



PR 522: Storytelling with Data Intelligence
3 Units

Fall 2022 – Thursday – 6-8:30 p.m.

Section: 21314D

Location: Online

Instructor: Prash Sabharwal

Office: Zoom

Office Hours: Thursdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

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Course Description

We are in an era where knowledge extraction from data is a new norm in every sector of public relations and advertising. From media relations to issues management to creative testing, we rely on data to tell our stories. The ability to create compelling and accurate stories from a variety of data types and to overcome analytic challenges is a prerequisite for practitioners. This course is designed to train students to obtain the skill sets to face future opportunities and challenges. This course will provide the foundations of quantitative research, the basics of storytelling with data, and critical thinking skills in public relations, advertising, and related fields. This course is a building block for the subsequent classes in our research track and professors in the subsequent research courses will assume that students have mastered all the knowledge and skills taught in this sequence.

There are three parts to the course: 1) Introduction to fundamentals of storytelling with data intelligence, storytelling with traditional research methods, and storytelling with emerging research methods. In the first part, we will discuss the changing world of public relations, advertising, and related fields and how the paradigm is shifting to data-driven approach and what it means to professionals. We will also overview the basics of quantitative data analysis. In the second part, we will cover how to do storytelling with traditional research methods and get a hands-on experience by working in groups to develop a research-based storytelling project. In the third part, we will shift our focus to how to craft a story using emerging research methods such as social media analytics and data visualization.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Learn the importance of data literacy and storytelling in public relations, advertising, and related fields.
- Be able to ask good questions and demonstrate problem-solving skills
- Have a fundamental understanding of basic statistics and data literacy
- Be able to evaluate and synthesize various data from traditional and emerging research to draw valid insights
- Demonstrate a basic level of proficiency with select data visualization tools
- Be able to detect stories in data and draw contextually-relevant insights
- Convert data/analytical results into compelling stories that resonate with target audiences
- Effectively communicate data insights to target audiences
- Practice and develop critical thinking skills

Description and Assessment of Assignments

1) Midterm Exam (individual work)

- In class exam.

2) Method Reflection & Report (individual work)

- Each student picks one method from the syllabus and finds one relevant public relations/advertising case or study.
- You need to write a short reflection essay about the PR/advertising case or study to discuss how the method was used and offer critiques and insights that you have.
- You will also do an oral report of your reflection in class.

3) Final research project & report: Execution, Analysis, and Insights (group work)

- Conduct research projects with real world implications.
- Develop and present PR/advertising recommendations.

4) Class participation.

- You are expected to attend class regularly and contribute to in-class discussions and activities. Students who miss multiple classes or rarely contribute to class discussion will face grade reduction.

5) Peer evaluation.

- Your participation in your group matters. Your group members will evaluate your efforts at the end of the semester via peer evaluations. This is worth 5% of your overall grade.
- In addition, it is possible to “be fired” by other group members from the group if you do not meet internal group deadlines, do not complete your group’s assignments, do not work as a team member, or do not show up for your group meetings. If all group members vote to fire you, then you will have to prepare a whole separate final project by yourself.

Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Midterm Exam (individual grade)	300	30%
Method Reflection & Report (individual grade)	200	20%
Final Project (group grade)	400	40%
Participation	50	5%
Peer Evaluation	50	5%
TOTAL	1000	100%

b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
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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

Public Relations

“A” projects have writing near professional quality; one or no mistakes; clearly proofread and edited material. All required elements included (catchy headline, solid lead, varied vocabulary; supporting facts/figures; quotes as required). Excellent organization and flow; original thinking. Showed creativity in packaging/distribution method. High end of scale: publishable today as is.

“B” projects have two to five spelling, grammar or AP Style mistakes. One or more required elements missing or poorly displayed (i.e., boring headline; confusing lead, etc.). Shows potential as a good writer. Adhered to inverted pyramid. High end of scale will have at least one extraordinary element such as astonishing lead or little-known facts or pithy quote. Some creativity shown. Publishable with medium editing.

“C” projects have more than five errors (spelling, grammar, AP style). Poorly edited and/or proofread. May have adhered to inverted pyramid but strayed at beginning or end. Hackneyed elements such as trite headline or uninteresting lead. Little or no facts/figures included. Passive rather than active verbs become the norm. Little or no creativity shown. Publishable with major editing.

“D” projects have more than 10 errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely rewritten. Poorly organized with little or no understanding of journalistic style/standards. Needs to work with writing coach.

“F” projects are not rewritable, late or not turned in. A grade of F also will be assigned for any plagiarized and/or fabricated material that is submitted.

d. Grading Timeline

One week.

Assignment Rubrics

Assignment Submission Policy

A. You are expected to complete assignments at the beginning of class on the due date indicated in the course schedule. Late assignments will have an automatic 10% per day deducted. I will not accept any written assignment one week after the due date. The one-week mark is calculated from the beginning of the class on the date that the assignment is due. After one week, you will receive zero points on this assignment.

B. For group projects, I expect one copy per group.

Assignment Rubrics

Presentations (Final)

1. Evidence of presentation team's preparedness and familiarity with content
2. Being on strategy/on-task/fulfills project objectives
3. Strategically Sound Situation Analysis, Cohesive Presentation, Data-supported Storytelling
4. Quality of slides (graphically appealing, brand-appropriate, error-free, appropriate use of data viz)
5. Quality of commentary (well-informed, thorough, compelling conclusions)
6. Professionalism of presentation team and appropriate engagement/rapport with audience
7. Quality of Q&A (demonstrating knowledge beyond slide content to answer questions)

Final Group Report

1. Appropriateness of the research questions and/or hypotheses
2. Sufficiently detailed findings
 - a. Use of appropriate data analysis and accurate results reporting
 - b. Compelling use of data visualization and storytelling techniques
3. Invigorating discussion of research findings and sound practical implications
4. Well-proofread and edited with no GSP (grammar, spelling or punctuation mistakes)

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Dykes, B. (2019). Effective data storytelling: how to drive change with data, narrative and visuals. John Wiley & Sons.

You can buy this book on Amazon. Alternatively, you can access it via our libraries for free at:
https://uosc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9781119615736&context=PC&vid=01USC_INST:01USC&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Primo%20Central&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,The%20Data%20Storytelling&offset=0

Be sure to sign in your library account before you click on this link.

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.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/22/22 – 12/2/22)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20223/calendar/>

Friday, September 9: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to change enrollment option to audit for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to change a Pass/No Pass to a letter grade for Session 001

Friday, September 9: Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall

Tuesday, September 13: 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 7: 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, November 11: 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	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 Date: 8/25	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Importance of data literacy in Public Relations, Advertising, and Marketing Communication • Principles and practice in data-driven storytelling • Course introduction • IRL (in real life) application—change through advocacy 	Dykes, Chapter 1-2	
Week 2 Date: 9/1	Storytelling with data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychology of data storytelling • The anatomy of a data story • The narrative of a data story • IRL application—customer-driven campaigns 	Dykes, Chapter 3-4, 6	Class forms into groups for final project
Week 3 Date: 9/8	Data as the foundation of your data story: Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of data • How to propose research questions? • Measurement scales • Sampling strategies in research IRL application—how data influences policy	Dykes, Chapter 5	Groups identify client for final project
Week 4 Date: 9/15	Data as the foundation of your data story: Part II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to understand statistics? • Statistical terms and concepts • IRL application—analyzing cultural trends • Research workshop with Annenberg school librarian 	Pew “5 key themes in Americans’ views about AI and human enhancement”	Groups submit client overview worksheet for final project by 9/15

Week 5 Date: 9/22	Introducing survey methods: Part 1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey procedures • Questionnaire Design • Workshop on questionnaire design in Qualtrics • Method reflection assignment overview 	Supplementary readings posted on blackboard	
Week 6 Date: 9/29	Introducing survey methods: Part 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting and analyzing quantitative data • Quantitative data analysis workshop • IRL application–employee value proposition • Review of midterm 	Supplementary readings posted on blackboard	
Week 7 Date: 10/6	Midterm		
Week 8 Date: 10/13	FALL RECESS		
Week 9 Date: 10/20	Qualitative research methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose, Philosophy & Mechanics • Methods & Tools • Discussion Guide Development • Coding and Qualitative Data Analysis 	Supplementary readings posted on blackboard	
Week 10 Date: 10/27	Harnessing private and public web data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social listening and writing Boolean queries • Google analytics • Social media analytics • IRL application–“real-time” content 	USC Annenberg–The Polarization Index Think With Google – Insights Briefing	Method reflection reports due by 10/27
Week 11 Date: 11/03	Emerging research methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big data analytics • Machine learning • Understanding AI • Ethical considerations and privacy • IRL application–AI in advertising • Method reflection shareouts 	WSJ “Did a Robot Help Create That Ad? The Answer, Increasingly, Is Yes.”	

Week 12 Date: 11/10	Data visualization fundamentals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When to use data viz? • What is good data viz? • What's the right visual for your data? • Traps to avoid • IRL application–pitching media Workshop for final projects	Dykes, Chapter 7, 8	
Week 13 Date: 11/17	Crafting a story with data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The elements of data stories • How to craft your own data story? • Q&A for final projects 	Dykes, Chapter 9	
Week 14 Date: 11/24	THANKSGIVING RECESS (NOV. 24-25)		
Week 15 Date: 12/01	Group Presentations Dry Run & Discussion		
FINAL EXAM PERIOD Date: 12/08, 7-9 p.m.	Final Group Presentations Summative experience		Final project due

Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

Communication

Please feel free to contact me via email outside of the classroom. Emails will be responded within 1 day during workdays.

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. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <https://policy.usc.edu/research-and-scholarship-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

<https://eeotix.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

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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776

osas.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/note takers/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

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://annenbergscholarships.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergscholarships-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.

Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund

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

Awards are distributed to students experiencing unforeseen circumstances and emergencies impacting their ability to pay tuition or cover everyday living expenses. These awards are not intended to cover full-tuition expenses, but rather serve as bridge funding to guarantee students' continued enrollment at USC until other resources, such as scholarships or loans, become available. Students are encouraged to

provide as much information in their application, as well as contact their academic advisor directly with questions about additional resources available to them.

About Your Instructor

Prash Sabharwal is a digital marketing and communications specialist who enables companies and executives to reach their most important audiences with thumb stopping content informed by data-driven intelligence. Whether it's helping clients mitigate crises by forecasting the spread of news stories or mining social media conversation for the next big brand campaign, Prash applies data to every step of the communications process. He has activated large-scale digital marketing programs for brands including McDonald's, Dow Chemical and Kimberly-Clark Professional. His agency experience includes Zeno Group (Edelman Holdings), Brunswick Group and Golin.