



**JOUR 210x: Basics of News Production for
Non-Majors
2 Units**

Spring 2021 – Six hours per week

Section: 21072R

Location: Online

Instructor: Christina Bellantoni

Course Description

This course introduces non-journalism majors to broadcast, radio and reporting and writing online by putting students to work as part of the multiplatform newsroom known as Annenberg Media. The student-led news outlet has live television and radio broadcasts, podcasting, newsletters and coverage of the campus, the surrounding community and the world around us online and on social media. Normally this course would be based out of the Annenberg Media Center in Wallis Annenberg Hall, but all work can be done remotely if the campus has not reopened. Students in this course will still have the opportunity to experience and observe the structure and functions of editorial and production teams for television, radio, or digital journalism, elements of the news production cycle. Students will be required to work for six hours assigned to part of the newsroom each week. There is no formal lecture time for the course. Students will either watch or participate in a series of online trainings depending on the area of the newsroom they select over the first few weeks of the semester. Students will be actively participating in online news meetings and producing works of journalism no later than week 5 of the semester. The course is credit/no credit.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Identify and use diverse sources in news stories
- Apply newsroom ethics and standards in a working newsroom
- Research, report and write news stories under deadline in a collaborative news environment for the Annenberg Media student news outlets website, uscannenbergmedia.com, AND/OR Annenberg Media social media platforms
- Record, edit and write audio or video news stories for Annenberg Media student news outlets radio or television broadcasts and/or social media platforms

Each of these learning outcomes will be evaluated through regular feedback sessions with your instructor. You should keep them in mind as you approach any work done in the newsroom.

Course Notes

Just as the semester begins, students must meet with the instructor to be officially onboarded into the Media Center systems. During that meeting, students will choose an area of the newsroom to work in and a shift day(s) and time(s). The instructor will provide students with a list of required workshops and a schedule for when those workshops will be held. Some will be offered in Week 1 but most will be offered or available for video viewing during the hours of the assigned shift in weeks 2 and 3.

Your credit/no credit grade will be determined by your attendance and effort in newsroom production. The instructor will hold individual meetings with students over the course of the semester. She also will ask students to check in via Slack when students begin each weekly shift and share their work.

Some videos and slideshows will be posted to Blackboard, but the best place to review how-to documents and see trainings is <http://resources.uscannenbergmedia.com>.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

If you do not already have the Adobe Creative Cloud on your laptop, you will be given access to it for a download for Annenberg Media use. A cell phone that can take video is useful for this course.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Please follow @annenbergmedia on Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and other social channels. You also may sign up for The Rundown weekly newsletter at uscannenbergmedia.com.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Students in this course participate in reporting and writing for uscannenbergmedia.com, production of a daily television and audio content for wide distribution and/or journalism on social media platforms. Class work will consist of on-the-job training and experience that mirrors the real world.

Student duties include:

- Generating and researching story ideas for radio, broadcast and online outlets
- Fulfilling different jobs during the production of radio and television newscasts and frequently updated social and digital platforms
- Participating in the production of news content for digital, broadcast and audio platforms

You must make a commitment to work **SIX HOURS** each week for Annenberg Media. You may split that shift over several days, but six consecutive hours is preferred. You must sign up for the same weekly shift(s) and you will work at the direction of a student leader in charge of your coverage area with support from your instructors. You will not pass this class unless you attend each shift and put effort into fulfilling your newsroom duties as assigned.

You are required to keep up on the news by reading a variety of news outlets, listening to local and national radio or podcasts, and watching local and national news.

You will also be required to participate in newsroom trainings. A complete schedule will be provided for you during Week 1. You will hold regular check-in meetings with your instructor.

Grading Breakdown of Grade

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Daily news production and attendance	80%
Regular check-ins with instructor	10%
Performance	10%
TOTAL	100%

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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Grading Standards

Students will be trained on and are expected to abide by the newsrooms ethical guidelines, best practices and coverage rules at all times. Maintaining professionalism and courtesy will be of utmost importance. Should any problems arise within the newsroom's student leadership, students in this course will be expected to raise the issue with the instructors right away.

Should students breach any ethical guidelines, they risk failing the course.

Journalism

All assignments will be edited on a professional basis and you will be judged first on the accuracy, fairness and completeness of your stories. You will then be evaluated for broadcast style, editing, production value, originality and the ability to meet deadlines.

Grading Timeline

Students are required to work from Week 1 through the last day of classes. There will be no final exam, so the instructors will provide feedback over the course of the semester via regular check-ins.

Assignment Submission Policy

You will work within the Annenberg Media systems to submit your work. In many cases, that will be via Trello, Slack and Google Docs (with edit access open to anyone with a USC email).

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/15/2021 – 4/30/2021; Final Exam Period: 5/5-12/2021)

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 three (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

If your shift takes places on a Wellness Day, you are NOT expected to work that day in the newsroom. The Wellness Days, indicated on the schedule below, are for you to unplug and relax.

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings/Preparation	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 Dates: 1/15-1/21	Students must meet with instructor for office hours during their chosen six-hour shift to finalize the newsroom area where they wish to work and receive the training schedule.	Instructor will email a signup link to schedule the meeting.	[MLK Day: Monday, January 18]
Week 2 Dates: 1/22-1/28	Students must attend mandatory workshops or watch videos as advised.		
Week 3 Dates: 1/29-2/4	Students must attend mandatory workshops or watch videos as advised.		
Week 4 Dates: 2/5-2/11	Students can begin producing works of journalism during their six-hour shift.		
Week 5 Dates: 2/12-2/18	Students will check in with instructors via office hours. Students will all be producing journalism during their six-hour shift.		[President's Day: Monday, February 15]
Week 6 Dates: 2/19-2/25	Students continue to produce journalism during their six-hour shift.		
Week 7 Dates: 2/26-3/4	Students continue to produce journalism during their six-hour shift.		
Week 8 Dates: 3/5-3/11	Students will check in with instructor via office hours and continue to produce journalism during their six-hour shift.		
Week 9 Dates: 3/12-3/18	Students continue to produce journalism during their six-hour shift.		[Wellness Day: Friday, March 12 – no classes]

Week 10 Dates: 3/19-3/25	Students continue to produce journalism during their six-hour shift.		[Wellness Day: Tuesday, March 23 – no classes]
Week 11 Dates: 3/26-4/1	Students continue to produce journalism during their six-hour shift.		
Week 12 Dates: 4/2-4/8	Students continue to produce journalism during their six-hour shift. Students will schedule a final office hours check-in with their instructor.		[Wellness Day: Wednesday, April 7 – no classes]
Week 13 Dates: 4/9-4/15	Students continue to produce journalism during their six-hour shift.		
Week 14 Dates: 4/16-4/22	Students continue to produce journalism during their six-hour shift.		[Wellness Day: Thursday, April 22 – no classes]
Week 15 Dates: 4/23-4/29	Students will work their final six-hour shift this week and also be given time to complete the course evaluation.		
FINAL EXAM PERIOD Dates: 5/5-5/12	Annenberg Media Wrap Party to celebrate the end of the semester. Save the date: 6-8 p.m. on Monday, May 3.		There is no final exam for this course. <i>Note: Students are encouraged to stay involved with Annenberg Media beyond this course. Make sure to speak with your instructor or a student leader about how to remain part of the newsroom.</i>

Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

You will be expected to adhere to the ethical standards of the newsroom and the policies found on our [Resources site](#). You also must communicate in Slack, which you should have loaded onto your phone and laptop with proper notifications enabled for your shift in the newsroom. You'll be given training on how to do so.

Communication

While the university remains doing remote instruction, I will be available to meet with you remotely. Please start with Slack and if you can't reach me please email to schedule office hours.

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.symplcity.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 Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

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

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

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

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

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

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

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

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

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]

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

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a

meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

About Your Instructor

Christina Bellantoni is a professor of professional practice and the director of the Annenberg Media Center. She joined Annenberg in August 2018 after serving as a member of the masthead at the Los Angeles Times for three years. Over her 20 years in journalism, Bellantoni worked as a reporter and editor, behind the camera as a producer and in front of it as an analyst on national television. She has covered local, state and federal government, along with four presidential campaigns and the White House.

She spent 12 years as a journalist in Washington, D.C. She served as editor-in-chief of the Capitol Hill newspaper Roll Call until moving to Los Angeles in 2015. Before taking over Roll Call, Bellantoni was the political editor at the PBS NewsHour. She also covered politics at Talking Points Memo and the Washington Times. Before moving to D.C., she worked at three newspapers in the Bay Area.