



**JOUR 585 Specialized Reporting:  
Religion  
Texas: Aberrant or All-American?  
4 Units**

**Spring 2020 – Tuesdays– 9 a.m.-12:20  
p.m.**

**Section:** 21641D

**Location:** ASC 240

**Instructor: Diane Winston**

**Office:** ASC 332B

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Email:** [dianewin@usc.edu](mailto:dianewin@usc.edu)

**Cell:** 323-336-1851

**Pronouns:** She/her

**Instructor: Alan Mittelstaedt**

**Office:** Media Center

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Email:** [alan.mittelstaedt@neontommy.com](mailto:alan.mittelstaedt@neontommy.com)

**Cell:** 626-372-2453

**Pronouns:** He/him

### **I. Course Description**

This course explores the intersection of religion, politics and culture by reporting on Texas, where politics are religious and religion is political. Students will learn about the interplay of religion, politics and culture in the Lone Star State by visiting the Texas-Mexican border and San Antonio. They will report on topics including immigration, abortion, criminal justice, Covid safety, family and gender, the environmental crisis, arts and entertainment. Students will be responsible for three features, 750-1000 words, and one long-form story of 2500 words.

This course is oriented toward publishing. Students will learn how to query and pitch their work to news outlets. They also will be expected to revise their work until it is ready for publication. All stories will be developed on multiple platforms, but students must demonstrate mastery of text writing. Students can do text and audio stories. Video can be an add-on but not the story's main platform.

### **II. Overall Learning Objectives**

- Develop capacity to elegantly, insightfully and intelligently report on religion, politics and culture
- Handle the challenges of reporting in a new and unfamiliar environment
- Learn to pitch stories to a variety of outlets
- Sharpen writing and storytelling skills
- Discern significant stories and write compelling narratives
- Build toolkit of resources for religion coverage

### **III. Description of Assignments**

- Readings and reflections on weekly readings
- Monitoring news from Texas
- Report and write one local story for publication

- Report and write three pieces from Texas, one filed from there and two completed in the week after the trip
- Contribute weekly to class Instagram account when reporting locally and daily from Texas. Posts should include at least two sentences that contextualize and explain the image,

#### IV. Grading

##### a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Three feature stories @ 10 points each	30	30%
One long form story and social media output	50	50%
Weekly reading responses	10	10%
Class participation	10	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</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

This course is writing intensive and we expect you to pay close attention to the mechanics of good writing—including grammar, spelling, organization, and appropriateness for the media platform. Each assignment will be judged for the mechanics of writing; the depth of reporting: range of sources, accuracy, and context; the elegance of the writing, and the organization and flow of the story.

Your first grade on a story will be the grade for the story, even if you revise it several times. However, you will receive a three-point bonus when your stories are published (or, if there is a long lead time, accepted at a news outlet. All assignments will be edited on a professional basis, which will be discussed in class but includes fairness, accuracy, multiple sourcing and clear writing. We expect all stories to be delivered on deadline. If you miss the deadline, you will receive a 0 for the assignment. The only excuses for lateness are a doctor's note, a severe emergency (your home burns down) or a death in the family that can be verified.

**"A" stories** are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor copyediting (i.e., they would be aired or published). Video work must also be shot and edited creatively, be well paced and include good sound bites and natural sound that add flavor, color or emotion to the story.

**"B" stories** require more than minor editing and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission. For video, there may be minor flaws in the composition of some shots or in the editing. Good use of available sound bites is required.

**"C" stories** need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many spelling, style or omission errors. Camera work and editing techniques in video stories are mediocre or unimaginative, but passable. Sound bites add little or no color - only information that could be better told in the reporter's narration.

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

**“F” stories** have failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, are late, have numerous errors or both. Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. 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.

#### **V. Assignment Submission Policy**

- You will write two briefs that will become part of a feature story based on your reporting in Los Angeles. The briefs will be edited but not graded. Briefs are 250 words. You will do one longform story of 2,500 words over the course of the semester.. Reporting can be done before and after the trip but the bulk of it will be in Texas. You also will write two feature pieces in Texas. The feature pieces from Texas and LA will be between 750 -1000 words. At least one photo must accompany each brief. LA and Texas stories must include at least three photos with captions. If you do an audio piece in Texas, it also must have a text component. Text stories can include audio and video segments captured by phone.
- You will add a photo to the class Instagram each week; in Texas, you will post every other day.
- Each student will create a google.doc for their reading journal. Each week new responses will be added to the top of the journal. Responses should be a paragraph and should address what you learned that can be used in your stories.
- Briefs, stories and reading responses are due on the Sunday before class at 5 pm. A Google folder will be created for the briefs and stories.
- Late stories will not be accepted except in dire circumstances and permission from instructors.
- Students will revise stories until they are ready for publication.

#### **VI. Required Readings and Bibliography of Sources**

For purchase:

“Rough Country: How Texas Became America’s Most Powerful Bible-Belt State,” by Robert Wuthnow

All other articles on Blackboard

#### **VII. 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 Virtual Commons](#) for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s [Information Technology Services](#) website.

**Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/10/2022 – 4/29/2022; Final Exam Period: 5/4-11/2022)**

**Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20221/calendar/>**

**Last day to add:** Friday, January 28, 2022

**Last day to drop without a mark of "W" and receive a refund:** Friday, January 28, 2022

**Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit:** Friday, January 28, 2022 [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

**Last day to add/drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or change to Audit:**  
Tuesday, February 1

**Last day to withdraw without a "W" on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade:** Friday, February 25, 2022 [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 for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Last day to drop with a mark of "W":** Friday, April 8, 2022

## IX. Course Schedule

	Research or Activity	Deliverable/Due Dates
<b>Week 1</b> <b>Date: 1/11</b>	Class Introduction and expectations Why religion? Why Texas? How to find a local LA story Features vs. Longform Set up FB and Instagram  Guest: Robert Wuthnow	<b>ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE WEEK (READ THESE BEFORE CLASS)</b> <b>Reading:</b> <i>Wuthnow, Rough Country</i>
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Date: 1/18</b>	Discussion of reading Local story pitches What makes a good story? Religion in Texas, 1 (independent evangelicals and Southern Baptists) Assign websites to monitor Photography 101  Guest TBA:	<b>Reading:</b>  <a href="https://www.newyorker.com/news/on-religion/the-fight-for-the-heart-of-the-southern-baptist-convention?utm_source=onsite-share&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=onsite-share&amp;utm_brand=the-new-yorker">https://www.newyorker.com/news/on-religion/the-fight-for-the-heart-of-the-southern-baptist-convention?utm_source=onsite-share&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=onsite-share&amp;utm_brand=the-new-yorker</a> BB  <a href="https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/sinners-in-the-hands/">https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/sinners-in-the-hands/</a>  <b>Writing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write up in your reading journal</li><li>• Three sentence pitch for your local story</li></ul>
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Date: 1/25</b>	Reading Review Workshop briefs Story discernment and news judgment Texas religion and politics, 1 Photography Clinic	<b>Reading:</b> <u>Christian Americanism and Texas Politics Since 2008 (BB)</u>  <a href="https://www.texasalmanac.com/articles/religious-affiliation-in-texas">https://www.texasalmanac.com/articles/religious-affiliation-in-texas</a>  <b>Writing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write-up in your reading journal</li><li>• Brief: 250-word profile on someone, some place or</li></ul>

		<p>something from your local reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitch for magazine story</li> </ul> <p>First brief due 5:00 p.m. on 1/23</p>
<p><b>Week 4</b> <b>Date 2/1</b></p>	<p>Reading review Workshop stories Discuss pitches Organizing your story from afar Religion in Texas, 2 Latina/o Catholicism, Pentecostalism and</p> <p>Guest: TBA</p>	<p><b>Reading:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-political-scene/the-deep-origins-of-latino-support-for-trump?utm_source=on-site-share&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=on-site-share&amp;utm_brand=the-new-yorker">https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-political-scene/the-deep-origins-of-latino-support-for-trump?utm_source=on-site-share&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=on-site-share&amp;utm_brand=the-new-yorker</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/on-the-border-two-versions-of-one-immigration-reality?utm_source=on-site-share&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=on-site-share&amp;utm_brand=the-new-yorker">https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/on-the-border-two-versions-of-one-immigration-reality?utm_source=on-site-share&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=on-site-share&amp;utm_brand=the-new-yorker</a></p> <p><b>Writing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write-up in your reading journal</li> <li>• Write up short pitch for longform story</li> <li>• Write 250-word brief describing where your story is taking place or showing what the tension/conflict/interest is or write up the first few pages of the story</li> </ul> <p>Second brief due 5:00 p.m. on 1/30</p>
<p><b>Week 5</b> <b>Date: 2/8</b></p>	<p>What's at stake in Texas primary elections Reading review Texas news update Reporting on Religion Review Texas pitches Workshop first story</p>	<p><b>Reading:</b></p> <p><a href="https://texaspolitics.utexas.edu/blog/overview-abortion-attitudes-texas-four-things-know">https://texaspolitics.utexas.edu/blog/overview-abortion-attitudes-texas-four-things-know</a></p> <p><a href="https://ballotpedia.org/Texas_Proposition_3,_Prohibition_on_Limiting_Religious_Services_or_Organizations_Amendment_(2021)">https://ballotpedia.org/Texas_Proposition_3,_Prohibition_on_Limiting_Religious_Services_or_Organizations_Amendment_(2021)</a></p> <p><b>Wuthnow review: Chapter 7—Moving into the national spotlight</b></p> <p><b>Writing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write-up in your reading journal</li> <li>• Pitches for two Texas feature stories</li> </ul>

		First story due 2/13 5 p.m.
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Date: 2/15</b>	Texas and the immigration debate Reading Review Texas News Update Update on your Texas story prep Workshop revisions  Guest: TBA	<b>Reading:</b>  <a href="https://www.texastribune.org/2021/12/06/texas-immigration-elections-2022-issues/">https://www.texastribune.org/2021/12/06/texas-immigration-elections-2022-issues/</a>  <a href="https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-detention-child-migrants?utm_medium=social_share&amp;utm_source=emailfwd">https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-detention-child-migrants?utm_medium=social_share&amp;utm_source=emailfwd</a>  <a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/christian-catholic-responsibility-illegal-immigrant-texas-charities-abbott-covid-1163182112011025207f00e2ef30a">https://www.wsj.com/articles/christian-catholic-responsibility-illegal-immigrant-texas-charities-abbott-covid-1163182112011025207f00e2ef30a</a>  <b>Writing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write-up in your reading journal</li><li>• Memo on your longform story</li></ul>
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Date: 2/22</b>	Texas abortion law goes to the U.S. Supreme Court Reading review Texas news Texas stories update Texas travel prep  Guest TBA	<b>Reading:</b>  <a href="https://www.texastribune.org/2021/11/24/texas-abortion-seekers-religion/">https://www.texastribune.org/2021/11/24/texas-abortion-seekers-religion/</a>  <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/dec/20/texas-church-fighting-abortion-rights">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/dec/20/texas-church-fighting-abortion-rights</a>  <b>Writing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write-up in your reading journal</li><li>• Update on Texas features</li></ul>
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Date: 3/1</b>	Preparing for Texas trip Reading Review Texas news Texas stories  Trip 3/9-19	<b>Reading Assignment:</b> TBD  <b>Writing</b> Write up in reading journal
<b>Week 9</b> <b>Date: 3/8</b>	Preparing for Texas trip Reading Review Texas news Texas stories  Trip 3/9-19	<b>Reading Assignment:</b> TBD  <b>Writing</b> Write up in reading journal

<b>Spring Break Date: 3/15</b>	<b>FILE 1 STORY FROM TEXAS</b>	
<b>Week 10 Dates: 3/22</b>	No class	Work on all three stories
<b>Week 11 Date: 3/29</b>	Postmortem trip Workshop feature stories Discuss longform stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>First Texas story due 5 p.m. on March 27</b></li> <li>• <b>Outline of longform piece</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 12 Date: 4/5</b>	Workshop second Texas stories Discuss feature stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Second Texas due April 3 by 5 p.m.</b></li> <li>• <b>Lede to nut graf of magazine story due April 4 by 5 pm</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 13 Date: 4/12</b>	Workshop drafts Discussion of freelancing, marketing/branding,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First draft longform story due April 10 by 5 pm</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14 Date: 4/19</b>	Workshop revised stories Placement of stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Longform stories April 17 5 pm</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 15 Date: 4/26</b>	Party Job options/alumni panel	
<b>Final Story due Tuesday, May 10</b>		Final version of 2500-word magazine piece due by 8 a.m.

## X. Policies and Procedures

### Class Behavior

Please treat every get-together with your classmates and instructors as if it were a meeting with your editors – that is, you won't even dream of being late, or of leaving your cell phone on, or of showing up less than fully caffeinated. Likewise, you'll treat every deadline as if it's a try-out for the *Washington Post* (or whatever your fantasy workplace is). Translation: **All students are to come to all classes with assignments complete and able to discuss the day's readings. Reading is mandatory.**

### Professional Comportment

For purposes of this class, you are a bona fide member of the working press. You should expect to be treated with all of the normal courtesies and privileges afforded to the news media. In return, you will represent the profession in a dignified and appropriate manner. If you do not take yourself seriously, no one else will. As a first step, dress professionally. Business casual is best: women should wear skirts or dresses of an appropriate length and pants that are not jeans; men should wear button-down shirts and pants that are not jeans. No skimpy or tight clothing, shorts, wrinkled t-shirts or flip-flops. Avoid clothing with any sort of logo, including USC logos. Please be aware of modesty standards when visiting religious communities. Women may need sleeves. If going to a mosque or Orthodox synagogue, bring a head covering.

### Civility

Questions and discussions are welcome. The only requirement is that the questioner respects the opinion of others and does not monopolize class time. Given the focus on religion, which is both intimate and inflammatory, you will give alternate beliefs respectful consideration whether or not you agree with them.

### Early Departures

If there is a special circumstance that requires you to leave early, please notify us before class so we can make sure that you get all the appropriate information concerning any upcoming test or quiz.

If laptops are permitted, they are for taking notes only. **Your cell phone should always be off and out of sight.**

### **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*

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 Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* (<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 (<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](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

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

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*  
[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

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

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*  
[uscsa.usc.edu](http://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](http://diversity.usc.edu)

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

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

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

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

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

## **XI. About Your Instructors**

DIANE WINSTON reported for the *Baltimore Sun*, *Dallas Times Herald* and *Raleigh News and Observer*. She also wrote for magazines and for television news. She holds a Ph.D. from Princeton University in Religion as well as Masters' degrees from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and the Harvard Divinity School. She has authored and edited several books, including *Red Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation*

*Army, Faith in the Market: Religion and Urban Commercial Culture, Small Screen, Big Picture: Television and Lived Religion, The Oxford Handbook of American News and Religion, Religion and Reality Television: Faith in Late Capitalism, and Religion in Los Angeles..* She is currently finishing a book on religion, the news media and the Reagan revolution. Her writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *Chronicle of Higher Education* among other venues.

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](http://uscannenbergmedia.com), where he now is a faculty advisor. During 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 six hard-nosed reporters. His mainstream newspaper jobs include city editor at the Portland (Maine) Press Herald and at the Pasadena Star-News, and investigative reporter and editor at the San Bernardino County Sun, where he was named Employee of the Year despite questioning many decisions of his Gannett bosses. At 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.