How can witnessing provide faithful documentation of history and how can it betray us?
- How do facets of our identity, including gender, race, class, and sexuality get constructed by and impact the way we interpret media, tell stories, and understand ourselves and others?

**Topics and Readings:**

**9/29:**

- Allissa V. Richardson, “Bearing Witness While Black: Theorizing African American mobile journalism after Ferguson.” Digital Journalism, 07 Jul 2016, Pages 673-698.
- Zoe Corbyn, “[Interview - Allissa Richardson: 'It's telling that we're OK with showing black people dying'](#)” The Guardian, August 16, 2020.
- Renee Hobbs, Create to Learn, “Reflecting and Taking Action: Use the Power of Information and Expression to Make a Difference” (87-101)

**10/1:**

- Travis L. Dixon, Kristopher R. Weeks, and Marisa A. Smith, “Media Constructions of Culture, Race, and Ethnicity.” Oxford Research Encyclopedia, May 2019 DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.502
- Sarah Banet-Weiser, “Popular Feminism: #MeToo” AND “Popular Feminism: Structural Rage” LARB 1/27/18, 3/30/18

**Lab Sections:**

**Lab Topics:** Using data to think about representation and normalized ideas (mapping/wire framing information, design and readability, telling a story and keeping it simple). WP check-in/answering partner activity. Examples of Remix DIY

**Assignments** - ASSIGNED - DIY #2 Video/Audio Remix or PSA

## **Week 8: Media Literacy and Political Process**

### **Learning Objectives:**

- How are emerging news and information norms influencing political participation?
- What are the global dimensions of transitions?
- What are the short-term and long-term concerns for current media literacy trends?
- How do changing notions of media literacy inform the electoral process?

### **Topics and Readings:**

**10/6**

- Kavanagh, Jennifer, et al, Truth Decay, p. 191-222 (Chapter 5)
- Stephen Castle, "[Five Takeaways From the Report on Russia's Interference in Britain.](#)" The New York Times, July 21, 2020.

**10/8:**

- Elaine Kamarck, "[Election night? Think again—election month might be more like it.](#)" The Brookings Institution, August 4, 2020.
- David Grahan, "[The 'Blue Shift' Will Decide the Election.](#)" The Atlantic, August 10, 2020.

### **Lab Sections:**

**Lab Topics:** Media Editing Basics—what's the story? how does editing help storytelling? How can editing shape and/or manipulate meaning?

**Assignments:** DUE IN LAB: - DIY #2 topic check in during lab

## **Week 9: The Economic Models of News and Media**

### **Learning Objectives:**

- What economic imperatives play a role in the production and distribution of media and news?
- This week will offer a broad overview of industries and conglomerates and their infrastructures as a way to understand the impact they have on what we have access to and how content comes to us.
- How does the shape of the business dictate the content we receive?
- How do these trends manifest as local and national levels?

**10/13:**

- Philip Napoli, “Media Economics and the Study of Media Industries”
- Derek Thompson, Interview with Tim Wu, “Does Advertising Ruin Everything?” The Atlantic, October 19, 2016.
- Mark Honigsbaum, “[How Does Anything Go Viral?](#)” The New York Times, July 9, 2020

**10/15**

- The Knight Foundation, “[Putting a Price Tag on Local News,](#)” 2019.
- Felix Salmom, “Jonah Peretti Goes Long,” Matter.

**Lab Sections:**

**Lab Topics:** Finding good sources - weaving found footage. Pre-production checklist

**Assignments:** DUE IN LAB: DIY #2 topic check in during lab

**Week 10: Platform Literacy****Learning Objectives:**

- How is media and information distributed and how do we receive it as consumers?
- How do platforms shape the way we see and digest content?
- What power do Facebook, Google, and other platforms have in our daily lives?
- How are these platforms informing different social change around the world?

**10/20:**

- Tarleton Gillespie, “Facebook and YouTube Just Got More Transparent. What Do We See?” Nieman Lab, 5/3/18
- Siva Vaidhyanathan, “Mark Zuckerberg doesn’t understand free speech in the 21st century,” The Guardian.
- Jess Miers, “[A primer on Section 230 and Trump’s executive order.](#)” The Brookings Institution, June 8, 2020

**10/22:**

- Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, “[Russia's Controversial 'Sovereign Internet' Law Comes Into Force.](#)” November 1, 2019.
- Max Fisher and Amanda Taub, “[How YouTube Radicalized Brazil.](#)” The New York Times, Aug. 11, 2019.
- Svea Windwehr And Jillian C. York, “[Turkey's New Internet Law Is the Worst Version of Germany's NetzDG Yet.](#)” Electronic Frontier Foundation, July 30, 2020.
- Priyanjana Bengani, “[India had its first 'WhatsApp election.' We have a million messages from it.](#)” Columbia Journalism Review, October 16, 2019.

**Lab Section:**

**Lab Topics:** Open critiques

**Assignments:** DUE IN LAB - DIY 2 rough cut (stage 1)

## **Week 11: Algorithmic Literacy**

### **Learning Objectives:**

- What is algorithmic bias and why should we care?
- How do these biases affect us?
- What regulations are most appropriate for internet and media platforms?
- What are the issues and implications of the restrictions on TikTok and WeChat?

### **10/27:**

- Safiya Noble, "Google Has a Striking History of Bias Against Black Girls" Time Magazine 3/26/18
- "10 Things We Should All Demand From Big Tech Right Now"
- Sophie Bishop, "What the Ideal Influencer Looks Like"

### **10/29:**

- Robert Chesney, "[Banning TikTok and WeChat: Another Primer.](#)" Lawfare. August 7, 2020.
- Shane Tews, "[TikTok Will Change the Way We Think About User Data.](#)" The National Interest, August 10, 2020.
- Shirin Ghaffary, "[TikTok clone Instagram Reels is just one of the many times Facebook has copied its competitors.](#)" Vox.com August 5, 2020,
- Rebecca Heilweil, "[Why it matters that TikTok wants to reveal its algorithms.](#)" Vox.com, Jul 29, 2020.

### **Lab Sections:**

**Lab Topics:** Open Open Critiques

**Assignments:** DUE IN LAB - DIY #2 rough draft (stage 2)

## **Week 12: Civic Literacies**

### **Learning Objectives:**

- What is civic media, and what are the avenues for civic engagement, participatory politics, and possibilities for social change in the digital age?
- What tools can we use (old and new) to encourage change and create impact?
- How do notions of free speech inform digital civic literacies?

### **Topics and Readings:**

#### **11/3:**

- Sangita Shrestova & Henry Jenkins, "From Voice to Influence: An Introduction"
- Henry Jenkins interview with DC Vito and Emily Long, "Break the Election: How To Learn Media Literacy By Remixing Political Advertisements" and Part 2

**11/5:**

- Hannah Giorgis, "[A Deeply Provincial View of Free Speech.](#)" The Atlantic, July 23, 2020.
- Mike Ananny, "[Probably Speech, Maybe Free: Toward a Probabilistic Understanding of Online Expression and Platform Governance.](#)" Knight First Amendment Institute, August 21, 2019.
- Ken White, "[Don't Use These Free Speech Arguments Ever Again.](#)" The Atlantic, August 22, 2019.

**Lab Sections:**

Lab Topics: Exports, write up, citing sources

**Assignments:** DIY #2 Audio/Video Remix Vox Pop, or PSA

**Week 13: The Technologies of Media Literacy****Learning Objectives:**

- How do technologies play a dual role as tools of convenience and efficiency as well as conduits for in surveillance and tracking of our everyday experiences (especially in the age of wearables)?
- How are our participation and actions as consumers and producers monitored?
- What are the future trends for these technologies?

**Topics and Readings:****11/10:**

- Dorian Lynskey, "Alexa, Are You Invading My Privacy?" The Guardian 10/9/19
- Drew Harwell, "Colleges Are Turning Students' Phones Into Surveillance Machines, Tracking the Locations of Hundreds of Thousands" Washington Post, 12/24/19
- Steven Feldstein and David Wong, "[New Technologies, New Problems – Troubling Surveillance Trends in America.](#)" Just Security, August 6, 2020.

**11/12:**

- Warzel and Thompson, "How Your Phone Betrays Democracy," New York Times, Dec. 21, 2019.
- Ross Anderson, "[China Is the First Surveillance Superpower](#)" The Atlantic, September 2020.

**Lab Sections:**

**Lab Topics:** Final course summary and exam review

**Assignments:** DUE 11/13 by 11 pm - WP due

Final Exam Scheduled– Tuesday November 17 from 2-4 pm.

## **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](https://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### **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](https://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) 740-935 (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](https://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](https://dsp.usc.edu)



Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710 [uscса.usc.edu](http://uscса.usc.edu)*

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101 [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)*

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)*

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)*

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberг.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.