

## **JOUR 539: Introduction to Investigative Reporting** **2 Units**

**Fall 2021 – Wednesdays – 6-7:50 p.m.**

**Section:** 21564D

**Location:** ANN 201

**Instructor: Matt Lait**

**Office:** Online

**Office Hours:** Available upon request

**Contact Info:** Email: [lait@usc.edu](mailto:lait@usc.edu)

**Instructor: Scott Glover**

**Office:** Online

**Office Hours:** Available upon request.

**Contact Info:** Email: [Scott.Glover@CNN.com](mailto:Scott.Glover@CNN.com)

### **Course Description**

This course will be an overview of investigative reporting. You'll learn about its history, why it's important and how to do it. Some of that learning will be in the form of lectures, but much of it will be hands on. You will learn to overcome obstacles while out in the field reporting. You'll spend time in the courthouse pulling search warrants and trolling for other public documents that may yield investigative stories. You'll learn to write public records requests. You'll crunch data during a computer assisted reporting class and learn how to find databases online that you can use to produce stories of your own. Students in previous classes have had assignments result in stories in the Daily Trojan, Los Angeles Times and CNN. Those are the kinds of stories we want you to find and publish in the Annenberg Media Center. You will be required to complete three graded homework assignments and several other pass/fail assignments over the course. You will write stories based on public records, including search warrants, civil court files, health records and government databases. [Details of the assignments in the course schedule below.] There also will be a take-home final. Most significantly, you will conceive of, and develop, a strong investigative story pitch that you will be able to take into an Advanced Investigative Reporting class or other course that requires an in-depth, original project. Some early guidance: As instructors, we value persistence, ingenuity and drive in students. So show some, please.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

This course is intended to give you a taste of investigative journalism. Unlike some reporting that is centered on press releases and press conferences, you'll learn that investigative reporting is about finding stories people don't want you to find and telling stories people don't want you to tell. Whether it's shining a light in a dark alley that was the scene of a police beating or giving voice to the impoverished tenants of an abusive slumlord, it's reporting that serves a greater good. If you have the instinct to be a digger, we'll give you the tools. If you're a watchdog at heart, this course should inspire--and unleash--that inner guardian. By the end of this course, you should know how to find, report and write investigative stories at a beginning level.

- You will have a solid understanding of what investigative reporting is and how it differs from other types of reporting.
- You will learn how to access and analyze public records that will help you build a strong foundation for your stories.
- You will learn how to spot stories that other reporters miss by asking questions that other reporters don't ask.
- You will learn how to identify potential sources and how to make them actual sources.

- You will learn how to manage those relationships, especially as they pertain to investigative reporting.
- You will learn techniques for getting reluctant sources and subjects to be interviewed.
- You will learn how to look for, access and analyze the ever-growing amount of information on the Internet. You will learn to see the Internet for its incredible potential for investigative reporting, as well as for its considerable limitations and hazards.
- You will be exposed to the basics of computer assisted reporting and learn how to spot potential data driven stories.
- You will learn to be persistent, to think creatively, and how to get around the obstacles between you and the story you're pursuing. You will learn that the best stories are typically surrounded by such obstacles.
- You will learn how to conduct yourself in an ethical manner and to approach your stories with a goal of being hard hitting, but always fair. What if this story were being written about me, you'll learn to ask yourself. Would I think it was fair?
- You will learn to unleash the power of your investigative reporting by writing compelling stories that make the best use of all the information in your notebook, as opposed to merely dumping its full contents in front of the reader

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

There will be graded and ungraded homework assignments that highlight different elements of investigative reporting. The first graded requires research, analysis and interviewing skills. The second and third graded assignments involve public records document search. The other homework assignments will be assessed on a pass/fail basis. They will center on data reporting and memos that will advance a story pitch project that represents the most significant component of your grade. The story pitch will be an original, deeply reported subject for a story that you will be able to advance in another, high level reporting or writing class. It should be your goal to develop a pitch that will lead to an important, publishable story. Additionally, class participation is an important part of your grade. Lastly, there will be a take-home final that will draw from the course readings, lectures and assignments.

### **Course Notes and Policies**

Your active participation in this course is a must and, as such, class attendance is extremely important. Key concepts and strategies are discussed during the lectures. Several sessions involve investigative scenarios in which students will need to work together to discuss the best reporting strategies to pursue. These scenarios are based on real life investigative stories by your instructors and their colleagues.

We strive to be accessible to students. Please do not hesitate to call and email us. Be persistent, but also understanding, if we don't immediately respond as we are both working journalists with busy schedules

### **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

*She Said: Breaking the Sexual Harassment Story That Helped Ignite a Movement*

By Jodi Kantor & Megan Twohey

*Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators*

By Ronan Farrow

All other readings will be available on the web, via USC online libraries, or handed out.

All USC students have access to the AP stylebook via the [USC library](#).

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:

NLJJA Stylebook on LGBTQ Terminology: <https://www.nljja.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://aaja.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 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 (mentioned above).

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 for 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 aspiring investigative journalists, it is imperative that you become consumers of good watchdog/accountability stories. You must follow the news and be familiar with what is going on around the world, the country, throughout Los Angeles and in your neighborhood. You should read news stories thoroughly every day, listening to radio news, and watching television and Web newscasts and ask yourself this: Is there a deeper more important story here? Please read at least one major daily newspaper or its website, as well as local and weekly news websites. Please check Blackboard regularly for any articles, messages, etc. In addition, the following websites may be useful to you when conducting research, or if you're looking for investigative journalism tips: News University at [www.newsu.org](http://www.newsu.org), ProPublica's MuckReads, Poynter Institute at [www.poynter.org](http://www.poynter.org), Investigative Reporters and Editors at [www.ire.org](http://www.ire.org) and IRE's ExtraExtra blog and Pulitzer Prize winning stories at [www.pulitzer.org](http://www.pulitzer.org).

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](http://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

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Story Proposal, including update memos	250	25%
Graded Homework Assignments	350	35%
Ungraded homework assignments & Class Participation	100	10%
Final (Two parts, a take home writing assignment and in-class test. 150 points per part.)	300	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</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

All assignments will be edited on a professional basis. Each will be returned with written comments and explanations of any editing. All stories should be written in AP style unless Annenberg style conflicts, in which case students can follow Annenberg style.

Your copy, whether in the form of a story or memo, should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar, or fact. There should not be any omissions, either. In fact, any misspelled proper noun (even if it's due to a typographical error) or an inaccuracy will result in an automatic "F" on that assignment. Any factual error also will result in an automatic "F" on the assignment. Accuracy is the first law of journalism. Professional journalists are expected to get their facts right, to spell and punctuate correctly, and to respect grammar and syntax. In case of doubt, check your facts and consult the AP Stylebook or a dictionary. It only takes a minute or two to avoid mistakes. The story you produce as part of the search warrant assignment and the memo you write based on your interview with an investigative reporter must be accompanied by a complete list of sources. These should include titles, phone numbers and email addresses for anyone quoted. Web sites must have URLs. Printed sources must have bibliographical information. We may randomly fact-check your work during the semester by using this source lists, calling your sources to thank them for their help and requesting feedback. Stories that are not accompanied by source lists will receive an F. Stories with partial source lists will be graded down.

#### *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 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.

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.

## **Grading Timeline**

Our goal is to grade and return your assignment within two class sessions.

## **Assignment Submission Policy**

All assignments must be uploaded onto Blackboard. They should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced. On the top left-hand corner of the first page, write:

Your name

Journalism 539

Page number

Word count:

Date assignment is due

Title of assignment: e.g. City council story, search warrant story, restaurant memo.

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 your 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	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 8/25	<b>Introduction and course overview:</b> Who we are, who you are and why we're here.  What it means to be an investigative reporter: Fairness, balance, accuracy and beyond (persistence, resourcefulness, refusing to take no for an answer).  Evaluating stories tips. (Student exercise).	<b>READING</b>  “A Case of Doubt.”  Sample story pitches — to be handed out.  Start reading <i>She Said</i> and <i>Catch and Kill</i> .  <b>HOMEWORK</b>  Find an investigative story or project in a newspaper which was based on public records. Interview the author and prepare a report (750-word	

	<p>Key course assignment is the pitch memo. Discussion on what is expected of you on this assignment, which accounts for a large portion of your grade.</p>	<p>minimum) including the author's account of the reporting of the project, a summary of the piece, its findings, which records were used as well as how they were obtained and analyzed. Please include a copy or link to the underlying investigation. Be prepared to discuss your report in class. Full details on Blackboard. <b>Due Week 2.</b></p> <p>Think of a potential story idea. Conduct at least two interviews, which can be used to find a story or to learn more about an idea you already have. Identify at least two kinds of documents that would shed light on your subject. Do a Nexis clip search on the subject. Write a short summary — not more than 500 words — of the potential story idea. List the people you interviewed, with their phone numbers and email addresses; list the documents you identified; and cite the most helpful story you found on Nexis. (If you have two good story ideas, you can write up a second one for us to discuss.) The goal is for this to be an investigative story, but we will also accept solid enterprise/investigative profile pieces. If your</p>	
--	---	---	--

		<p>story is investigative, identify what harm has been perpetrated: Dollars stolen? Bodies injured, sickened, or killed? Trust betrayed? If it's not investigative but narrative or documentary, or a profile, or whatever, explain that and say why a reader would care. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. <b>Due Week 4.</b></p>	
<p>Week 2 9/1</p>	<p><b>The Hunt for Public records (and those that aren't) Part I:</b> They are the bedrock of investigative reporting. You'll learn how to find them, acquire them and analyze them to make your stories solid and compelling. You will learn about filing records through the federal Freedom of Information Act and through California's Public Records Act.</p> <p>Lecture on Public Records: Where to look, who has them and how to get them.</p> <p>The importance of civil and criminal court records/proceedings.</p> <p>View clip from Erin Brockovich.</p> <p>Discuss Investigative interview assignment.</p>	<p><b><u>READING:</u></b></p> <p>ProPublica--<a href="#">He's a liar, a con artist and a snitch. His testimony could soon send a man to his death.</a></p> <p><i>She Said</i> and <i>Catch and Kill</i>.</p> <p><u>"A Case of Doubt."</u></p> <p><b><u>HOMEWORK</u></b></p> <p>Search warrant story assignment. Your assignment is to go to a criminal court and find an interesting search warrant. You are to read the file, interview the investigating officer and do any other research you deem necessary. Do not attempt to interview the suspect unless you speak to us first. If charges have been filed in the case already, you should call the attorneys involved in the matter. Turn in a 700-word (more if you need it) story about</p>	<p>Investigative write-up due.</p>

		<p>your case. You should provide the basic allegations, the probable cause for the search and any background you can find on the suspect.</p> <p><i>TIP: A good search warrant might be fodder for a great story pitch.</i></p> <p><b>Due Week 6.</b></p> <p>Work on pitch.</p>	
<p>Week 3 9/8</p>	<p><b>The Hunt for Public records (and those that aren't) Part II.</b></p> <p>Case of Doubt: Guest Speaker Bruce Lisker, a man freed from prison after 26 year behind bars for a wrongful conviction. This discussion will focus on how records helped free Lisker.</p>	<p><b><u>READING</u></b></p> <p><i>She Said and Catch and Kill.</i></p> <p>How to be a FOIA Sleuth — to be emailed by instructor.</p> <p><a href="#">The Federal Open Government Guide</a></p> <p><a href="#">Open Government Guide California - Reporters Committee</a></p> <p><b><u>HOMEWORK</u></b></p> <p>Set up an iFOIA account here: <a href="#">iFOIA.org - Create and Manage your iFOIA Requests</a>. Email confirmation that you have done next class.</p> <p>Work on pitch and search warrant assignment.</p>	
<p>Week 4 9/15</p>	<p><b>The Hunt for Public records (and those that aren't) Part III.</b></p> <p>Public records exercise.</p> <p>Lecture on FOIAs.</p>	<p><b><u>READING</u></b></p> <p><i>She Said and Catch and Kill.</i></p> <p><a href="#">Eric Nadler on the Art of the Interview</a></p>	<p>Pitch memo due.</p> <p>Written updates due every other week. (Updates are ungraded, but part of your overall grade.)</p>

		<p><a href="#">Tips for persuading reluctant news sources to talk</a></p> <p><b><u>HOMEWORK</u></b></p> <p>File a FOIA/CPRA. <b>Due week 5.</b></p> <p>Work on pitch and search warrant assignment.</p>	
<p>Week 5 9/22</p>	<p><b>The Art of the Investigative Interview:</b> It's one thing to ask the quarterback who just threw the game winning touchdown how he feels about the victory or the movie star who just won a Golden Globe about the film they were in. It's quite another to interview the subject of an investigative story about the things you've been dredging up about them for the past weeks or months. How do you convince them to talk, even if they probably shouldn't? How do you keep the interview from ending prematurely? How do you make sure you get what came for, especially if you may only get one chance?</p> <p>Lecture on successful interviewing techniques.</p>	<p><b><u>READING</u></b></p> <p><i>She Said and Catch and Kill.</i></p> <p><b><u>GET AHEAD ON DATA!</u></b></p> <p>Familiarize yourself with Google Sheets by mastering the content of these guides and other readings:</p> <p><a href="#">Google Sheets.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Pivot tables.</a></p> <p><a href="#">How to interview data</a></p> <p><a href="#">"Clean Water Laws Are Neglected, at a Cost in Suffering"</a></p> <p><b><u>HOMEWORK</u></b></p> <p>Work on pitch.</p>	<p>FOIA assignment due.</p>

	Analyze recorded interview involving LAPD Detective.  View clip from All the President's Men.		
Week 6 9/29	<p><b>Finding and Working Sources Part I:</b></p> <p>So, who was this Deep Throat guy, and how do I find one for myself? Finding and developing sources is a vital skill for any reporter. It's absolutely crucial for an investigative reporter. We talk about what makes a good source, and provide you with some techniques for approaching them, grooming them and—once you have them—keeping them.</p> <p>Lecture on developing sources.</p> <p>View clip from The Insider</p> <p>Break up in groups and talk about your story pitch.</p>	<p><b>READING</b></p> <p><i>She Said</i> and <i>Catch and Kill</i>.</p> <p><a href="#">An overdose, a young companion, drug-fueled parties: The secret life of a USC med school dean</a></p> <p><a href="#">Must Reads: A USC doctor was accused of bad behavior with young women for years. The university let him continue treating students</a></p> <p>Complete the Week 5 reading on data reporting.</p> <p><b>HOMEWORK</b></p> <p>Work on pitch.</p>	Pitch memo update due. Search warrant assignment due.
Week 7 10/6	<p><b>Finding and Working Sources Part II:</b></p> <p>Class discussion of the <i>She Said</i> and <i>Catch and Kill</i> books.</p> <p>How did they get people talk?</p> <p>How do you protect them, and yourself?</p>	<p><b>READING</b></p> <p>LA Times' <b>Frequent Fire</b> and <b>Investigating Their Own</b>.</p> <p><b>HOMEWORK</b></p> <p>Restaurant Inspection Report: You are to go to a restaurant of your choice and write a one-page memo on its most</p>	

	<p>What level of corroboration is needed to publish?</p>	<p>recent public health inspection report, which by law has to be available upon request. Additionally, review the establishment's historical record posted on the county's public health website and include that information in your report. The online information will be less detailed than you will find at the restaurant. Pick a restaurant that has a B or C grade. Those will be more interesting. You will run into employees who will try to deny you the report. Be persistent. Make the reporting part of your write-up. If students feel uncomfortable seeking inspection reports from a restaurant due to the coronavirus, an alternative assignment using the county's online records will be offered. Select the restaurant in class. Due week 9.</p>	
<p>Week 8 10/13</p>	<p><b>The Power of Data, Part I:</b></p> <p>What do crooked Florida pawnbrokers, repeat shooters in the ranks of the LAPD, and dirty doctors in Southern California have in common? They were all the subject of stories revealed by data. We'll use these stories and several others for a macro-level introduction to</p>	<p><b><u>READING</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Dying for Relief.</u></b></p>	<p>Pitch memo update due.</p>

	<p>the concept of data reporting, the types of stories it can yield, and how to harness the power of numbers without being dull.</p>		
<p>Week 9 10/20</p>	<p><b>The Power of Data, Part II:</b></p> <p>This hands-on class will focus on manipulating some datasets that came from previously published stories, as well as finding new sets that are out there just waiting to be downloaded and crunched. From Covid-19 to systemic racism, there is readily available data to help you find and tell a story.</p>	<p><b>READING:</b></p> <p><a href="#">The Jeffrey Epstein Case Was Cold, Until a Miami Herald Reporter Got Accusers to Talk</a></p> <p><a href="#">Jeffrey Epstein: About the sex trafficking case &amp; accusations</a></p>	<p>Restaurant assignment due.</p>
<p>Week 10 10/27</p>	<p><b>How to Perform a Scrub.</b></p> <p>Lecture: How do you look into the backgrounds of elected officials, business titans, community leaders and others thrust into the news.</p> <p>View CNN scrub on Ben Carson</p> <p>View CNN scrub on Stormy Daniel's attorney.</p>	<p><b>READING:</b></p> <p><a href="#">The Reynold Center Guide to Basic Business Beat Reporting</a></p> <p><a href="#">10 K Filings Guide.</a> <a href="#">10 K Filings Basics.</a></p> <p>Work on pitch.</p>	<p>Pitch memo update due.</p>
<p>Week 11 11/3</p>	<p><b>How to Perform a Scrub Part of a Business/Charity:</b></p> <p>Lecture: How to investigate</p>	<p><b>HOMEWORK</b></p> <p>Work on pitch.</p>	

	<p>businesses and non-profit organizations.</p> <p>Break up in groups and talk about your story pitch.</p>		
<p>Week 12 11/10</p>	<p><b>Case Study: Breakdown of an investigation into a top law enforcement official.</b></p> <p>Lecture: How do you take an enticing tip and turn it into a story? How do you take one piece of information and leverage that for more?</p> <p>Interactive class exercise.</p>	<p><b><u>READING:</u></b></p> <p>Ethics reading handout.</p> <p><b><u>HOMEWORK</u></b></p> <p>Work on pitch.</p>	<p>Pitch memo update due.</p>
<p>Week 13 11/17</p>	<p><b>Hard hitting, yeah, but also fair, ethical and accurate:</b></p> <p>Investigative reporting is hard work. You want to push the envelope so your stories will have impact. At the same time, it is imperative that you conduct yourself in an ethical manner at all times; that you present your findings in a fair way; and that you don't make any mistakes in the process. It isn't easy. And there's no precise formula. But, we'll provide you with some strategies for striking that balance.</p> <p><b>In-class:</b></p>	<p><b>HOMEWORK:</b></p> <p>Take-home final writing assignment will be handed out. (Final Part 1)</p>	<p><b>FINAL PITCH PAPER DUE.</b></p>

	<p>Discussion of assigned readings involving ethical dilemmas.</p> <p>Lecture on common and not-so-common ethical pitfalls and how to recognize and avoid them.</p> <p>Lecture: You want to tell a story, not write a term paper. How to self-edit.</p> <p>Fact-checking.</p>		
<p>Week 14 11/24</p>	<p><b>Thanksgiving Break</b></p>		
<p>Week 15 12/1</p>	<p><b>Summative experience.</b></p> <p>Course summary. Tie up all loose ends/questions.</p> <p>End of semester Core survey, instructor evaluation, and self-evaluation.</p>		<p><b>Part 1: Take-home final writing assignment due.</b></p>
<p>Finals 12/8 7-9 p.m.</p>	<p><b>In-class Final Part II.</b></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](http://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](http://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://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](http://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](http://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](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**

**Scott Glover** has covered local and federal law enforcement since 1997, most recently focusing on police corruption. After an 18 career at the Los Angeles Times, he took a reporting position with CNN where he works on the investigative team. A graduate of San Francisco State University, Glover has worked at daily newspapers in Oregon, New Jersey and Florida during his career as a journalist. He has won numerous local, state and national awards for investigative reporting, including the prestigious Livingston Award for Young Journalists in 1996. In

2005, he received the Heywood Broun Award in Washington, D.C. for stories undermining the 20-year-old murder case against a San Fernando Valley man imprisoned for killing his mother. Glover was also a key contributor to The Times' coverage of the 2003 California wildfires, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for breaking news

**Matt Lait** is managing editor of investigations at CNN. Prior to that, he worked at the Los Angeles Times for more than two decades. He was part of a two-person team that broke what came to be known as the LAPD's Rampart Corruption Scandal and has won local, state and national awards for his reporting. He is a graduate of the University of California, San Diego.