



## **JOUR 206: Reporting and Writing Practicum (Community Reporting)**

### **1 Unit**

**Spring 2021 — Wednesdays**

**8-11:50 a.m./11 a.m.-2:50 p.m./2-5:50 p.m.**

**Sections:** 21013/21015/21017

**Location:** Online

**Instructor:** Henry Fuhrmann

**Office:** Online

**Office Hours:** By appointment

### **Course Description**

Welcome to JOUR 206 Reporting and Writing Practicum (Community Reporting.) This course gives journalism majors hands-on experience in writing digital news for publication on [uscannenbergmedia.com](http://uscannenbergmedia.com). During this weekly lab, students work four consecutive hours for the USC and/or South Los Angeles desks of Annenberg Media, reporting, writing, and distributing stories assigned by student editors with guidance from experienced faculty and coaches. This course runs concurrently with JOUR 207 Reporting and Writing I and JOUR 307 Reporting and Writing II. The practicum is credit/no-credit.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

- Identify elements that make a story newsworthy for different audiences
- Identify and use diverse sources in news stories
- Research and verify information for use in news stories on digital platforms and social media
- Write news briefs and stories on deadline and in accordance with professional industry standards under the guidance of student editors and faculty and in collaboration with other student reporters and editors
- Create content for digital and social platforms on deadline and in accordance with professional industry standards and in collaboration with other student reporters and editors
- Apply principles of ethics in real-life news situations

**Concurrent Enrollment:** JOUR 207 Reporting and Writing I or JOUR 307 Reporting and Writing II

### **Description and Assessment of Assignments**

This class is about hands-on learning. It is designed to give you practical experience in a newsroom. The work you do in your lab shifts will be published on [uscannenbergmedia.com](http://uscannenbergmedia.com) and Annenberg Media social media platforms. Class work will consist of on-the-job training and experience that mirrors the real world.

At the start of the semester, students will participate in mandatory newsroom training. Beginning in week three or four, students will act as general assignment reporters in an active newsroom.

Student duties include:

- Generating story ideas
- Finding and maintaining source lists
- Conducting research and interviews
- Writing news briefs, social media posts and longer stories
- Writing handoff notes for other reporters and editors summarizing their progress on stories

Students will work under the guidance of student editors and with the support of faculty and coaches. Every week, you should arrive with your own story ideas. Instructors will discuss current stories and review the previous week's work.

In order to receive credit for your lab shift, you will need to attend all of your shifts, spend the full four hours focusing your energy and attention on your assigned newsroom tasks and complete a shift handoff note before you leave. Please check in with your instructor and student editors before you complete your shift.

## Course Notes and Policies

The practicum is credit/no-credit.

This semester, we will work from a virtual newsroom via Zoom meetings and extensive communication through Slack. Please stay engaged while on the Zoom calls. You don't need to have your camera on all the time, but please be respectful and attentive during the virtual newsroom meetings, in your comments and in chat. You'll need to check your USC email and the Annenberg Media Slack account regularly to keep up with newsroom communication.

We expect you to do much of your reporting using your phone and computer to prioritize safety and safeguard the common good. All of it should follow the public health guidelines in your area.

Please arrive on time, aware of the day's news and prepared to give your full attention to your newsroom duties. Please don't schedule or conduct interviews or work on assignments for other classes during your lab shift.

The student-led news outlets that make up Annenberg Media are counting on you. If you must miss a shift because of documented illness or emergency, please let your instructor and student editors know via the newsroom Slack channel. You'll need to make up the session within two weeks (religious holidays are exempt, as are some other limited circumstances.) If you miss any sessions at the beginning of the semester, please reach out to your instructor to make them up as soon as possible so you are up to speed on everything you will need to operate successfully in the newsroom. If you're having difficulty fulfilling your shifts at any time or for any reason, please reach out to your instructor for support.

Learning how to become a good journalist means understanding and questioning your own biases and assumptions and considering the "fault lines" present in most stories. As a reporter, you will strive for a diverse range of sources and voices in your stories, and your instructors will help support those values.

This lab shift involves robust discussion about story ideas and peer review and editing. We are committed to a culture of respect at Annenberg Media. If you have concerns about interactions with student editors, reporters, or faculty, or want to express other concerns about the Media Center, you can use [this form](#) to provide anonymous feedback. It will be reviewed by the Director of the Media Center. If you prefer to raise issues to others at Annenberg who are NOT affiliated with the Media Center, you can fill out [this form](#).

## Required Readings, Equipment and Supplementary Materials

There are no required textbooks in this class, but please bookmark the following Media Center guides:

- [USC Annenberg Media Resources](#) — links to schedules, tools, guidelines, etc.
- [Legal Guide](#) — writing about crime, minors, courts. Using anonymous sources.
- [Guide to Thoughtful Language](#) — writing about age, disability, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality. Cautions on using obscenities, profanities, vulgarities.
- [11 Style Rules to Know Now](#): Review of AP style. Using Amy the Stylebot in Slack.
- [Media Center Ethics Guidelines](#) — a guide to practices and the workplace environment.
- [Resources and Links: Pitching and Researching Stories](#) — writing a solid pitch, working with polls, tips for fact checking and verification, USC contact and expert lists.

All USC students have access to the AP stylebook via the USC library.  
([https://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://www.apstylebook.com/usc\\_edu/](https://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://www.apstylebook.com/usc_edu/)) and you can also use Amy the Stylebot in the Annenberg Media Slack account for AP style questions.

Annenberg Media uses AP style in assignments, including when writing about race and ethnicity. The new AP style guidelines include capitalizing Black and deleting the hyphen in terms such as Asian American. Please consult the Annenberg Media Guide to Thoughtful Language for more discussion on accurate and respectful language.

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.

Annenberg is committed to every student's success. There are multiple resources available to assist students who are having issues with equipment or technology that limit their ability to participate fully in class. Please reach out to your instructor and/or advisor if this is the case. We can help connect you with resources.

### Grading Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Weekly handoff notes (15)	90%
Participation	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Grading Standards

This is a credit/no credit course. You will not receive a letter grade for this class, but will be assessed on your effort and output. The aim is to produce publishable work, which could help you if you are seeking a job in a newsroom or as a student manager with Annenberg Media in subsequent semesters. You cannot pass this class without doing the hands-on work.

### Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/15/2021 — 4/30/2021)

**Friday, February 5:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, February 5:** Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

**Tuesday, February 9:** Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001

**Friday, March 5:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript for Session 001. 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 3 (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, March 5:** Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

**Friday, April 9:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

**Important note to students:** *Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change.*

Important: Students are required to attend all shifts beginning the first week of classes. Many workshops will be presented during your shift; some will require you to view a recorded presentation BEFORE you arrive.

The following days in the Spring 2021 semester have been designated as Wellness Days for students: Friday, March 12, Tuesday, March 23, Wednesday, April 7, Thursday, April 22, and Friday, April 30. On Wellness Day, there will be no classes and no classwork expected of students.

### **Week 1—Jan. 20**

Newsroom training as advised.

### **Week 2 — Jan. 27**

Newsroom training as advised.

### **Week 3 — Feb. 3**

Newsroom training as advised.

### **Week 4 — Feb. 10**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

### **Week 5 — Feb. 17**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

### **Week 6 — Feb. 24**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

### **Week 7 — March 3**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

### **Week 8 — March 10**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

### **Week 9 — March 17**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

### **Week 10 — March 24**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

### **Week 11 — March 31**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

### **Week 12 — April 7**

No lab session. WELLNESS DAY

### **Week 13 — April 14**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

### **Week 14 — April 21**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

## **Week 15 — April 28**

Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised.

Last week of newsroom production. There is no final for this class, but there will be a wrap party on Monday, May 3.

## **Communication**

Please contact me by Slack when possible. Otherwise, you may contact me by email. I'll return your messages within 24 hours.

## **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).

#### *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](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) 740-9355(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](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*

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

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

*USC Department of Public Safety — UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 — 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenbergsuccessfund.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

*Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]*

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally "breaking bread" over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

**About Your Instructor**

Henry Fuhrmann joined USC Annenberg as an adjunct instructor in fall 2016. He has taught graduate students in the summer immersion session and in the spring capstone course. As a writing coach in the Media Center, he advises on matters of story structure, copy editing, grammar, usage, fact checking and taste. Before arriving at USC, Fuhrmann worked for 25 years as an editor at the Los Angeles Times, retiring in 2015 as assistant managing editor for the copy desks and standards. He led the first group of editors assigned to serve the paper's website, latimes.com, and helped develop newsroom guidelines for publishing online. Before entering the news business, Fuhrmann studied engineering at Caltech and UCLA and worked as a science writer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He holds two degrees in journalism: a B.A. from Cal State Los Angeles and an M.S. from Columbia University. He serves on the executive committee of ACES: The Society for Editing and the national board of directors of the Asian American Journalists Association. Fuhrmann was born in Japan and grew up in Ventura County.