**JOUR 206: Reporting and Writing**

**Practicum (Community Reporting)**

**1 Unit**

**Fall 2021 – Tuesdays**

**8:30-12:20 a.m./11 a.m.-2:50 p.m./2-5:50 p.m.**

**Section:** 21007R/21009R/21013R  
 **Location:**  ANN 102

**Instructor: Esmeralda Fabian Romero**

**Office:** ANN 102  
 **Office Hours:**  Weekdays, by appointment only.

**Contact Info:** [efabianr@usc.edu](mailto:efabianr@usc.edu) , 562-445-1052.

**Pronouns:** She, Her, Hers

**Course Description**

This course gives journalism majors hands-on experience in writing digital news for publication on [uscannenbergmedia.com](https://www.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.

At USC Annenberg, we produce journalistic content that reflects anti-racist practices, and addresses social and racial inequities. We are committed to produce content that reflects inclusiveness and diversity.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

* Identify elements that make a story newsworthy for different audiences
* Identify and use diverse sources in news stories in order to create accurate, complete and relevant news and information.
* Students will be able to describe how systemic biases (race, gender, etc.) operate in journalism and identify past and current examples.
* 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. ***\*All undergraduate journalism majors take two semesters of JOUR 206, one in Live Production and one in Community Reporting, concurrent with JOUR 207 and JOUR 307. These can be taken in either sequence.***

**Description and Assessment of Assignments**

This class is about hands-on learning. It is designed to give students practical experience in a newsroom. Student work is published on uscannenbergmedia.com and Annenberg Media social media platforms. Class work consists of on-the-job training and experience that mirrors the real world.

At the start of the semester, students will participate in mandatory newsroom trainings. Beginning in week three or four, students will act as general assignment reporters in an active newsroom. ***There will be additional trainings that students must complete throughout the semester in order to receive a passing grade for this class.***

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.

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

**Course Notes and Policies**

The practicum is credit/no credit.

Students are expected to attend all their scheduled shifts. To receive credit for the lab shift, students must arrive on time, aware of the day’s news and prepared to give their full attention to your newsroom duties. Please don’t schedule or conduct interviews or work on assignments for other classes during the lab shift.

Reporting practices will follow public health guidelines, and may change throughout the semester.

The student-led news outlets that make up Annenberg Media count on student journalists.

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 have completed all required training. If you’re having difficulty fulfilling your shifts at any time or for any reason, please reach out to your instructor for support.

Students are expected to check regularly their USC email/Blackboard, and Slack. Most of the communication within the newsroom, including instructor and editors happens through Annenberg Media Slack channel.

Students who need to meet with the instructor should arrange a meeting time on weekdays with 24 hours advance notice.

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](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdVSf40mZVBzx6bItW5wI7Rh9wAt2q3eScvgTiskATBVXbyow/viewform) 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](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdVSf40mZVBzx6bItW5wI7Rh9wAt2q3eScvgTiskATBVXbyow/viewform).

**Required Readings, hardware/software, laptops and supplementary materials**

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

● [USC Annenberg Media Resources](http://resources.uscannenbergmedia.com/) — links to schedules, tools, guidelines, etc.

● [Legal Guide](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OWxO6wOMCAAnFTkH7DZZ0trb2CRAi-MpPibX9iB7MZE/edit#heading=h.gjdgxs) — writing about crime, minors, courts. Using anonymous sources.

● [Annenberg Media Guide to Equitable Reporting and Newsroom Style](https://docs.google.com/document/d/13FsmzFKjvS3KCn1PjG9FryVFzgZp1HmEuO22JyT-khY/edit) which covers Annenberg Media’s standards and best practices for writing and reporting in a respectful and conscious way.

● 1[1 Style Rules to Know Now](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cix7F2UwywksUld8kA9N_vv-h8yxo3OjAfuFswPKVR8/edit) : Review of AP style. Using Amy, the Stylebot in Slack.

● [Media Center Ethics Guidelines](http://interactives.uscannenbergmedia.com/projects/about-annenberg-media/ethics.html) — a guide to practices and the workplace environment.

● [Resources and Links: Pitching and Researching Stories](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xw8x4Pqn7YIiMyh9tXtXbwv9gUZUK_krj5scLFoPw8c/edit) — 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/>) 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.

**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. USC provides subscriptions for students, staff and faculty to The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times, as well as the Wall Street Journal. Through the USC library, you have access to many regional news outlets and a variety of publications that cover specific communities. You should be familiar with publications covering the many communities of Los Angeles such as The Los Angeles Sentinel, The Los Angeles Blade, The Los Angeles Wave, La Opinión, L.A. Taco, The Eastsider, The Armenian Weekly, High Country News, the Asian Journal and others. You should keep up with the Daily Trojan and uscannenbergmedia.com, including USC student-led verticals Dímelo and Black., listen to NPR and news radio, watch local and national television news, read news email newsletters and push alerts and follow news organizations social networks, including Twitter, Instagram and TikTok. You’re encouraged to sign up for Nieman Lab’s newsletter, which publishes brief, readable articles on important issues in the media. Following the news will sharpen your judgment and provide good (and bad) examples of the state of mainstream journalism.

**Grading**

**a. Breakdown of Grade**

| Assignment | % of Grade |
| --- | --- |
| Weekly handoff notes (15) | 90% |
| Participation | 10% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** |

**b. 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 |

**c. 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 attending the lab sessions, completing all required trainings and doing the hands-on work during your lab sessions.**

***School of Journalism grading standards***

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 accuracy and truthfulness in their stories. Good journalism prioritizes transparency, context and inclusivity. All stories should be written in AP style unless Annenberg style conflicts, in which case students can follow Annenberg style.

The following standards apply to news assignments.

“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.

For assignments other than conventional news reporting, quality of research and clarity of expression are the most important criteria. In research papers, good research should be presented through good writing, and good writing should be backed up by good research. Clarity of expression includes thoughtful organization of the material, insight into the subject matter and writing free from factual, grammatical and spelling errors. Research should draw on a diverse range of sources.

**Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/23/21 – 12/3/21)**

**Link:** <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20213/calendar/>

**Friday, September 10:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, September 10:** Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001

**Friday, September 10:** Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall

**Tuesday,** **September 14:** Last day to add or drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund or change to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001

**Friday, October 8:** 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, October 8:** 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, November 12:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

**Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

***Important note to students:*** 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. *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 and Homework | Deliverable/Due Dates |
| Week 1  8/24 | Newsroom training. | As advised. |  |
| Week 2  8/31 | Newsroom training. | As advised. |  |
| Week 3  9/7 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 4  9/14 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 5  9/21 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 6  9/28 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 7  10/5 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 8  10/12 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 9  10/19 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 10  10/26 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 11  11/2 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 12  11/9 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 13  11/16 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 14  11/23 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |
| Week 15  11/29 | Newsroom general assignment reporting as advised. |  |  |

**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 by 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](http://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](http://www.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](http://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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu/), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu/)

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

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

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

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

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.

**About Your Instructor**

Esmeralda Fabián Romero is a bilingual journalist, currently working as a contributor for PBS SoCal, LA School Report, and Los Angeles Times Español, La Opinión, among other online publications. Previously she has worked as a contributor for Fox News Latino and as MundoFOX network’s newscast producer and assignment editor. Fabián Romero was selected as a fellow by the prestigious Loyola Law School as a Journalist Law School Fellow in 2014. She has been awarded by the California Teachers Association for Media Excellence in 2016 and has been selected multiple times as a fellow by New America Media. Her reporting in Spanish has been awarded by the National Association of Hispanic Publications. She is a member of the Education Writers Association and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.