**PR 209: Effective Writing for Strategic**

**Public Relations**

**4 units**

**Spring 2023 – Mondays – 8:30-11:50 a.m.**

**Section:** 21068D

**Location:** ANN 308

## **Instructor: Josh Rubenstein**

**Office:** ANN lobby or classroom

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Contact Info:** [joshuaru@usc.edu](mailto:joshuaru@usc.edu); 213-399-5818

## **Course Description**

This is the first course of a three-part journey that includes PR 351a and 351b.

PR 209 is an intensive, skills-based writing course designed and focused on preparing and writing materials for use in media relations. It also provides students with the following:

1. Familiarity with proper writing styles with sensitivity to the requirements of media and publications.
2. Competence in writing mechanics and grammar, headlines, labels, structure, and the ability to express information clearly to the intended audience(s).
3. Familiarity with the Inverted Pyramid and prioritizing facts.
4. Ability to judge what constitutes news and the nuances of how it is defined by a wide variety of media.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

* Write with clarity, insight and skill
* Judge the importance of information, set priorities and tailor writing to meet the needs of different media and reporters
* Demonstrate editing and proofreading abilities to prepare material to be published

Through in-class assignments and homework, students will learn to organize and plan their writing both with and without deadline pressure. Some assignments will cover the essentials of news and the basic building blocks of providing information; others will include elements designed to provide insight for working with the news media.

Students are expected to take on their assignments with a professional attitude and a willingness to learn new techniques. Writing solid media materials takes **practice** and hard work. \*\*\* Based on the progress of each student, certain exercises and/or assignments may be changed. \*\*\*

Classes include a weekly quiz and writing exercises. Some exercises take place during the class and are in addition to take-home assignments. Some writing will be on deadline, which is an essential skill for public relations.

## **Course Notes**

Copies of lecture slides, examples of assignments, and additional tutorial material are typically uploaded to Blackboard but may vary weekly.

# **Description and Assessment of Assignments**

**Homework:** Various readings, writing assignments (media materials), and/or research. Points are deducted for incomplete assignments and for AP (Associated Press) errors.

**Quizzes:** Based on readings, AP Stylebook, grammar, and proofreading. Answer keys are used to assess accuracy of quiz answers.

**Writing** **(in-class and homework):** Students will draft an array of writing assignments (media materials). Points are deducted for incomplete assignments and for AP (Associated Press) errors.

**Midterm exam**: There is both a “take-home” section and an “in-class” section of the exam; the “take-home” section is a writing assignment (create a news release and detailed fact sheet); the “in-class” section is a series of drills to test spelling, grammar, AP style, proofreading and writing assignments. Students must take both sections of the midterm to pass the class.

**Class participation**: Active response to readings, posing questions and comments.

**Final project:** See final project description attached to syllabus. Points are deducted for incomplete assignments and for AP (Associated Press) errors.

## **Grading**

### **a. Grading Breakdown**

Description of assessments and corresponding points and percentage of grade.

1. **Breakdown of Grade**

| Assignment | % of Grade |
| --- | --- |
| Homework assignments **(20-35 pts. each)** | 15% |
| Quizzes **(points will vary)** | 5% |
| Writing drills (in-class) **(20-35 pts. each)** | 25% |
| Midterm exam **(200 pts.)** | 20% |
| Class participation **(5 pts. per class)** | 10% |
| Final project **(135 pts.)** | 25% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** |

### **b. Course Grading Scale**

Letter grades and corresponding point value ranges.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range** | | |
| 95% to 100%: A | 80% to 83%: B- (B minus) | 67% to 69%: D+ (D plus) |
| 90% to 94%: A- (A minus) | 77% to 79%: C+ (C plus) | 64% to 66%: D |
| 87% to 89%: B+ (B plus) | 74% to 76%: C | 60% to 63%: D- (D minus) |
| 84% to 86%: B | 70% to 73%: C- (C minus) | 0% to 59%: F |

### **c. Grading Standards**

**“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**

Graded **homework** assignments are typically due Fridays by 9 pm following each class session, though this may vary. Students can expect to receive their grades and feedback before the next class session. Graded **“in-class”** **writing assignments** are typically due Wednesday by 9 pm.

## **Assignment Submission Policy**

Assignments will be due via Blackboard, as I designate each week. All assignments will be created in Microsoft Word. Assignments not following directions will be graded lower. If you are absent, you are responsible for submitting homework when it is due. **No late assignments are accepted.**

## **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

1. *Public Relations Writing, Strategies & Structures* by Doug Newsom and Jim Haynes. Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. Eleventh Edition, 2016. (or other more recent edition)
2. *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law.* **Latest edition required.**
3. Dictionaries and other writing references are indispensable.
4. It’s impossible to learn about writing and improve your writing skills without reading topical news and feature writing and watching quality news broadcasts. Be regular readers of newspapers, magazines, trade publications, websites, and other publications as required by assignment or your own interest. You should be familiar with <http://www.prnewswire.com> and <http://www.businesswire.com> and other press release services.

## **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**](http://www.annenbergdl.org/) for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s [Information Technology Services](http://itservices.usc.edu/wireless/support/) website.

**Add/Drop Dates for Session 001**

**(15 weeks: 1/9/2023 – 4/28/2023; Final Exam Period: 5/3-10/2023)**

**Link:** [**https://classes.usc.edu/term-20231/calendar/**](https://classes.usc.edu/term-20231/calendar/)

**Last day to add:** Friday, January 27, 2023

**Last day to drop without a mark of "W" and receive a refund:** Friday, January 27, 2023

**Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit:** Saturday, January 28, 2023 [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, January 31, 2023

**Last day to withdraw without a “W” on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade:** Friday, February 24, 2023 [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 7, 2023

**Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**  
A weekly schedule of the topics, readings, and deliverables for the course.

***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. More detailed lessons will be provided each week on Blackboard.*

|  | **Topics/Daily Activities** | **Readings and Homework** | **Deliverable/Due Dates** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week 1**  **Date: 1/9** | **Welcome**  Introductions, detailed review of syllabus, texts, policies, and components of media materials. Inverted Pyramid. What is the job of PR Writer? | *In-Class Assignment:*   * Interview a classmate and write a one-page bio (200 words) and submit by the end of this class.   *Homework:*   * Bring two (2) news releases to the next class. Be prepared to come to class to talk about the key messages being conveyed.   *Reading:*   * Readings:Newsom - Ch. 1 Public Relations and the Writer and Ch. 3 Writing to Clarify; AP Style - Punctuation Guide, A, B | Homework due by Friday 5 p.m. |
| **Week 2**  **Date: 1/16** | NO CLASS: MLK Day | | |
| **Week 3**  **Date: 1/23** | **Headlines**  How to write a headline  What is the PESO Model  The Basic Parts of a News Release | *In-Class Assignment:*   * Review Headlines in LA Times and NY Times * Quiz – AP Style     *Homework:*   * Using the two news releases you found, identify what you believe to be the intended key messages. Write a brief report with your summary. * Watch three separate morning, afternoon, and evening newscasts. Listen to one AM radio news show. Be prepared to identify the news anchors. Try to figure out which was a PR-generated news story.   *Reading:*   * Readings:Newsom - Ch. 6 Research for the PR Writer and Ch.7 Writing to Persuade; AP Style - C, D, E, F | Quiz due by 5 p.m.  Homework due by Friday 5 p.m. |
| **Week 4**  **Date: 1/30** | **Understanding Media**  An immersive discussion to understand how media outlets operate, what types of stories they look for, and how stories get chosen and created.  Understanding Stakeholders  The Art of the Pitch | *In-Class Assignment:*   * The art of writing a subject line * Write three versions of an email subject line * AP Style Quiz   *Homework:*   * Write a headline and lead paragraph for each of two news events * Begin thinking about the final project -- topics/subjects   *Reading:*   * Readings: Newsom - Ch. 9 Writing for Public Media and Ch. 10 Email, Memos;AP Style - G, H, I, J, K | Quiz due by 5 p.m.  Homework due by Friday 5 p.m. |
| **Week 5**  **Date: 2/6** | **The News Release**  Discuss messaging and how it connects to audiences. What is the client trying to achieve?  Breaking down a news release  Why is Good Grammar important?  Emails, Memos, Letters & Reports | *In-Class Assignment:*   * Components of a news release * Begin writing a news release (contact info., headline, lead graph).   *Homework:*   * Add a nut graph to your news release.   *Reading:*   * Readings:Newsom - Ch. 4 Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation and Ch. 5 Social Media Writing; AP Style L, M, N, O, P | Homework due Friday 5 p.m. |
| **Week 6**  **Date: 2/13** | **Quotes & Statements**  Analyzing the Nut Graph  Making your writing more readable  Active vs. Passive Voice  Creating a great quote | *In-Class Assignment:*   * Interview a partner and create a quote * Include two quotes in a paragraph about your partner * AP Style Quiz   *Homework:*   * Add a nut graph to your news release.   *Reading:*   * Readings:Newsom – Ch. 8 Media Contact; AP Style Q, R, S, T, U, V | Quiz due by 5 p.m.  Homework due by Friday 5 p.m. |
| **Week 7**  **Date: 2/20** | NO CLASS: Presidents’ Day | | |
| **Week 8**  **Date: 2/27** | **Crisp Writing & Fact Sheets**  Understanding a press kit  Ins and Outs of Research  Backgrounders | *In-Class Assignment:*   * Write a backgrounder about your assigned event, initiative, or product * AP Style Quiz   *Homework:*   * Add two quotes to your news release   *Reading:*   * Readings:AP Style W, X, Y, Z | Quiz due by 5 p.m.  Homework due by Friday 5 p.m. |
| **Week 9**  **Date: 3/6** | Midterm Review  AP Style Review | Study For Midterm | Receive “Take-Home” Portion of Midterm Exam |
| **Spring Break**  **Date: 3/13** | NO CLASS | | |
| **Week 10**  **Date: 3/20** | MIDTERM | Complete “In-Class” section of the midterm | “In-Class” section of midterm must be completed during class  “Take-Home” section turned in at the start of class |
| **Week 11**  **Date: 3/27** | **Putting It All Together**  Review requirements for final project  Writing a Boilerplate | *In-Class Assignment:*   * Complete News Release * Write a Boilerplate for your news release   *Homework:*   * Finalize your proposal for the company you are choosing for your final project. Develop a list of elements for your information kit | Homework due by Friday 5 p.m. |
| **Week 12**  **Date: 4/3** | Crisis Communications  Lifecycle of a Crisis  Crisis Case Study  Holding Statements | *In-Class Assignment:*   * Write a holding statement for the scenario given   *Homework:*   * Complete news release for your final project | Homework due by Friday 5 p.m. |
| **Week 13**  **Date: 4/10** | FAQs & Q and As – Ethical Writing  Legal Aspects of Business Communication  Ethics vs. Law  Writing FAQs or Q & As | *In-Class Assignment:*   * AP Style Quiz   *Homework:*   * Complete FAQs for your final project | AP Style Quiz due by 5 p.m.  Homework due by Friday 5 p.m. |
| **Week 14**  **Date: 4/17** | Social Media  The power of social media  Exploration of various platforms  Writing a Blog | *In-Class Assignment:*   * Practice writing social posts   *Homework:*   * Complete Fact Sheet for your final project | Homework due by Friday 5 p.m. |
| **Week 15**  **Date: 4/24** | Internal Comms and Media Advisories  Understanding the difference between external communication and internal communication  Writing an apology  What to include in a media advisory | *In-Class Assignment:*   * *Create a media advisory for the Powerball Winner*   *Homework:*   * Finish Final Projects |  |
| **FINAL EXAM PERIOD**  **Date: 5/8, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.** | Final Project Presentations | Turn in Final Project Materials |  |

**PR 209 FINAL PROJECT: Detailed information kit --**

You will prepare a detailed information kit (worth 135 pts.) on an organization or person of your choice. You are responsible for researching and writing all the material. All content must be original.

The topic may reflect the type of public relations you think you might be interested in. For example, if you’re interested in corporate social responsibility, Tom’s Shoes or Ben & Jerry’s might be interesting organizations for you to examine. However, your kit should not be a mirror reflection of materials and strategies already employed by an existing company. Unless you select or create a brand-new organization, you should not plan to prepare a corporate information kit. Rather, you should select some newsworthy aspect of that organization to highlight. For example, Starbucks’ new philanthropy initiative (not real), or Lush Cosmetics’ partnership with Time’s Up (also not real).

Past topics include the following companies and their “news” –

Sephora – new in-store recycling program

Soho House – opening of a Palm Springs location

Patagonia – promote its Worn Wear program

Book publishing – promote new YA book by R.F. Kuang

Oatly milk – Barista competition

University Tees – opening of first brick-and-mortar location

Warby Parker – promote children’s eye exams in Philadelphia

Baby Bullet food processor – host children and parenting information and a product fair

Nike – promote partnership with NBA player Giannis Antetokounmpo and youth fitness

Writing should be your own. Your materials should not be a repackaging of information already created by another company. Please, no organizations or persons that are USC and/or campus-related.

**Required Elements – All kits must include:**

1. **Strategic-style memo** to the client/boss/instructor explaining the purpose of the kit and how it fits your overall public relations strategy. The memo should outline the details of your strategy, tactics, audience and distribution. Tell me what each piece is meant to accomplish, for whom and how that audience is meant to get your information. Maximum length: three pages. (15 points)
   1. Include in your memo a list of all the other materials you would include if you were doing a complete kit. This list would include additional written sections, photos or graphics, etc. Include a sentence or two of description as needed. This is where you would demonstrate your grasp of strategy and how you would create a plan that goes beyond the basic requirements of the project.
2. A **news release** key to the specific purpose or topic of your final project (30 points)
3. A **fact sheet** of some kind, either about the organization, about the specific purpose or a topic that enhances your subject. Must be two pages. (20 points)
4. An **FAQ or Q&A** that could be published as a printed document or posted on a website. Choose the option that most fits your topic. Must be eight questions. (20 points)
5. A **PowerPoint or Keynote** deck that you will use to present to the class. The deck should provide contextual information to help your audience (your classmates) understand why you chose this topic, how it relates to the “bigger picture” of world news, and why it’s newsworthy. It should be a maximum of 10 slides. Two of the slides should detail the items in your kit and the perspective you took with each one. You should plan to speak for 8-10 minutes on Zoom. (10 points)

**Additional Elements:**

In addition, the kit **must** include **two** additional elements (20 points each). Among your options:

1. **Pitch letter**. One page in length.
2. A **formal bio** with **photograph** of the subject. No more than two pages.
3. An **additional fact sheet**. It must be completely different than #3 in the required elements. Do not have any duplicate information from your required fact sheet. One to two pages in length.

**Important!**

* Clean copy is a must. Your grade will be lowered if your copy is sloppy.
* Showcase substance. Visuals are an important element, but don’t try to hide a lack of substantive copy with overuse of visuals. Visuals should complement the story, not overpower it.
* When I say one page or two pages, they must be FULL pages.
* Documents should be created in MS Word and be 1.50 line spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides.
* All materials must be uploaded to Blackboard no later than 8:00 am the day of the presentation. No email submissions allowed.
* Please do not plagiarize. Acceptable: You may borrow basic template language about an organization like the company boilerplate. Unacceptable: You may not copy and paste an interview that exists online and pass it off as your own.

# **Policies and Procedures**

## **Additional Policies**

The following policies and recommendations are intended to provide guidance to students while also establishing a consistent, campus-wide set of standards for accommodating and responding to some of the common issues that may arise from remote learning.

**What You Can Expect From Me**

* I come to class each week with enthusiasm and a strong desire to help you learn. My goal is to help you prepare for the world of PR.
* I am open to your questions and welcome the opportunity to discuss any issues concerning you. Please let me know what is on your mind.
* When you get an assignment back from me, you’ll have a good idea why you earned the grade you did and what can be done to improve your writing. However, if things are not clear, let’s talk. The more discussion, the better the understanding.
* This syllabus is a general guideline for what we will cover during the semester. Other assignments, such as written homework and class projects, will be given as needed. In addition, we will have in-class writing most weeks.
* I’ll guide you along to improve your writing, but feel free to help guide our discussions. Bring to class your questions, observations and opinions about how you see the role of public relations at work in the real world. Our most pertinent and interesting class time will come from what’s happening in our world today.

**What I Expect From You**

* Our class starts on time. I expect you to be present and ready to engage!
* Assignments are due to me at the designated date/time. All assignments must be complete and typed. Assignments completed not following directions will be graded lower. If you are absent, you are responsible for getting me your homework by the due date/time. **No late assignments are accepted.**
* All assignments must have your name at the top. Save all documents in the following format (first name, last name, name of assignment) **example: Susan Smith MacArthur news release or Susan Smith pitch letter**
* There will be no make-ups for the midterm. There will be no extensions for the final project. You must complete and submit the midterm and final project to pass the class.
* If you miss class, please get notes and assignments from a classmate. I do not email notes or handouts.
* Class participation is expected and will help your final grade. Everyone is expected to contribute. Lack of participation will reduce your participation grade.
* No texting or any use of cell phones or other forms of electronic communication during class. Doing so will negatively impact your grade as it will distract you for our lesson.
* There should only be one discussion going on at a time in class. Paying attention to the speaker, whether it is the instructor, fellow student or guest, is a sign of respect and professionalism. Disruptive behavior, such as talking out of turn and carrying on side conversations, will negatively impact your grade.
* The syllabus is our guideline and will change during the course of the semester to accommodate current events and speaker schedules.
* Please check Blackboard regularly for updates on homework and assignments. And check your USC email account, which is how I will communicate with you.

**Annenberg Media Guide to Thoughtful Language:**

Check Blackboard for this document and refer to it as necessary throughout the course.

## **Communication**

I am always available to speak with students to answer questions, review assignments, or share career advice. Please contact me by email to set up a time to talk via phone or Teams. I do my best to reply to all emails the same day but please allow 24 hours.

## **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 by unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism or public relations class.

## **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

### **Academic Conduct**

The USC Student Handbook

(https://policy.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/USC\_StudentCode\_August2022.pdf)

### **Academic Integrity**

USC’s Unifying Value of integrity is a foundational principle that inspires the community to match its values to its actions. Academic integrity is ultimately the sole guarantor of the legitimacy of one’s education, and therefore, is vitally important not just for oneself, but for the entire USC community. The value of all USC degrees is negatively impacted by violations of academic integrity. In the classroom, general principles of academic integrity include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles.

Academic Integrity violations (academic dishonesty) include, but are not limited to:

Plagiarism and Cheating

• The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student’s own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.

• Re-using any portion of one’s own work (essay, term paper, project, or other assignment) previously submitted without citation of such and without permission of the instructor(s) involved.

• Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers, including drafts. Also, all students involved in collaborative work (as permitted by the instructor) are expected to proofread the work and are responsible for all particulars of the final draft.

• Acquisition of academic work, such as term papers, solutions, or other assignments, from any source and the subsequent presentation of those materials as the student’s own work, or providing academic work, such as term papers, solutions, or assignments that another student submits as their own work.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

<https://catalogue.usc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=16&ent_oid=3459>

“Since its founding, the 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.”

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.

## **Students and Disability Accommodations:**

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](http://osas.usc.edu/). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

## **Support Systems:**

[*Counseling and Mental Health*](http://sites.google.com/usc.edu/counseling-mental-health) *- (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

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

[*988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline*](http://988lifeline.org/) *- 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call*

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)*](http://sites.google.com/usc.edu/rsvpclientservices/home) *- (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[*Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX)*](http://eeotix.usc.edu/) *- (213) 740-5086*

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.

[*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment*](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report) *- (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

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

[*The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS)*](http://osas.usc.edu/) *- (213) 740-0776*

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[*USC Campus Support and Intervention*](http://campussupport.usc.edu/) *- (213) 740-0411*

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

[*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*](http://diversity.usc.edu/) *- (213) 740-2101*

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

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*](https://dps.usc.edu/) *- UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call*

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[*Office of the Ombuds*](http://ombuds.usc.edu/) *- (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)*

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[*Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice*](http://chan.usc.edu/patient-care/faculty-practice) *- (323) 442-2850 or*[otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

​Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

*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.

*Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund*

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

Josh Rubenstein currently serves as Kaiser Permanente’s Senior Director of Brand Reputation, Media, and Issues Management. Working for Kaiser Permanente in Southern California, Rubenstein oversees the media relations team and crisis management for the region.

Before taking his role with KP, Rubenstein led the LAPD’s strategic communications and media outreach efforts. As the Commanding Officer of the Public Communications Group (PCG), Director Rubenstein oversaw the Media Relations Division, which is made up of the Digital Media Section (Online Media Unit and Video Unit) and the Media Relations Section (Public Information Officers, Public Relations Unit, and social media Team). The PCG is made up of a combination of sworn and civilian Department employees, who are responsible for messaging and communicating critical information to the City of Los Angeles and its residents.  
  
Director Rubenstein served as a key communications strategist and advisor to the Chief of Police, as well as the entire LAPD command staff and Department personnel.

He is a graduate of the University of Illinois-Urbana where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications and later earned a Master's in Public Administration and Urban Planning from California State University, Northridge. He also completed FEMA courses on the  
National Incident Management System and advises non-profits and other organizations on communications strategies and crisis communication.

Rubenstein is also a part-time faculty member at California State University-Northridge in the Department of Sociology’s Criminal Justice Program.

Prior to joining the LAPD, Rubenstein served as the Chief Meteorologist and Senior Journalist for KCBS and KCAL Television in Los Angeles for nearly two decades. As both a reporter and meteorologist for both stations, Rubenstein provided insightful analysis of the weather conditions that had the potential to significantly impact Southern California, covered breaking news and human-interest stories, and reported from the frontlines of numerous wildfires, floods, earthquakes, and other disasters.

Rubenstein is a current reserve police officer for the Los Angeles Police Department, served as the co-chair of North Hollywood Area's Community Police Advisory Board, and has been publicly recognized for his community engagement efforts by the Los Angeles City Council. He is a recipient of numerous Golden Mic Awards and two Los Angeles Area Emmy Awards.