



**JOUR 532: Fall Digital Journalism
Immersion Practicum
1 Unit**

Fall 2021 – Thursdays

Section: 21548D

Location: ANN 102

Instructor: Alan Mittelstaedt

Office: Media Center

Office Hours: By appointment

Contact Info: Cell: 626 372-2453, Slack, amittels@usc.edu

Pronouns: He, him

I. Course Description

This course gives students hands-on experience working with live television and radio, writing on deadline and creating video for digital and social platforms. Students work a full day each week for Annenberg Media, the multiplatform newsroom housed in the Media Center. Students will rotate through shifts with Annenberg TV News, Annenberg Radio News and annenbergmedia.com to fulfill this lab shift, which runs concurrently with JOUR 531-Fall Digital Journalism Immersion.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

- Identify elements that make a story newsworthy for different audiences
- Identify and use diverse sources in news stories
- Research and verify information for use in news stories on TV, radio and digital platforms including social media
- Write news briefs and stories for radio and TV 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
- Shoot photographs and video and record and edit audio and video for use in news stories on deadline and in accordance with professional industry standards
- Collaborate with other student reporters and editors to cover stories across platforms
- Apply principles of ethics in real-life news situations

Concurrent Enrollment: JOUR 531 Fall Digital Journalism Immersion

III. Description and Assessment of Assignments

M.S. students work a weekly shift of at least eight consecutive hours inside the newsroom known as Annenberg Media on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. **Weekly attendance is mandatory and participation as a working member of the newsroom is required for a passing grade in this course. Shifts begin in the Annenberg Media Center at 8 a.m. with your lab shift instructor helping you develop a pitch for the student leaders on duty each day.**

The M.S. students will rotate between several areas of the newsroom. The rotation schedule will be provided to you during Week 1 as you begin training. You are required to do work on each of four areas:

video, audio, writing and community reporting. You must do all of them, and your instructor will make an effort to get you more time with the area of the newsroom that you prefer toward the end of the semester. Your shift begins in Week 1 of the semester. You will be part of the morning news meeting and participate in all of the required Annenberg Media trainings.

M.S. students will work at the direction of competitively hired, trained and paid student leaders who make coverage decisions about the stories being pursued for the ATVN television program, the ARN radio broadcast, Annenberg Media social channels and online at uscannenbergmedia.com. Every assignment you work on could be the clip that helps you land a journalism job, or an award waiting to happen, so it's up to you to give it your all. Our goal is to help you learn by doing, and you will improve over the course of the semester.

Students may be asked to do reporting, obtain video or audio footage or edit material for one story or several stories, depending on the needs of the newsroom. Students must complete their work by the deadlines set by student leaders, their lab shift instructors and the faculty providing guidance in the Media Center. Failure to meet deadlines will be factored into your grade for the course. Students must stay in touch via Slack with student leaders while on assignment and consider a full day in the newsroom to be a weekly requirement, not optional, even if you complete your assignment early. Should you have extra time, you could do social media tied to your assignment or help out in another area of the newsroom, or work ahead on another project.

ANNENBERG MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS:

There are no guarantees that your work will appear on ATVN, ARN, uscannenbergmedia.com or the Annenberg Media social channels. You should strive to produce work on every shift that will be published, but if it does not meet Annenberg Media editorial standards then it will not be posted, streamed or aired. The best way to get great clips is to attend the mandatory training sessions, be an active participant and ask questions when you need help. The keys to success are arriving on time for each shift with a well-researched pitch that is relevant to a young audience and achievable that day and meeting your deadlines.

If anyone is struggling or has concerns, please reach out to Media Center Director Christina Bellantoni for help. She's reachable on the Annenberg Media Center Slack account and via email at christina.bellantoni@usc.edu.

Over the course of your time working in the newsroom, you will likely produce all of the following elements. Your lab shift instructor will help to guide you as you complete the assignment, and **must** be the first read or set of eyeballs before you submit the work to the student editors.

VIDEO:

On a video day, you will be asked to produce very different kinds of visual content (all of which fulfill your shift requirements). You may produce VOs, VOSOTs, Live Shots and Reporter Packages (with a standup or live shot) for ATVN. You may be asked to complete a Reporter Package or a Natural Sound piece for uscannenbergmedia.com or the social channels. By the end of the Fall Semester, every student should have completed at least one Reporter Package for ATVN or for YouTube that required deadline reporting, video, writing and editing for a daily production. That piece must include either a stand-up or a live shot.

AUDIO:

On an audio day, you will be asked to produce very different kinds of audio content (all of which fulfill your shift requirements). You may produce a Q&A, a call-in live hit, extended interviews or reporter pieces. You may rotate as one of the hosts of the Annenberg Radio News show, reading the day's headlines. The work will be shared to uscannenbergmedia.com or Annenberg Media social channels. By the end of the Fall Semester, every student should have completed at least one Reporter Piece for ARN (with the written host intro) that required deadline reporting, audio recording, writing and editing for a daily production.

WRITING:

At least three stories for uscannenbergmedia.com where you are the lead byline should be completed by the end of the fall semester. Those three assignments require reporting, interviewing, and writing on a daily deadline. Those stories are likely to be between 400 and 800 words, but the exact assignment is up to the discretion of the student leader working on the day of a student's shift. Students must follow writing and reporting best practices and ethics on tight deadlines. All pieces must include a photo or lead image and breaking stories may be updated, expanded and/or rewritten over the course of the day.

Students also are encouraged to work on at least one long-term project that could be team-based, data-oriented, or primarily visual and published through the Annenberg Media Interactives Desk. Your lab shift instructors will discuss this with you during Week One.

IMPORTANT: If you are competitively selected via the audition process for an on-air role with ATVN, ARN, The Rundown or any other voluntary position, that does NOT count toward fulfilling your shift requirements. Please keep your full-day work assignment in mind as you plan your other commitments in the fall semester.

No assignments that are curation or aggregation work are allowed.

Be assured that we do NOT **require** you to produce a published piece during every week you work at Annenberg Media, but you must attend your weekly shift, actively participate and execute an assignment each week in order to receive a full participation grade for each shift. In some weeks, you might be contributing to many stories as you meet the demands that mirror those of a professional newsroom, or you might be working with a team on one large story. Unexcused absences let your team down and can negatively impact your grade in this course.

IV. Grading

This class is about hands-on learning. It is designed to give you practical experience in a newsroom. In order to succeed in this class, you will need to attend your shift and complete the tasks assigned to you. If you must miss a shift because of documented illness or emergency, you must notify your instructor and student editors via the newsroom Slack workspace and make up the session within two weeks (religious holidays are exempt, as are some other limited circumstances.) Please arrive on time. If you are late, you will not get credit for the shift and must make it up. Do not schedule interviews or assignments for other classes during this time period or you will not receive credit and must make up the shift.

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

V. Grading Standards

All assignments will be edited on a professional basis and you will be judged first on the accuracy, fairness and objectivity of your stories. You will then be evaluated for broadcast style, editing, production value, originality and the ability to meet deadlines. You also must adhere to the [Annenberg Media ethics policies](#) at all times. Your work produced for Annenberg Media will not be graded. Your instructor instead will be **the first edit or set of eyeballs** and will provide you feedback as you improve over the course of the semester.

VI. Assignment Submission Policy

Students will work under the guidance of student editors and with the support of faculty, instructors and coaches. You will submit written stories via Google document with open edit privileges, or through iNews, Trello or the other systems used by the Annenberg Media newsroom. Every week, you should arrive with your own story ideas. Instructors will discuss current stories and review the previous week's work. You must check in with your instructor and student editors before you leave at the end of the workday. **In most cases, that is 6 p.m. In some cases, it will be later.**

VII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

You will be expected to arrive for your shift with a knowledge of what is happening in local and national news. You will write in accordance with AP style.

2021 AP Stylebook: (https://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://www.apstylebook.com/usc_edu/) **NOTE: USC STUDENTS HAVE FREE ONLINE ACCESS. CLICK LINK**

Please note there are new [AP style guidelines](#) about race and ethnicity, which include capitalizing Black and deleting the hyphen in Asian American. The [NLGJA Stylebook on LGBTQ Terminology](#) includes more detailed information about accurate coverage of the LGBTQ community.

Annenberg 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>

VIII. 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.

IX. 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

X. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: *Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change.*

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.

Weeks 1, 2 – Aug. 26, Sept. 2

- Introductions, onboarding and overview. You will be trained and do hands-on exercises to prepare you for the newsroom. You’ll be given your rotations for the semester.
- Familiarize yourself with these guides (click the links):
 - [USC Annenberg Media Resources](#) — links to schedules, tools, guidelines, etc.
 - [Legal Guide](#) — writing about crime, minors, courts. Using anonymous sources.
 - [Annenberg Media Guide to Equitable Reporting Strategies and Newsroom Style](#)
 - [11 Style Rules to Know Now](#): Review of AP style.

Weeks 3, 4 – Sept. 9, Sept. 16

- Some rotations will start production while others will do run-throughs.

Week 5 – Sept. 23

The student-led Annenberg Media newsroom is up and running fully. You will work on stories as assigned by the editors. You are also encouraged to file your own story pitches to Trello the night before or arrive for your weekly shift prepared to share your story ideas in consultation with your instructor.

Week 6 – Sept. 30

Newsroom production continues.

Week 7 – Oct. 7

Newsroom production continues.

Week 8 – Oct. 14, Fall Break – No Media Center shifts

Week 9 – Oct. 21

Newsroom wide training.

Week 10 – Oct. 28

Newsroom production continues.

Week 11 – Nov. 4

Newsroom production continues.

Week 12 – Nov. 11

Newsroom production continues.

Week 13 – Nov. 18

Newsroom production continues.

Week 14 – Nov. 25 – Thanksgiving – No Media Center shifts

No production this week for Thanksgiving break.

Week 15 – Dec. 2

Last week of newsroom production.

There is no final for this class. Please join your colleagues at the Annenberg Media Wrap Party on **Mon., Dec. 6.**

XI. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

Communication

You must communicate with your instructor and the student editors on your assigned shift day via the Annenberg Media Slack workspace. This is different from the USC Annenberg Slack workspace that you are automatically signed up for via your courses.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

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

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

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

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

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

b. Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health – (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

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

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

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

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

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

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

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

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

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

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

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

usc-advocate.symplcity.com/care_report

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

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

dsp.usc.edu

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

USC Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

uscса.usc.edu

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

Diversity at USC – (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

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

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

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

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

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

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

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

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

XII. About Your Instructor

Alan Mittelstaedt started as an adjunct instructor in 2003 and joined the full-time faculty in Fall 2009 to help manage Annenberg Digital News, which produced Neon Tommy, the forerunner of uscannenbergmedia.com, where he now is a faculty advisor. For much of the previous decade, he was news editor at Los Angeles' alt-weeklies, including seven years at the L.A. Weekly, where he wrote a political column and oversaw a staff of six hard-nosed reporters. He's worked at mainstream newspapers. He was city editor at the Portland (Maine) Press Herald and at the Pasadena Star-News and was an investigative reporter and an editor at the San Bernardino County Sun, where he was surprised to be named Employee of the Year despite questioning many decisions of his Gannett bosses. When he was 15, he published his first article called "Deschooling Society: The Evils of Compulsory Education," and handed out 1,000 copies at his rural Virginia high school over the protests of his principal, who threatened to suspend him.