



## **JOUR 207: Reporting and Writing I** **3 Units**

**Fall 2021 – Wednesdays – 12-2:30 p.m.**

**Section:** 21099D

**Location:** ANN 307

**Instructor:** Christina Bellantoni

**Office:** Media Center

**Office Hours:** Wednesday or Friday, by appointment

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**Pronouns:** She/her

### **Course Description**

Welcome to JOUR 207 Reporting & Writing I. The goals of this course are to sharpen your writing, reporting, and critical thinking skills, as well as teach you about news values, ethics, copy editing, interviewing, fact-checking and how to accurately report on and write about a diverse world on deadline.

This course covers the basics of writing and reporting hard news stories, including courts and local government. Next semester you'll take JOUR 307 Reporting and Writing II, which will cover writing features, profiles and other formats, pitching and developing stories, and the basics of broadcast journalism.

By the end of this course, you will understand what makes an event newsworthy — worth covering — and have the capability to produce accurate, well-written, well-sourced news stories on deadline.

Finally, part of your training in this introductory newswriting and reporting course includes a review and discussion of the journalism industry's code of ethics, its role in a democratic society, and its current and past strengths and failings.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

- Write a hard news story on deadline with multiple sources, effective quotes, and a compelling lede, using clear, active, and concise language and correct grammar, punctuation, spelling and AP Style.
- Identify newsworthy elements for tweets, ledes and news stories.
- Conduct research and verify information using diverse primary and secondary sources.
- Create complete, relevant news stories that reflect our diverse society and prioritize accuracy, truth, transparency, context and inclusivity.
- Use language around race, ethnicity, ability, gender, age, sexuality and gender identity, and socioeconomic status with precision and in accordance with AP style in news stories.
- Evaluate current conflicts, controversies and issues in journalism.

**Concurrent Enrollment:** JOUR 207 students must also register for JOUR 206, which requires a weekly three-hour, 50-minute shift in the Annenberg Media newsroom based in the Media Center. Your work for each course will be distinct, but the hope is that skills you learn in each will help you in the other. Your professor is the director of the Media Center, and can help you navigate that work as well, during office hours outside of class time.

You will take the second JOUR 206 practicum concurrent with JOUR 307, so that by the end of the two courses, you will have worked in both the LIVE and COMMUNITY sections of the Annenberg Media newsroom.

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

Your assignments are designed to help you develop as a writer, reporter and emerging journalist. They include tweets, news ledes (sometimes referred to as leads), news briefs and news stories as assigned by your instructor. They get more complex as the semester progresses, and are worth more as a percentage of your grade.

There's a midterm, which covers grammar, spelling, punctuation, AP style and writing. You'll complete self-paced modules before the midterm to help you master these skills.

For the final, you will report and write a 750 to 1,000-word story on deadline.

There will also be student-led ethics discussions. You'll work with a group on a presentation that explores a current controversy or issue in journalism, using assigned readings and additional research, and facilitate a class discussion about the topic. All students will respond to the discussion with in-class prompts that draw on assigned readings.

There is a participation grade in this class, which will be evaluated by in-class assignments and your constructive feedback during classroom discussion, peer presentations and guest speakers.

Assignments should be done via a Google document and shared with me with open edit access by deadline. They will generally be returned with feedback from your instructor within a week. You will be expected to review this feedback and incorporate the recommendations in future assignments.

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, you should first review this with your instructor. Be careful not to misrepresent yourself when seeking an interview (i.e., telling a source you are writing for the Daily Trojan or Annenberg Media if you are not actually doing so). You also want to make clear to the source(s) that the story *could* be published. Don't submit single source stories unless specified in an assignment.

Links to sample rubrics will be provided in advance for all assignments.

Accuracy is your number one priority. Your reputation as a journalist and the reputation of the news organization for which you work hangs in the balance. Is the information accurate, is the grammar correct, are the names spelled correctly? Have you properly identified the sources of your report? Is the writing clear and concise? Have you written a lede that will grab attention? Is the style and tone appropriate for the report?

In addition to being ethical in developing and writing your stories, it is important that you also consider if your work is reflective of the diverse world you are expected to cover as a journalist. When looking at your work, you should consider who is involved and how it will impact others. Is your work fair and does it represent all stakeholders in a balanced manner? This class helps you learn how to write in a manner that includes diverse viewpoints. That means socioeconomic/class, race/ethnicity, religion, gender/sexual orientation, geography and generations in the context of current events and journalism.

### **Course Notes and Policies**

Please come to class on time, prepared (i.e. having done your readings and homework assignments), and ready to discuss various news-related topics.

We will use class time to learn actively, and ask that you make every effort to stay focused and attentive during class. That means no laptops unless we are actively using them for an in-class assignment. To keep everyone safe,

no one will be allowed to eat during class. You may take sips from a beverage and use our class breaks for snacks outdoors.

This class involves robust discussion, in-class assignments and peer review and editing. We can all learn from each other. It's Annenberg's 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.

Please feel free to reach out with questions about the assignments or general feedback about the class.

The best way to reach me is via email, and I will make a point to respond to you within 24 hours. You also can feel free to find me in-person in the Media Center during your lab shift or via the Annenberg Media Slack workspace.

We expect you to turn your assignments in on time. We'll deduct points for missing deadlines, so please reach out early and often if you're having trouble meeting those deadlines.

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

There are some readings outlined below, but I also will be emailing you weekly reading that is either on the news or relevant to our upcoming class session. The readings will be essential to group presentations, classroom discussions and exercises.

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. ([https://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://www.apstylebook.com/usc\\_edu/](https://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://www.apstylebook.com/usc_edu/)) I also have additional copies of the books in my office I am happy to loan out.

Students will be graded on adherence to AP style in assignments, including when writing about race and ethnicity. The updated AP style guidelines include capitalizing Black and deleting the hyphen in terms such as Asian American.

The following style guides will be available on BB:

NLGJA Stylebook on LGBTQ Terminology: <https://www.nlgja.org/stylebook/>

Native American Journalists Association: <https://najanewsroom.com/reporting-guides/>

National Association of Black Journalists: <https://www.nabj.org/page/styleguide>

Asian American Journalists Association: <https://aaaja.org/2020/11/30/covering-asia-and-asian-americans/>

The Diversity Style Guide: <https://www.diversitystyleguide.com>

The NAHJ Cultural Competence Handbook: <https://nahj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NAHJ-Cultural-Competence-Handbook.pdf>

Transjournalist Style Guide: <https://transjournalists.org/style-guide/>

SPJ Diversity Toolbox: <https://www.spj.org/diversity.asp>

Annenberg Media also has its own style guide that students can access through the app Amy the Stylebot on the Annenberg Media Center's Slack workspace. Annenberg's style guide is being developed with input from students, and whether or not students use our guide, they can provide valuable input here: <http://bit.ly/annenbergediting>

In addition, Annenberg Media's Guide for Equitable Reporting Strategies and Newsroom Style (<https://bit.ly/AnnMediaEquitableReportingGuide>) created by students, has detailed guidelines on thoughtful language and best practices for creating journalism respectful and reflective of a diverse world. Along with other useful resources, it can be found on Blackboard and is incorporated into Amy the Stylebot.

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 with issues that limit their ability to participate fully in class. Please reach out to a professor and/or advisor if you need help connecting with these resources. They include the Annenberg Student Success Fund, 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, and other scholarships and awards.

### 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 (<http://nytimesaccess.com/usc/>) and the Los Angeles Times (<https://my.usc.edu/los-angeles-times/>), as well as the Wall Street Journal ([wsj.com/usc](http://wsj.com/usc)).

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](http://uscannenbergmedia.com) including the Annenberg Media newsroom's student-led verticals Dímelo and Black., listen to NPR and news radio, watch local and national television news, subscribe to newsletters and push alerts from news organizations and follow them on 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
AP style and GSP: Complete before the midterm self-paced modules with reviews, including guide/discussion on using language around race with precision, the AP pre-test and GSP final.	5%
Participation (Includes in-class assignments and peer review)	10%
Homework assignments (before midterm)	15%
Homework assignments (after midterm)	35%
Group presentation on ethics	10%
Midterm (Oct. 13)	10%
Final (Dec. 10)	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 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

### *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 accuracy and completeness in their stories. Good journalism prioritizes transparency, context and inclusivity. All stories should be written in AP style unless Annenberg Media style conflicts, in which case students can follow what is outlined in the Annenberg Guide to Equitable Reporting Strategies and Newsroom Style (<https://bit.ly/AnnMediaEquitableReportingGuide>).

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 perspective 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 perspective 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](mailto:dt.city@gmail.com) for more on how to pitch work to the campus newspaper.

### 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:** 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 (to be done before class)	Deliverable/Due Dates
<b>Week 1 Aug. 25</b>	<p><b>Course intro: Newsworthiness, Ethics, Diversity and Tweets</b></p> <p>Get to know each other and your instructor. Review <i>syllabus</i>. <i>AP and GSP Modules</i> – What are they? How do they work? Where can you find them? What is <i>AP Style</i>? Why do we care? What about <i>journalism ethics</i>? Why ethics are more important today than ever. Explanation of assignments: What is a tear-up? How do they work? What’s expected? How do I read a rubric? Plagiarism and other deadly sins.</p> <p><b>State of the news media.</b> An industry in flux – what basics still hold?</p> <p><b>Twitter.</b> Its many uses, from news gathering to disseminating news. Some let your personality shine through, and some are for straight news reporting.</p>	<p>Kovach and Rosenstiel, <u><a href="#">The Elements of Journalism</a></u>.</p> <p>SPJ Code of Ethics: <a href="https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp">https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp</a></p> <p>ONA Code of Ethics: <a href="https://journalists.org/tools/social-newsgathering">https://journalists.org/tools/social-newsgathering</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.poynter.org/news/twitter-dustups-are-reminder-journalists-you-are-what-you-tweet">https://www.poynter.org/news/twitter-dustups-are-reminder-journalists-you-are-what-you-tweet</a></p> <p><u><a href="#">Annenberg’s guide to social media for instructors</a></u></p>	<p>Watch a news event that will be shared with you. Write at least five tweets about the event and a push alert in a Google doc and submit no later than <b>Sept. 1 at noon</b></p> <p>Watch the race-related coverage modules in Blackboard, complete the quiz no later than <b>Sept. 1</b>.</p>

	<p><b>Newsworthiness.</b> What makes an event or a person <i>newsworthy</i>? How do you develop news judgment?</p> <p><b>In-class assignment:</b> Students will watch a press conference and “live tweet” it in a Google doc. What’s the most important information for the tweet? Review as a group.</p>		
<p><b>Week 2 Sept. 1</b></p>	<p><b>From a tweet to a lede (sometimes referred to as lead)</b></p> <p>News judgment.</p> <p><b>Headlines.</b> A good headline summarizes the story and is told in a way that entices the reader to read the rest of your story. We’ll discuss.</p> <p><b>News ledes:</b> The 5 Ws and H: Who, what, when, where, why and how.</p> <p>Try to write basic news ledes that are one sentence long and 35 words or shorter.</p> <p><b>In-Class:</b> Write several ledes. The class will peer review and review together. What was the important part of each story? If time permits, students will write their own lede for class.</p> <p>Get presentation assignments.</p>	<p>Harrower, Chapter 3, pp 36 – 47 (on BB)</p> <p>Alan Rusbridger, “Breaking News,” Intro (on BB)</p>	<p>Write five ledes from provided material in a single Google doc and submit no later than <b>Sept. 8 at noon</b></p>
<p><b>Week 3 Sept. 8</b></p>	<p><b>News briefs and verification</b></p> <p>What comes after your lede? Supporting/additional paragraphs with information that supports lede with facts, quotes, and attribution from sources.</p> <p><b>News Briefs.</b> While hard news updates come in many other formats (push alerts, live updates, tweets, etc.), you should understand how to write a news brief in the inverted pyramid style.</p> <p><b>Copy editing and self-editing.</b> You must learn to review your own and others’ material for AP style, grammar and spelling. You will often be publishing (including to social media and digital platforms) without the benefit of an editor. Your credibility depends on getting the basics correct.</p>	<p><u>AP Style for Numbers</u></p> <p><u>AP style rules to know now</u></p> <p>AP Stylebook, A, B, C, D, E</p> <p><u>Journalism as a discipline of verification.</u></p> <p>Harrower, p 59 (checklist) and p 84 – 85 (attribution) on BB</p>	<p>Write three news briefs and tweets for each in a Google doc.</p> <p><b>Due by Sept. 15 at noon</b></p>

	<p><b>In-Class:</b> We'll write news briefs, then peer review and review together for style, grammar and spelling.</p> <p>We'll also do an AP style exercise, so make sure you have started the modules and done your Stylebook (A-E) homework.</p> <p>Preview of next week's special presentation and the reading on objectivity and bias.</p>		
<p><b>Week 4 Sept. 15</b></p>	<p><b>Class will begin in the Annenberg Media Center today with a special presentation from Shaun Harper of the USC Race and Equity Center.</b></p> <p>The remainder of class time will be spent discussing objectivity in journalism, the concept of fairness and guarding against bias. You will be expected to discuss the Annenberg Media Guide to Equitable Reporting Strategies and Newsroom Style.</p>	<p>Watch recorded lecture on objectivity and bias</p> <p><a href="#"><u>A Reckoning Over Objectivity, Led by Black Journalists</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Twitter response from Tom Rosenstiel</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Annenberg Media's Guide for Equitable Reporting Strategies and Newsroom Style</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>How Implicit Bias Works in Journalism</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>White Audiences Who Will Pay is Still Metro Newspapers Survival Strategy</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>DIEA checklist for reporting</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Tools to Manage Bias</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>How Alexandra Bell is disrupting racism in journalism</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>A guide to gender identity terms</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>A Top Editor Becomes Her 'True Self'</u></a></p>	<p>There will be two student-led presentations next week, one on objectivity and one on bias. All students will write an in-class response to these presentations that draws on the readings assigned for next week.</p>



		<p><u>AP Stylebook on race-related coverage</u></p> <p><u>Why we need more empathy in journalism</u></p> <p><u>Nikole Hannah-Jones on making space in media for Black journalists</u></p>	
<p><b>Week 5 Sept. 22</b></p>	<p><b>Reporting and interviewing</b></p> <p>Research, preparation, techniques. Note-taking, quotes and where to put them, open and closed questions, observing the room. Primary sources vs. secondary sources.</p> <p><b>In-Class:</b> Review stories with excellent interviews. Role-play in pairs an “ask” for an interview.</p> <p>Research possible subjects and write an e-mail request for an interview to fulfill your homework this week. How can you find someone to interview? How can you persuade them to say yes, on your timeframe?</p> <p>There will be two student-led presentations this week, one on objectivity and one on bias and accuracy.</p> <p>All students will write an in-class response to these presentations that draws on the assigned readings.</p>	<p>AP Stylebook, F, G, H, I, J</p> <p><u>Good tips on interviewing</u></p> <p><u>Tips for requesting an interview</u></p>	<p>Send an email to a working journalist requesting a brief interview.</p> <p>Write a story/Q&amp;A of no more than 500 words. It should include a brief background on the reporter. Include a tweet. See assignment sheet for more detail.</p> <p>Due Sept. 29 via Google doc. <b>Yes, this is a single source story. Don’t get used to it.</b></p>
<p><b>Week 6 Sept. 29</b></p>	<p><b>Short stories, using quotes, protest coverage, sourcing, media and the law</b></p> <p>This week we’ll start writing full news stories. Moving from a three-paragraph news brief to a 300- to 500-word story is not that much of a leap. The key is organization. It involves expanding on and supporting the five W’s and H with data, description and quotes.</p> <p>To produce a fully reported story, journalists must find sources and use attribution showing where you got your information.</p> <p>Anonymous sources discussion. information.</p>	<p>AP Stylebook, K, L, M, N, O</p> <p><u>It’s Time to Change the Way the Media Reports on Protests. Here are some ideas.</u></p> <p><u>Fact-checking yourself and organizing your reporting material</u></p> <p>Harrower, p. 81, on and off the record and anonymous sources, and law and ethics, p 140 – 156 (on BB)</p>	<p>You will write a 500-word news story about a protest, news event and/or speech, getting instructor approval of your topic. It must include direct observation of the event, reaction from participants, and contain a minimum of three distinct sources. Think about a compelling lede, good quotes and clarity. Due via Google doc by Oct. 6.</p>

	<p>Covering scheduled events. Reporters need to conduct background research on the speech or event, and know why it is happening at this time. Reporters also must convey what happened accurately, fairly and in an interesting manner and use their powers of direct observation. Learn to observe.</p> <p>Story structure. How do you start? How do you include your sources? How do you find the “killer quote”? How do you include other details, such as what you observed?</p> <p>We’ll also talk about your rights and responsibilities as a reporter, and First Amendment basics for reporters.</p> <p><b>In-class:</b> Law and ethics quiz AP style exercise continued</p>	<p>LAT’s Steve Padilla (USC alum and one-time Daily Trojan editor) thread on <a href="#">quotes</a></p>	<p><b>Email me any questions you may have about the midterm.</b></p>
<p><b>Week 7 Oct. 6</b></p>	<p><b>Review for Midterm</b></p> <p>We will review homework on writing a full story. For the midterm, we’ll review the basics of writing a lede, a hard news story, writing conventions, AP Style and editing tips.</p> <p><b>In-class:</b> AP style exercise continued</p>	<p>Review all your graded work.</p> <p>AP Stylebook P-Z</p>	<p>AP style and GSP: Complete before the midterm self-paced modules with reviews, including guide/discussion on using language around race with precision, the AP pre-test and GSP final.</p>
<p><b>Week 8 Oct. 13</b></p>	<p><b>Midterm today!</b> The midterm will include an editing assignment and writing assignments (ledes, a brief and a story from factsheets). You may use the AP Stylebook, Amy the Stylebot, and the dictionary for both.</p>		<p>Schedule office hours with me.</p>
<p><b>Week 9 Oct. 20</b></p>	<p><b>Writing on deadline Accuracy and verification</b></p> <p>Reminder that homework from now on is worth more of your grade.</p> <p>Writing on deadline is a necessary element for any reporter, whether you’re writing for a newspaper, online or just about anywhere else. Increasingly, news needs to be immediate. Writing it quickly – and also accurately and informatively – is expected of you. Often, even what you write will be overcome by events and you will need to rewrite it – again and again – and quickly. There are some simple tricks to</p>	<p><a href="#">Guide to writing B matter</a> from Annenberg adjunct professor Saba Hamedy (an NBC editor.)</p> <p><a href="#">How to write faster on deadline.</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Hierarchy of Accuracy</a></p> <p>LAT’s Steve Padilla (USC alum and one-time Daily Trojan editor) thread on</p>	<p>“Top” your b-matter with a-matter following guidance given in class. Your story should be between 500-700 words.</p> <p><b>Due via Google doc Oct. 27.</b></p>

	<p>master this, and we'll go over them in class – planning ahead, writing b-matter, and topping the story when news requires it.</p> <p>We will learn how to compile b-matter for your story and how to top it with a-matter on deadline.</p> <p><b>In-class:</b> We talk more on how to find sources, especially in a hurry.</p> <p>You will work with your instructor to identify an upcoming news event. In a group, you will work on writing b-matter and editing it together.</p>	<p><u>strong writing and writing advice</u></p> <p><i>Optional</i> Padilla's <u>writing tips seminar</u> – one-hour audio</p>	
<p><b>Week 10</b> <b>Oct. 27</b></p>	<p><b>Accountability journalism -- covering local governments</b></p> <p>Who's who and why does it matter? What's in a city budget and how do you find it? Who are the council members and how do they get to power?</p> <p>Reporters are watchdogs, making sure city agencies and departments are carrying out their responsibilities efficiently, effectively and economically. These are all things paid for by taxpayer dollars, and it is in the public interest to report on them critically.</p> <p>Discuss covering government meetings and government budgets, a key to understanding how a local government or agency conducts its business. It is the job of the reporter to use his/her critical thinking and news judgment skills to choose the most noteworthy information to feature in the lede and story. We'll review how to read an agenda and how to prepare for a meeting.</p> <p>We'll also research and review how to find a local off-campus meeting you can attend to complete your homework.</p>	<p><u>Tips for developing a beat</u></p> <p>Examples of current city council coverage will be emailed to you for class discussion.</p>	<p>Attend a community board, city council, county Board of Supervisors, Board of Education or other similar meeting and cover the proceedings. The instructor must approve your choice in advance. You should obtain the agenda beforehand.</p> <p>Write a 500-word story that helps the reader understand what was newsworthy and important from the meeting — not just summarize what happened. Your story <b>must include several sources:</b> speakers at the meeting, quotes from officials there or secondary source information you've compiled from the agenda or public documents. If the issue includes competing points of view, you must include them in the report. <b>Due via Google doc by Nov. 3.</b></p>
<p><b>Week 11</b> <b>Nov. 3</b></p>	<p><b>Covering law enforcement and crime</b></p> <p>Possible guest speaker.</p> <p>Crime and public safety are top concerns. Covering these topics accurately and not</p>	<p><u>Newsrooms begin to reflect on their roles in systemic racism</u></p>	<p>Write a 500- to 750-word crime story from provided information. <b>Due via Google doc by Nov. 10.</b></p>

	<p>sensationalizing stories is key, however. So is avoiding stereotypes, keeping victims safe, treating suspects and minors fairly, and learning how to interview victims and witnesses of trauma in a sensitive manner.</p> <p>We'll have an in-depth examination of how crime is reported, from the initial 911 call to the police press conference.</p> <p><b>In-class:</b>  Student group presentation: How should media cover crime? All students will write an in-class response to the presentation drawing on readings assigned for this week.</p> <p>Crime coverage exercise.</p>	<p><u><a href="#">It's time for journalism to break the cycle of crime reporting</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">AP decides not to name minor crime suspects</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">The Mug Shot, a Crime Story Staple, is Dropped by Some Newsrooms and Police</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">The Dart Center – Working with Victims and Survivors</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">Letters to the Editor: Why the L.A. Times should not have named the Saugus High shooter</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">How the first statement from Minneapolis police made George Floyd's murder seem like George Floyd's fault</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">How do you write about traumatic situations without retraumatizing those involved? Read this new guide for journalists, for starters</a></u></p>	
<p><b>Week 12</b>  <b>Nov. 10</b></p>	<p><b>Covering courts</b></p> <p>Prof. Alan Mittelstaedt will provide some material on how to navigate a courthouse. We'll look at court filings and talk about how to read them, where to get more information and how to find stories within pages of legal jargon.</p> <p>We'll discuss what makes a court case worth covering, and how something goes from the law enforcement side as we discussed the previous week into the legal system. What is a journalist's responsibility once the issue makes that shift?</p>	<p>Examples of current court coverage will be emailed to you for class discussion.</p> <p>Harrower, pp 104-105, on BB.</p> <p>Tony Rodgers, "<a href="#">Reporting on the Courts.</a>"</p> <p><a href="#">About California Courts</a></p> <p><a href="#">Reporting on Courts</a></p>	<p>Identify a court case. Next week, we'll take a look at it together and talk about how to write a story that will be due Nov. 23.</p>
<p><b>Week 13</b>  <b>Nov. 17</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion and review</b></p>	<p><u><a href="#">How Local Media Fueled the Tulsa Massacre</a></u></p>	<p>Write a 750-word story about the case, including</p>

	<p>We'll go over your chosen court case and talk about reporting and writing strategies.</p> <p><b>In-class:</b>  Student group presentation: What responsibilities do current news organization have to correct for flaws in previous coverage? All students will write an in-class response to the presentation that references readings assigned for this week.</p>	<p><u><a href="#">An examination of The Times' failures on race, our apology and a path forward</a></u></p>	<p>information from the documents, direct observation if applicable, and at least one outside interview. The interview should be with someone directly involved in the case as a defendant, plaintiff, witness or lawyer, or someone who has clear expertise or insight related to the case. <b>Due via Google doc by Nov. 23.</b></p>
<p><b>Week 14 Nov. 24</b></p>	<p><b>No class, Thanksgiving Recess</b></p>		
<p><b>Week 15 Dec. 1</b></p>	<p><b>Final exam review</b></p> <p>The final exam will be a 750-word story written on deadline during the exam period on <b>Dec. 10</b>. It will involve research into the topic ahead of time. You will then listen to a live presentation by a speaker during the final exam period and write the story. Your final story must include research and sources you contacted and quoted ahead of time as well as a lede and quotes from the speaker.</p> <p>Complete course evaluation</p> <p>Ask me anything about my experience and career or the journalism industry as a whole.</p>		<p>Write draft of b-matter for final story. I will review it and provide feedback that will help you do your best on the final if you send it to me <b>no later than Dec. 7</b>.</p>
<p><b>FINAL EXAM Dec. 10, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.</b></p>	<p>Summative experience</p>		

## 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 Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

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

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

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Christina Bellantoni** is a professor of professional practice and the director of the Annenberg Media Center. She also has been a contributing editor at The 19th News, a nonprofit newsroom that covers gender, politics and policy, since 2021. She joined Annenberg in August 2018 after serving as a member of the masthead at the Los Angeles Times for three years. Over her more than 20 years in journalism, Bellantoni worked as a reporter and editor, behind the camera as a producer and in front of it as an analyst on national television. She has covered local, state and federal government, along with four presidential campaigns and the White House.

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