



## **JOUR 405: Non-Fiction Television**

### **4 Units**

**Spring 2021 – Tuesdays – 9 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.**

**Section:** 21237R

**Location:** Online

**Zoom:** Link will be emailed and also listed on Blackboard

**Instructor: Professor Daniel Birman**

**Office:** ANN 205A or <https://usc.zoom.us/my/danbirman>

**Office Hours:** By appointment via Zoom or telephone

**Contact Info:** [birman@usc.edu](mailto:birman@usc.edu), 818.434.4300 (cell)

**Production Coach: Susy Garciasalas Barkley**

**Office:** ANN 204F or <https://usc.zoom.us/my/impacthelp>

**Office Hours:** By appointment via Zoom or telephone

**Contact Info:** [garciasa@usc.edu](mailto:garciasa@usc.edu), 562.652.6494 (cell)

### **Course Description**

JOUR 405 is a hands-on production course that teaches a methodology for crafting a long-form nonfiction television story. From story conception and pre-production, through production and post-production, students will, by semester's end, be proficient in best practices and how these apply to the evolving trends in the television and documentary industries.

We are now in a golden age of documentary unlike any other time in history. Documentaries have become more important than ever to journalism for the depth they can convey about virtually any subject at any time. Nearly every media platform presents documentaries as critical programming, but there are varying standards by which they are made. This course presents an unabashedly journalistic model that leaves plenty of room for creativity and just great storytelling, but all under the cloak of integrity and fairness.

Producing a long-form story provides an opportunity for in-depth reporting and storytelling that offers viewers greater perspective and insight. The goal of this class is to further develop what you already know about news reporting and apply these skills to a longer story.

The key to success in the class is coming up with ideas that are visual and for which you have access. Story subjects need to be relevant and practical, but they also need to be evergreen. A story about a news event can work as long as the approach takes an in-depth look at a larger problem. Example: If a car company introduces a line of cars that no longer need gasoline to operate – this is a news story. However, if you produce a story about the larger problems associated with our dependence on oil, the story stops being news and becomes intriguing for the technology and the bigger picture behind the news story.

The bulk of the work in documentary centers on creating a feasible idea with interesting characters from concept through completion. Students pitch marketable ideas, do extensive research, identify experts and visual sequences that can help tell the story, write a script, edit, and revise their stories for publication. The class focuses on how to think about a story visually and how to build it using visual sequences within a manageable story arc. Students learn how to shoot with professional cameras, write, and edit for long-form storytelling in ways that will translate to any medium or platform.

Journalistic integrity and values are at the heart of it all. Your finished products should be creative and be able to stand up to the rigors of fairness and credibility. And you should be proud of your work.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Students taking JOUR 405:

- Research ideas that can be produced within a semester
- Pitch a story idea with a specific placement in mind
- Review and analyze current and historical documentaries
- Collect relevant research materials
- Organize content for pre-production planning
- Use advanced shooting and editing techniques
- Understand and shoot visual sequences
- Log and transcribe the material
- Write a producible script
- Edit a nonfiction short program
- Make revisions based on first edit evaluations.

These Learning Outcomes / Objectives define the day-to-day work of long-form nonfiction stories. Every aspect of this form is complex, but equally interesting. Research, experts, actualities, interviews, visuals, sound, music, and graphics – these are the basic elements of a long-form story. The payoff is rewarding for the producer and for the viewer.

As we go through the semester, we'll discuss terminology and application so that when you walk away from this course, you'll have a strong and defensible approach to making important, honest and fair programs.

Keep in mind that you're in control of content that demands some levels of creativity to get people to watch. As you define the story through research and interviews, you'll develop the visual context as well. Your job is to create the content flow (the story) and decide how best to visualize it.

It's not enough to just create informational content though. We're in a highly competitive marketplace that includes digital platforms and broadcast networks and they're all vying for great work. But when you're among thousands of other content creators, what are you going to do to stand above all the rest?

JOUR 405 will teach you how to think about your own story to make it marketable. Digital sites measure hits and retention while networks monitor what audiences do second-by-second... losing an audience in the first moments is a disaster and becomes a problem for the producer.

Through observation (critiquing existing content), organization, and hands-on producing, you'll learn some secrets behind long-form storytelling that will, by extension, help you in your professional career.

**Prerequisite(s):** JOUR 307, JOUR 321

## Course Notes

**Grading** is subjective based on the instructor's overall assessment of the student's application of ideas taught throughout the course, and the student's engagement within the class. Students are expected to be active participants during class, including discussions centering on the application of critical thinking approaches to storytelling. The instructor does not expect technical perfection, rather a clear indication that the student is working toward best possible outcomes. Students are also expected to contact the instructor when confused about course objectives, or if having difficulty meeting the course requirements.

**Attendance:** While we are not allowed to grade for attendance, it is expected that you will attend all classes. Anyone with three or more unexcused absences will be asked to drop the class. Also, students are expected to attend on time. **Online v. Classroom Attendance:** this is an online only class where all classes will be taught virtually. Any person who is unable to attend the classes will need to clear this with the instructor so that special options can be considered. Class sessions will be recorded and posted to Blackboard.

**Adaptations for COVID-19 Pandemic Conditions:** Storytelling approaches will be modified with safe and best practices in mind for students, faculty, staff, and story participants. There is zero tolerance for breach of best practices that will be required depending on guidelines presented by CDC, Federal, State, local government, and policies required by the University.

## Special Note About Diversity and Inclusion

Journalists enjoy a special privilege and responsibility to report on government, business, industry, citizen action, social conditions, science, university work, medicine, entertainment – a wide spectrum of ideas and activities that impact people here and abroad. The students who take this class are expected to be sensitive to diversity on a large scale. Gender, racial, ethnic, religious, financial, social, health, ability, physical, political – these are just some of the areas where diversity matters.

Students are expected to consider diversity as a critical factor when approaching all stories. This means that students are open to varying opinions from people from all backgrounds, which is consistent with the diversity of the world in which we live and work.

The instructor has zero tolerance for any action that would be considered insensitive to another person for who they are, their backgrounds, or expressed opinions. It is this instructor's position that diversity increases perspective, which helps us to report fairly and accurately given diverse views.

And finally, through research, we reach one of the main tenets of journalistic integrity: objectivity coupled with an unbiased selection of the best people and situations for our stories. Inclusion is fundamental and professionals are challenged to look beyond bias in favor of making sure that we are fair and inclusive with our choices.

## Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Because this is an advanced production class, a basic proficiency in video camera use and editing software (Adobe Premiere Pro) is expected. Microsoft Word is also required for completing written assignments.

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

### TEXTBOOKS AS REFERENCES:

Through observation (critiquing existing shows), organization, and hands-on producing, you'll learn the secrets behind long-form storytelling. In addition to the semester's work, the following reading list – available at the bookstore – will give you an even greater understanding of the history behind documentary both as television and as a film model and the work that goes into creating it.

- Barnouw, Erik. *Documentary: A History of the Nonfiction Film*
- Rabiger, Michael. *Directing the Documentary*
- Bernard, Sheila Curran. *Documentary Storytelling: Making Stronger More Dramatic Nonfiction Films.*

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

### CLASS DELIVERABLES:

- **Pitches** need to be typed out, proofread and checked for grammar. You'll research two to three ideas. Each idea must be no longer than one typed paragraph. Email a Word document prior to class. You'll also need to prepare for a verbal pitch in class. You should be able to get to the "So what?" and "Who cares?" elements within the first sentence – the big picture. You'll be graded on your ability to articulate ideas – based on credible facts – and how well prepared you are to answer questions pertaining to the topic.
- **Research** needs include links to information along with a short summary of the article. Book or academic publications must be listed in MLA format, also with a couple of sentences describing the significance of the research. Research is emailed to the instructor prior to class. You should be able to demonstrate an ability to conduct in-depth research with legitimate and reliable sources, like journal articles, feature stories, etc. Wikipedia is not a source. News stories are also not good references. Think big picture – e.g. If you're producing a story about earthquakes in southern California, you need to cite statistics from the USGS or from an academic institution about how many earthquakes happen in the region, how often, etc.
- **The story arc** is to be submitted via email as Microsoft Word documents. You will be graded on presentation of a clear, thought-out narrative and approach to the storytelling based on gathered, or yet-to-be-gathered elements. One story arc per team.
- **Edited sequences** are to be submitted as exported QuickTime files via Xchange. Victor Figueroa, your media production supervisor, will guide you through the technical process in the editing workshop and in his tutorials.
- **Scripts** are to be submitted as Microsoft Word documents via email to the instructor. (Please refer to the Optional Readings and Supplementary Materials section for format.) You will be graded on good visual descriptions in the left column, and how the story flows in the right column. *I will not grade an assignment that deviates from the example provided.*
- The **rough-cut edit** is to be submitted as an exported QuickTime file via Xchange. This is where your documentary starts to take shape. You'll edit based on your script and any associated notes from me. You'll be graded on how well you achieved what you said you were going to do in your script, as well as pacing, storytelling and visual sequences.
- The **fine cut edit** is to be submitted as an exported QuickTime file via Xchange. This is your final product.
- **Final deliverables: Release forms** for all featured persons in your stories are **REQUIRED**. I will not give a final story grade for segments missing release forms. Hard copies are to be turned in upon fine cut delivery. Our required release form is posted to Blackboard and available on the *Impact* website. Please be sure to make extra copies and put them in your camera bag before going on a shoot. *Any missing deliverables will result in no grade for the assignment.* A **conformed script** that reflects your fine cut from beginning to end is required, as well. Please email the Word document to the Impact team at [impact@usc.edu](mailto:impact@usc.edu).

## Grading Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Story Pitch	5%
Research	15%
Story Arc	10%
Edited Sequences (2 x 5%)	10%
Script	15%
Rough Cut	20%
Final Edit & Final Delivery: Release Forms + Conformed Script	25%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Grading Scale

The following is the grade scale that I use to assign letter grades. **It is up to you to keep track of your grades and to make an appointment with me to discuss any concerns you might have.** We will have a mid-course evaluation to let you know where you stand.

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

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.

**“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.

**“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.

**“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.

**“D” stories** require excessive rewriting, have numerous errors and should not have been submitted. Camera work is unsatisfactory or fails to show important elements.

**“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.

## Grading Timeline

All assignments will be graded and delivered via email within a week of its due date.

## Assignment Submission Policy

- A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, unexcused late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.
- B. Written assignments must be submitted as Word documents via email to the instructor per guidelines outlined in the syllabus.
- C. File Names. Each assignment is to be given a file name with the following hierarchical information: 405 Assignment Name Date. **Example: 405 Pitch Dan Birman 8-20-2020**
- D. Video edits must be exported as QuickTime movies and submitted through Xchange. We will provide training on the system during the editing workshops. For technical issues, please contact Victor Figueroa, the Media Center’s Production Supervisor at [vfiguero@usc.edu](mailto:vfiguero@usc.edu).
- E. **Completed projects will be eligible for broadcast on *Impact*, USC Annenberg’s award-winning student-produced newsmagazine series.** *Impact* is also a weekly broadcast on **Spectrum News One**, Sundays 11 a.m., 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., to millions of subscribers. **For more information, please visit:**  
**<http://www.uscannenbergmedia.com/category/watch/impact>**

**About the video shot for this class...** the footage you shoot for this course is the property of the University and the Annenberg School, only to be used by you for your story as an assignment, as part of your thesis project, and in all cases, as a story for possible inclusion on *Impact*. The footage cannot be used for any other purpose – whatsoever – without written permission from Annenberg. You will be entitled to use completed copies of your stories for demonstration purposes and your resume. You may link to the *Impact* site on any website that is specific to you and your job search. The story may not be used for any commercial purpose. Please refer to the Procedures and Guidelines for greater clarification on this policy.

## Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the **Annenberg Digital Lounge** for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s **Information Technology Services** website.

### **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

**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.

Week	
1 01.19.2021	<p><b>INTRODUCTIONS</b></p> <p><b>LECTURE: Understanding Documentary and Long-Form Storytelling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Realms of nonfiction television</li><li>▪ Journalism and integrity as a long-form practice</li><li>▪ Passion and creativity behind the craft</li><li>▪ Taking the timeliness out of newsworthy events</li></ul> <p><b>Pandemic Production</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Status of our industry</li><li>▪ The challenges of production in a fluid environment</li><li>▪ Establishing safe practices to protect yourself and others</li><li>▪ Being mindful of individual limitations and trepidations</li><li>▪ Finding alternative ways to be creative</li></ul> <p><b>HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ USC Intellectual Property Agreement</li><li>▪ Understanding copyright and fair use</li><li>▪ Liability and Production Insurance</li><li>▪ Appearance, Location and Materials release forms</li></ul> <p><b>ASSIGNMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Start brainstorming possible stories to produce.</li><li>- Watch a documentary and <b>write a one-page review</b>, keeping in mind all of the topics discussed in class today. Email Word <b>document</b> to instructor before class.</li></ul>
2 01.26.2021	<p><b>** DUE: DOCUMENTARY REVIEW in Word document format. Email to instructor before class.</b></p> <p><b>LECTURE: Finding the Story and Presenting the Pitch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Crafting viable story ideas for decision-makers: thinking about audience</li><li>▪ Access and feasibility for a successful production</li><li>▪ Considering your own experiences and biases in shaping the story angle</li><li>▪ Objectivity and Context: Keeping an eye on the big picture</li></ul> <p><b>Responsibility in Reporting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What we do as journalists is a <i>privilege</i>, not a right</li><li>▪ Covering issues of gender, race, diversity, etc.</li><li>▪ Challenging your own biases and assumptions to achieve a greater understanding</li><li>▪ Research as the most powerful and informative tool</li></ul> <p><b>ASSIGNMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Research <b>two to three</b> ideas (one main, up to two as backup) for a documentary project.</li><li>- Write single-paragraph pitches for each. Email Word <b>document</b> to instructor by next class.</li><li>- Prepare to present verbal one-minute pitches for next class.</li></ul>



**Week****3**

02.02.2021

**\*\* DUE: STORY PITCHES in Word document format. Email to instructor before class.****PITCH SESSION***In-class feedback. Instructor will email notes and grades.***LECTURE: The Power of Research in Long-Form Storytelling**

- A deeper dive: Not taking things at face value
- Research methodologies: Finding credible sources
- Statistics, accuracy of information and thinking critically
- The importance of being organized
- The Research Bibliography: Organized by topic, with links, descriptions and relevant data in MLA format

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Begin in-depth research and compiling sources for your bibliography. Due next week.
- Begin gaining access to locations, characters and experts.

**4**

02.09.2021

**\*\* DUE: RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY in Word document format. Email to instructor before class.****LECTURE: Pre-Production**

- Deconstructing the elements: people, locations, actualities, topics & questions
- Imagining the final documentary
- The Pre-Interview: deciding what's realistic for an interview in the pandemic environment
- Clearly representing your project and your intent to your subjects
- Things your subject can do to help you
- Archival sources as a supplement to what you can't film

**Crafting the Story Arc**

- Using research and pre-interviews to focus your story angle
- Identifying main elements in your story and finding a story structure
- Translating the story arc into a strategic production plan. Notate your story arc with tentative production dates and objectives for each shoot.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

- **FOR NEXT WEEK:** You will be receiving the Sony FS-5 kit and your pre-assigned hard drive from the Equipment Room. Read the associated shooting guidelines, which will be emailed to you. *Please have the equipment ready in your space for the in-class workshop next week.*
- Begin preparing a story arc in outline format via Microsoft Word, as discussed in class. Due in two weeks.

**5**

02.16.2021

**LECTURE: Visual Literacy**

- Thinking visually: positioning pictures and sounds
- Going beyond the "see and say" mentality
- Parallel story construction
- Utilizing available tools and resources to bring a creative vision to life
- Maintaining journalistic integrity and accuracy throughout the process

## Week

**6**  
02.23.2021

### **Advanced Camera Workshop – Part 1: Introduction to the Sony FS-5**

- Cinematography terms and techniques
- Navigating the FS-5: buttons, settings, manual operation
- Audio basics
- The interview: Setup and techniques for long-form television

#### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- **Finish your story arc** for your approved project. Email the Word document to the instructor before next class.
- Practice using the Sony FS-5.
- Begin scheduling shoots. Conduct pre-interviews. Revise your production plan, as necessary.

**\*\* DUE: STORY ARC. Email Word document to instructor before class.**

### **LECTURE: Advanced Camera Workshop – Part 2: Shooting in Sequences**

- Sequences: Capturing visual information that conveys a basic narrative
- Getting a variety of shots and angles: wide shots, medium shots, close-ups, cutaways, etc.
- What to do on location and dealing with subjects
- Taking a pause to observe your surroundings
- Looking for telling details that reveal character, behavior, skill, etc.
- Quantity v. quality

#### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Begin filming for your project.
- Have your camera SD cards ready for the media management workshop next week.

**7**  
03.02.2021

**\*\* DUE: RAW FOOTAGE. Upload video to Xchange before class.**

### **REVIEW FOOTAGE + PRODUCTION UPDATES**

*In class review and feedback.*

### **LECTURE: Media Management and Organization**

- VPN Client for remote access to the USC Network
- Adobe Creative Cloud and Premiere Pro
- Hard drive: File structure and organization
- Setting up your Premiere project
- Importing and exporting footage
- Using Xchange to submit video assignments
- Accessing the Impact Server as a fail-safe backup

### **Production Troubleshooting**

- Troubleshooting storylines: weak story beats, missing footage
- Journalists' choices and ethical dilemmas
- Problems we predict v. the ones we can't anticipate
- Additional sources for information or footage
- Project completion problems and finding solutions

#### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Continue shooting. Log and transcribe footage.

## Week

8

03.09.2021

**\*\* DUE: RAW FOOTAGE. Upload video to Xchange before class.**

### **REVIEW FOOTAGE + PRODUCTION UPDATES**

*In class review and feedback.*

#### **LECTURE: Writing the Script**

- Translating your story arc and raw footage into a script
- Screening footage for good story beats
- Script format and annotations
- Responsibility of a journalist in long-form: sourcing and attribution
- Writing to a long-form audience
- Managing expectations for footage you still need to shoot or acquire

#### **Edit Workshop: Advanced Editing Techniques**

- Transitioning from production to post-production
- Establishing good habits: duplicating timelines, proper naming conventions
- The Radio Cut: putting sound bites down first to form the narrative
- Editing visual sequences to organize topics and/or characters
- Pacing and split edits
- Transitioning between sequences

#### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Continue shooting. Log and transcribe footage.
- **Edit Sequence 1.** Due next week in class. **Export and upload to Xchange before next class.**
- **Begin writing script.** Due in three weeks. *Refer to the workshop documentation emailed to you.*

9

03.16.2021

**\*\* DUE: SEQUENCE 1. Video must be uploaded to Xchange prior to class.**

### **REVIEW SEQUENCE 1 + Production Updates**

*In-class review and feedback.*

#### **LECTURE: The Prologue**

- Setting the tone and hooking the viewer in
- A vehicle for establishing the thesis of your story and introducing your characters
- Selecting poignant sound bites
- Music

#### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Continue shooting. Log and transcribe footage.
- **Finish writing script.** Refer to the Supplementary Materials handout for format. Email Word document to instructor before next class (in two weeks).

10

03.23.2021

**WELLNESS DAY**

<u>Week</u>	
<b>11</b> 03.30.2021	<p><b>** DUE: SCRIPT. Email appropriately formatted Word document to instructor before class.</b></p> <p><b>Lecture: Translating the script to the edit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to turn your writing into video</li> <li>Changing the see-and-say mindset into thinking in sequences</li> <li>Letting shots go and pacing</li> <li>Advancing the story</li> </ul> <p><b>Using Stock Footage Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anticipating gaps in your production</li> <li>Creating boards</li> <li>Keyword searches</li> <li>Piecing together individual shots to form sequences</li> <li>Downloading comps and organizing them for the edit</li> </ul> <p><b>ASSIGNMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct pickup shoots, if necessary.</li> <li><b>Edit Sequence 2.</b> Due next week in class. <b>Export and upload to Xchange before next class.</b></li> </ul>
<b>12</b> 04.06.2021	<p><b>** DUE: SEQUENCE 2. Video must be uploaded to Xchange prior to class.</b></p> <p><b>REVIEW SEQUENCE 2 + Production Updates</b>  <i>In-class review and feedback.</i></p> <p><b>LECTURE: Edit Workshop: Fine Tuning Techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning up sound bites</li> <li>Video effects for transitions</li> <li>Pacing</li> <li>Balancing audio: levels, keyframing and transitions</li> <li>Editing to music</li> </ul> <p><b>ASSIGNMENT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Begin editing rough cut.</b> Export a <b>PROGRESS CUT</b> for review in class next week.</li> </ul>
<b>13</b> 04.13.2021	<p><b>** DUE: PROGRESS CUT. Video must be uploaded to Xchange prior to class.</b></p> <p><b>PROGRESS CUT SCREENING</b>  <i>In-class review and feedback.</i></p> <p><b>LECTURE: Making Editorial Decisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparing your vision with the execution</li> <li>What you pitched v. how the editing is going</li> <li>Taking a step back to re-check journalistic responsibility in the reporting</li> <li>Deciding when material hurts the storytelling</li> <li>Learning to fall out of love with too much footage</li> <li>Strong v. weak story beats</li> <li>Surviving executive notes</li> </ul> <p><b>ASSIGNMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct pick-up shoots, if necessary.</li> <li><b>Finish ROUGH CUT.</b> Export and upload to Xchange before class next week.</li> </ul>

<b>Week</b> <b>14</b> 04.20.2021	<p><b>** DUE: ROUGH CUT. Video must be uploaded to Xchange prior to class.</b></p> <p><b>ROUGH CUT SCREENING</b>  <i>In-class feedback. Instructor will email notes and grades.</i></p> <p><b>ASSIGNMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue editing. Final cut due in three weeks.</li> <li>- Course evaluations will be emailed to you. Please complete before next class.</li> </ul>
<b>15</b> 04.27.2021	<p><b>** DUE: COURSE EVALUATION.</b></p> <p><b>LECTURE: Current state of nonfiction television &amp; career choices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The blurring lines between nonfiction and entertainment</li> <li>▪ Understanding the marketplace: your ideas v. network interests and competition</li> <li>▪ Realities of the industry</li> <li>▪ Pitching your ideas: where to go and who to talk with</li> <li>▪ What it means to work in long-form</li> <li>▪ How class projects can help you find work</li> <li>▪ Industry feedback</li> </ul> <p><b>ASSIGNMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>FINAL CUT due on Tuesday 05.11.</b> Export and upload to Xchange before class.</li> <li>- <b>Compile all deliverables:</b> release forms, conformed script in Word document format, notated with stock footage, music and research citations.</li> </ul>
<b>FINAL</b> Tuesday 05.11.2021 8-10 a.m.	<p><b>** DUE: FINE CUT + DELIVERABLES (conformed script + release forms, hard drives and equipment)</b></p> <p><b>FINAL SCREENING</b>  <i>In-class feedback. Instructor will email notes and grades.</i></p> <p><b>YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE A GRADE IF ANY DELIVERABLES ARE MISSING!</b></p>

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Additional Policies**

#### **Attendance**

Students are advised to attend the first class meetings of their journalism classes or the instructors may drop them. The School of Journalism adheres to the university policy, which states “an instructor may replace any student who without prior consent does not attend... the first class session of the semester for once-a-week classes. It is then the student’s responsibility to withdraw officially from the course through the Registration Department.”

#### **Communication**

One of the keys to success in documentary, as with any business, is good communication. It is this instructor’s basic philosophy that students are adults, they are professionals getting ready to enter the business world, and that anything having to do with video is fraught with problems, even for the most experienced user. There are any number of reasons why you might need to talk with me. 1) Equipment problems, 2) Difficult situations, 3) Interviewee questions, 4) Interviewees who cancel, 5) Your story is crumbling or shifting, and this just touches the surface.

I’m sympathetic, having been a student and knowing full well that what you are doing is difficult. I make myself available to students at all times of day and weekends because you’re in production at all times. It is essential that if you find yourself dealing with a problem that you cannot manage, that you call immediately. If you cannot reach me by telephone, then next send a text message. And if I cannot be reached, you have contact information for Megan Chao and Victor Figueroa.

One thing I do not want is to find out, a week later, that you had a problem and did not reach out. I would consider this unprofessional and not a reason for missing a deadline. Industry professionals would see this as a lapse in judgement. Therefore, make sure you do reach out when problems arise. We will problem-solve together and come to an alternative solution, including the possibility of missing a deadline, provided we decide this together.

#### **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](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 Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710*

[campussupport.usc.edu](https://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](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) 442-120 – 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

**Daniel H. Birman** is a documentary producer, writer and director. He is currently developing *The Hinges of History*, a historical series based on the *New York Times Best Sellers* books by Thomas Cahill. It is about pivotal moments and people in history that shaped Western civilization. He most recently completed *St. Patrick's Greatest Gift* for **CuriosityStream**, a documentary about the little-known story of St. Patrick and his heroic efforts to save literacy. He also recently completed *Murder to Mercy: The Cyntoia Brown story*, a feature documentary in collaboration with **Netflix** about a young Tennessee woman who was sentenced to life in prison for murder. On the Netflix Top 10 for the first week of broadcast, this project was based on the acclaimed PBS **Independent Lens** documentary, *Me Facing Life: Cyntoia's Story*, also produced and directed by Birman.

Some notable projects include: *The Earliest Americans*, a documentary that looks at a controversial finding about the first peopling of the Americas, and *The Hunt for Dark Matter*, a documentary about recent advancements in space exploration, for **CuriosityStream**. *Perfecting Flight*, a feature documentary about legendary aviator Bob Hoover. At age 91, he flies for the last time and tells his story. Birman was a contributing producer for *The Big Bang Machine* for **PBS - NOVA** about one of the great scientific discoveries, the Higgs boson, a tiny particle that explains how the universe was formed. *Chasing Speed: Leslie Porterfield* for **Velocity** is about the world's fastest woman on a motorcycle. And *Brace for Impact: the Chesley B. Sullenberger Story* for **TLC** and **Discovery**.

Birman is a Professor of Professional Practice at the **USC Annenberg School of Journalism**, where he teaches documentary production and is the Executive Producer of *Impact*, a student-produced documentary series.

Additionally, Birman is on the Board of Governors for the **Television Academy**, representing the Documentary peer group.