



JOUR 307: Reporting and Writing II

3 Units

Spring 2021 – Tuesdays – 9-11:30 a.m.

Section: 21123D

Location: Online & ANN 308

Instructors: Alan Abrahamson & Mary Harris

Office: Online

Office Hours: Flexible. Call or text and we will work it out.

Contact Info:

Course Description

(Continuation of JOUR 207 - Reporting and Writing I)

In this semester, you will research, report, write and produce different types of stories across different platforms, including radio and television.

Students will develop news judgment, and discuss ethics, and the role of accurate, relevant and thorough journalism in a diverse world.

Students will continue to develop strong fundamental skills, and over the course of the semester work towards more in-depth storytelling.

Student Learning Outcomes

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

Apply professional standards of news judgment and ethics to real-life situations.

Understand the difference between subject matter and a story pitch.

Understand how a story develops.

Understanding sources - and how to maximize public information and engage responsibly with social media.

Report, write and revise news stories, including features and profiles, that are close to professional standards for digital and print platforms.

Report, write, shoot and edit video and audio news stories for radio and television that are close to professional standards for digital and broadcast platforms.

Use diverse sources to create accurate, relevant news stories.

Use language around race, ethnicity, ability, gender, age, sexuality and gender identity, and socioeconomic status with precision in news stories.

Concurrent Enrollment: JOUR 206, Media Center Practicum

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Your assignments are designed to help you develop as a writer, reporter and emerging journalist.

Assignments, which increase in complexity as the semester progresses. You should expect to turn in story drafts and revise these based on instructor feedback.

Pitches will need to be focused (advancing/developing the story and setting up an expectation for the story.)

The draft and should reflect the scope of information you gathered and voices you are including. You will learn that re-writing is part of the process. What is learned here will inform your writing in general - and give you insight into your particular style.

The final submission should reflect the rewrites and tweaks from the draft process. This should be publishable.

Participation is a critical part of this class. Journalism requires us to explore ideas and consider a range of perspectives. There will be robust conversations about news, and the classwork. Your participation is critical to your growth - and your perspective is critical to your classmates.

Class time will include weekly conversations about news (stories -ethics and process) - focused lessons on fundamental journalism skills and sharing of student class work. Journalism in the real world is a team sport and we will work that way in class.

Course Notes and Policies

This course will be held via Zoom. 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.

It's easier to communicate when we can see one another's faces, so your camera should be on for the vast majority of class. Please let us know if that is an issue for you. We will use class time to learn actively, and we ask that you make every effort to stay focused and attentive during class. Sitting or standing are both appropriate during class. Feel free to eat or drink (remember to mute your audio,) turn your camera off occasionally as needed as a courtesy to your classmates or adopt other non-distracting tactics to help you stay present during our class periods.

This class involves robust discussion, in-class assignments and peer review and editing. We believe we can all learn from each other. It's our intention to foster a culture of respect, which includes pronouncing your name correctly and using your chosen pronouns. Please speak up if that's not happening. We will discuss class norms in more detail during the first class session. If you feel the classroom norms are not being followed by your instructors or classmates, you can use this [form](#) to provide anonymous feedback.

Communication is key in class, and in journalism. Please reach out with any concerns you have about class, content, or the process.

The best way to reach Alan and Mary is through email. If you have a more time sensitive issue text, please text.

We expect you to turn your assignments in on time. Deadlines are an absolute part of being a journalist. Developing respect for them is essential to your success. Our deadlines are built around being able to discuss your work in class, while the assignment is still forefront in your mind. The experience of getting the work done is as important as the content of it, and we will talk about both. Process is as important as substance.

We'll deduct points for missing deadlines, so please reach out early and often if you're having trouble meeting those deadlines.

During the pitch and draft process you will submit work via e-mail and YouTube links.

All final (graded) submissions will need to be posted to Blackboard and Exchange.

Please post your text stories and video and audio scripts to Blackboard in a Word document. Use the template provided for audio/video scripts, a double column format with the narration and sound appearing on the right and visuals on the left. Please write, word for word, everything the reporter and interview subjects say in your audio/video script.

Video stories should be submitted to Xchange. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to do that: <http://www.annenbergdl.org/tutorials/xchange-student/>. If you need help with editing or Xchange, you can visit the MC Help desk during regular business hours at <https://usc.zoom.us/my/mcvideohelp>

Shooting video is challenging during a pandemic. There may be times you can use video shot by someone else for your video stories, but you should discuss that with us in advance. You should also let us know if you're reporting on the same topic for more than one class.

Because this course is about developing your skills as a professional journalist, we're expecting you to interview sources outside of your friends and family. If there are good reasons to include them in your story (and that's definitely possible with the current conditions,) please talk to us about this in advance.

Required Readings, Equipment and Supplementary Materials

We'll expect you to use AP style in all of your assignments. All USC students have access to the AP stylebook via the USC library at this link:

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.

Please note there are new AP style guidelines about race and ethnicity which include capitalizing Black and deleting the hyphen in Asian American. The NLGJA Stylebook on LGBTQ Terminology includes more detailed information about accurate coverage of LGBTQ people. There are other useful style guides on Blackboard.

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 for students having issues with equipment or technology that limit their ability to participate fully in class. Please reach out to one of us and/or your advisor so we can help connect you with these resources.

News Consumption and Knowledge of Current Events

As journalists, you should keep up with what is happening on campus, in the Los Angeles area, in the United States and around the world. You have access to subscriptions via USC to The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times. You should read them regularly, as well as check other news sources, including the Daily Trojan and Annenbergmedia.com, listen to NPR and news radio, watch local and national television news, read news email newsletters and push alerts and follow news organizations on social media.

Every class will begin with a discussion on current events, your observations on stories that were well done, or not.

How your Final Grade is Determined

- | | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 1. Homework | 10% |
| 2. Participation - | 15% |
| 3. Quizzes - | 15% |
| 4. Data Story | 15% |
| 5. Profile - | 20% |
| 6. Feature FINAL - | 25% |

Data Story -

How can you take a "statistic" and make it relevant?

Find a piece of data that interests you. Explain why it is important, the conditions that led to that point and the IMPACT it will have on people.

Text - 750 words

Broadcast - 1 min - VOX POP (radio)

Pitch Feb 9, 2021
 Draft - Feb 23, 2021
 Final Submission - March 2

Profile Story

A profile goes beyond someone's resume. Don't just tell us what they have done - help us UNDERSTAND them. What have they overcome to be who they are? How have they changed?

Text - 1000 words

Broadcast - 1:45-2:00 TRT

Pitch - March 9, 2021

Draft - March 30, 2021

Final Submission - April 6, 2021

FINAL - Feature

This should be your most in-depth and sophisticated work of the semester and reflect the skills you have learned.

Text - 1250 words

Broadcast - 2:00-2:15 TRT

Pitch - April 13, 2021

Draft - April 27, 2021

Final Submission - May 11, 2021

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Week 1 - Jan. 19, 2021 -

Class introductions

Syllabus review

Expectations - process and resources.

What is news? Where are you getting news from?

HW - Write ups on three interesting news stories.

Read - <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/19/style/loretta-ross-smith-college-cancel-culture.html>

Week 2 - Jan. 26, 2021 -

News quiz.

Discussion on "Cancel culture" (NYT article)

How news stories develop - and how that leads to better pitches.

What is needed for a solid pitch?

Importance of sources - and how many do you need?

How to maximize public information - and social media?

Review newsroom terminology

HW - Write up three pitches

Week 3 - Feb. 2, 2021 -

Pitch session using homework ideas.

Nut grafs

Broadcast writing - and how to strategize strong VOs

Discussion on making news stories relevant.

HW - Write three nut grafs and three VOs with provided materials

Data Story Pitch

Week 4 - Feb. 9, 2021 -

Data Story Pitch due - be prepared to pitch in class.

VOX Pop review -

Maximizing quotes and identifying SOTS

HW - Writing SOTVOs using provided materials

Week 5 - Feb. 16, 2021 -

Interview techniques -

HW - Understanding your interview style. Prepare for an interview. Do research on your subject. Write up questions. Record interview. LOG ENTIRE interview. Review your interview. What felt good? What did you miss? What will you do different next time? (Submit audio)

Week 6 - Feb. 23, 2021

Data Story Draft Due

What makes for a strong profile piece?

The relationship between Twitter and print/broadcast.

Week 7 - March 2, 2021

Data Story FINAL Submissions DUE

How to build a better story/ package - (Information - Emotion - Context)

Week 8 - March 9, 2021

News quiz
 Visual storytelling - (varying shots - sequencing- reveals - natural sound)
 Using your own video versus licensed video.
 What is “fair use?”
 User generated content.
 Profile Pitch Due - be prepared to pitch in class.

Week 9 - March 16, 2021 -

Individual evaluations.
 Students meet with Alan and Mary to discuss their progress, set some goals and discuss how to maximize the remainder of the semester.

Week 10 - March 23, 2021 -

Wellness Week - no class

Week 11 - March 30, 2021

Covering crisis and trauma.
 Differences between traditional broadcast packages and social videos.
 Profile Draft Due

Week 12 - April 6, 2021

Profile FINAL Submissions Due

Week 13 - April 13, 2021

Feature Story Pitch Due - be prepared to pitch in class.

Week 14 - April 20, 2021

News quiz.

Week 15 - April 27, 2021

Feature story drafts due.

FINAL - MAY 11, 2021, 8-10 a.m.

Feature Story FINAL SUBMISSIONS due.

***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.*

CLASSES END – April 30

STUDY DAYS – May 1 - 4

FINALS – May 5 - 12

COMMENCEMENT – May 1

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

Grading Standards

Journalism

Our curriculum is structured to prepare students to be successful in a professional news organization with the highest standards. Students will be evaluated first on the accuracy, fairness and completeness of their stories. They will also be evaluated for a story's writing style, editing or structure, layout or visual elements (when appropriate), newsworthiness, use of diverse sources and ability to meet deadlines. All stories should be written in AP style.

"A" stories are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor copyediting (i.e., they would be aired or published). Video work must also be shot and edited creatively, be well paced and include good sound bites and natural sound that add flavor, color or emotion to the story. Sources are varied, diverse and offer a complete view of the topic.

"B" stories require more than minor editing and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission. For video, there may be minor flaws in the composition of some shots or in the editing. Good use of available sound bites is required. Sources are mostly varied, diverse and offer a complete view of the topic.

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

"D" stories require excessive rewriting, have numerous errors and should not have been submitted. Camera work is unsatisfactory or fails to show important elements. Sources are repetitive or incomplete.

"F" stories have failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, are late, have numerous errors or both. Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts.

Any misspelled or mispronounced proper noun will result in an automatic “F” on that assignment. Any factual error will also result in an automatic “F” on the assignment. Accuracy is the first law of journalism. The following are some other circumstances that would warrant a grade of “F” and potential USC/Annenberg disciplinary action:

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

Students are encouraged to submit their work for consideration to Annenberg Media or the Daily Trojan, or pitch it to mainstream media outlets. Visit <http://bit.ly/SubmitAnnenbergMedia> for more information about that submission and review process and email Daily Trojan news editors at dt.city@gmail.com for more on how to pitch your work to the campus newspaper.

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

Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism or public relations class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism’s policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

“Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an ‘F’ on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators.”

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

b. Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

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

USC 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://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 Instructors

Alan Abrahamson is an award-winning sportswriter, best-selling author and in-demand television analyst. In 2010 he launched his own website, 3 Wire Sports (www.3wiresports.com), described in James Patterson and Mark Sullivan’s 2012 best-selling novel “Private Games” as “the world’s best source of information about the [Olympic] Games and the culture that surrounds them.” The Tokyo Games, if they happen, will be his 11th. Alan spent 17 years as a staff writer at the LA Times, nine in news, eight in sports. He is from Dayton, Ohio (not his fault) and is a graduate of the Northwestern journalism school (go Cats!) He also has a law degree (from the same school as Vice President-elect Kamala Harris -- two years ahead of her) and is a member (inactive) of the California State Bar. For more, see www.3wiresports.com/about/

Mary Harris is an award winning journalist with over 25 years experience. In her current role at NBC4 she has field produced major live events like the Vegas Shooting, the Dodgers/Red Sox/Astros World Series and the Rio Olympics. Harris' work as a package producer covers a full spectrum of storytelling - from daily turns on news of the day to in depth multi-part stories and specials. She has picked up 12 L.A. Area EMMY Awards, including eight individual achievement awards for Outstanding News Writer. Harris is equally enthusiastic about her life outside of the newsroom. She founded and runs a volunteer group that provides underwear to L.A.'s immense population of homeless women. She also likes to drink coffee at small cafes around the world.