



ASCJ 200 Discover, Deconstruct, Design:
Navigating Media & News in the Digital Age
21910/11, 4 units
Spring 2023 T/Th 11am-12:20pm + Required Lab
Sections (times/instructors vary)

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Land Acknowledgement

The University of Southern California's (USC) University Park campus is located on the traditional land of the Tongva People. You can visit <https://mila.ss.ucla.edu/> to learn about the history of Indigenous peoples in Los Angeles and read stories shared by the Tongva community. To learn about the Indigenous land on which your learning location resides, you can visit <https://native-land.ca>.

Course Overview

This interdisciplinary cross-school course is designed to engage students as discriminating and critical media and news *consumers* and *contributors* at a time when the digital revolution is spawning an unprecedented daily flood of content. Our media environment is evolving rapidly, creating new sets of powerful players. The influence these players possess and implications of their reach are often poorly understood and unquestioned. The mark of a well-educated person in the 21st century is the ability to *critically navigate* this contested and integrated terrain: to understand, employ, enjoy, and help build and shape the media landscape we now inhabit, considering our positionality and that of others. Only by understanding our own roles as consumers and producers of media can we begin to make sense of the environment around us. The health of our democracy depends on enlightened and engaged citizens who can critically analyze the range of information and content disseminated from an equally wide range of sources and platforms. The course will examine new avenues of civic participation and the importance of ethical standards in communicating messages. ***Students will learn how to apply their critical-thinking and analytic skills to a range of media and news production and consumption. The critical thinking skills developed in this course will be applicable to many fields of study, from science to the arts.***

Course Objectives and Outcomes

Every student comes into our class with different abilities, passions, priorities, lived experiences, and ways of learning. We invite you to begin where you are—to listen and learn from course content and discussions, to critically contemplate, question and critique. To that end, the learning outcomes below are fluid, and work in collaboration and dialogue with our teaching (as well as that of your lab instructors), course content, and class discussions. What students take away will depend on where they start, how they engage, and how they tap into their capacities to learn and grow. It is our hope that this course provides an opportunity for you to:

- **develop** critical thinking and analytic skills for evaluating the barrage of media, information, and news content we face in this digital age, from advertising, film and television images to news and opinion.
- **discern and distinguish** different types of media and news (e.g., opinion/commentary, news reports, documentary, entertainment, satire, expository/informative), the different media formats and platforms in which they circulate, and the different types of audiences they target.
- **assess** how different groups are represented in media and news and in the content we produce ourselves
- **participate** actively in digital culture, traveling beyond the role of passive consumers to emerge as highly engaged critics, thoughtful and ethical citizens, and co-producers of content.
- **produce** and manipulate media using various software while taking into consideration the construction of argument, potential implicit bias, and the value in sharing and distribution to a diverse set of audiences.

Course Requirements and Attendance

Students are required to do all the reading, attend all classes (including labs), complete all assignments, and participate fully in this course. Participation can encompass many things, including speaking in class, emails to your professor and/or TA, sharing media or other examples relevant to class with your professor and/or TA and/or on the class [Padlet](#) (online discussion board), office hours, attentive listening during class. **Participation grades will start at 85—the threshold—and then move up or down based on the factors above.**

If circumstances prevent you from attending class or actively participating, please inform us (and/or your lab instructor) by email ASAP. Regardless of the reason for missing, you should always keep us informed, and we will help you stay up to date. If you need to miss class for a religious or university-sanctioned activity, please let us know at the beginning of the term. You are responsible for accessing and staying abreast of course content in cases where you miss class, and for communicating with us in a timely manner if you have any obstacles impacting your work and successful completion of the course. We will make every attempt to listen and understand what is going on in your academic and personal life that may be impacting your progress in this class; however, it is up to you to **be proactive in your communication.**

Technology Guidelines & Classroom Norms

It is recommended that notetaking be done by hand to maintain attention and engagement during the course. During class, you should **avoid** multitasking on mobile phones or web surfing. [To understand the reasons for this guidance, you may want to read "[Why you should take notes by hand – not on a laptop](#)" and "[The Myth of Multitasking.](#)"]

Please remember that USC policy **prohibits sharing** of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. As a student, you are responsible for the appropriate use and handling of any recordings that we may make available under existing SCampus policies regarding class notes (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>). These rules will be strictly enforced, and violations will be met with the appropriate disciplinary sanction.

Classroom Conduct and Respect

All students are encouraged to use the classroom as a safe (and brave) space in which to speak and voice their opinions. We all come to the classroom with different backgrounds and experiences—

defined by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, class, ideology, even personality. This diversity can be our greatest strength and an asset as we learn together. Our expectation is that you respect not only your professors, lab instructors, and our guests, but also your classmates/peers when they participate in discussion. We may not truly understand another person's perspective, but we can/should listen with acceptance and empathy. Every student should feel comfortable participating and being part of a productive, engaging dialogue. Given the focus on current events and other social issues, this class, and the discussions we have may make you feel some discomfort. You may not always agree with us or your peers. This is normal, and part of the learning. If you ever feel that we (your professors/instructors) have misspoken or misrepresented something or you have an emotional response to the material or to something someone in class has said, please reach out to discuss. You may also use this [google form](#) to anonymously address your concerns. Above all, please be flexible (and forgiving) with us, your peers and yourself as we navigate these issues together.

Communication

You may reach your professors and lab instructors by email, and we will respond typically within 24 hours. If we don't respond, feel free to nudge us. We all receive many emails and sometimes things do fall through the cracks. It's nothing personal. For questions, concerns, or constructive criticism of class at any time during the semester, you may use this anonymous [google form](#). We will do course evaluations at the end of the term.

Course Readings

Course readings can be found on Blackboard, as **PDFs/online links**. The Blackboard site will also include a list of **useful links and resources** used throughout the term. We will regularly incorporate topics and developments that come up in the popular press and current events to allow for "in the moment" analysis.

Lab Sessions

Weekly lab sessions are an **essential** and **mandatory** part of this course. Labs are designed to work in conjunction with lecture content and to train you in general design principles and the use of digital tools so that you are equipped to maintain your WordPress Portfolio and complete your digital DIY assignments. A selection of digital tools for DIY assignments will be discussed in lab and linked on Blackboard. There will also be **asynchronous video tutorials** made available via BlackBoard to help instruct you on the use of digital tools. Additional help is available at the Digital Lounge helpdesk. Hours of operation and software tutorials can be found on their website: www.AnnenbergDL.org or this link usc.zoom.us/my/annenbergdl You may also look at Lynda.com on USC's IT site for online tutorials on a range of software here: <https://shib.lynda.com/InCommon>

Required Equipment for Labs and Assignments

In accordance with the Annenberg mandatory laptop policy and in order to run the latest version of the Adobe Creative Cloud, please see [these tech specs](#).

Additionally, you will need at least 10GB of dedicated media storage for this course. An external hard drive is highly recommended. For more information, please visit <http://www.annenbergdl.org/adobe/>

If for any reason you do not have the required equipment or have problems with your equipment during the course of the semester, please get in touch with the instructors ASAP. Accommodations can be made to support you—both for hardware and software. You may also check out USC's Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program.

Assignments and Grading

All assignment prompts will be distributed via Blackboard. Assignments must be completed and handed in on time to avoid a grade reduction. All assignments are **due by 11:59 pm on Tuesdays except where noted**. If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide written documentation that will allow you to be excused or discuss your situation with us in a timely manner.

Do NOT wait until the end of the semester to sort things out if you are having problems (health or otherwise). Remember: this is YOUR responsibility.

You are responsible for the material covered in class and in the reading. You will be evaluated on the following:

- 1) the level of your engagement with the class materials (as demonstrated in your written work, projects, and class participation)
- 2) your capacity to articulate and explain your ideas and analysis in well-written posts and digital media projects
- 3) your ability to analyze and apply the theories and methodologies of the class
- 4) your ability to demonstrate intentional design choices and execution of your projects

All of your work will be graded on two primary evaluative scales:

- 1) how well it demonstrates an understanding of the theories and methodologies of the class
- 2) how well it articulates and structures its argument (in written and digital media formats)

The final course grade will be based on the following distribution:

Participation, including lecture and lab	10%
Reading check/quiz	5%
WordPress site (see below)	5%
Including posting and clear categorization of all assignments	
DIY Assignments (2 total, 15%, 20%)	35%
Each DIY assignment will have mandatory check-ins worth 5% of assignment grade	
Written Posts (3 total, 5% 10%, 10%, see below)	25%
Final Exam	20%
TOTAL	100%

Assignments will be detailed in specific prompts distributed throughout the course of the semester. ***Late assignments will be marked down 5 points per day.***

You must complete ALL assignments to pass the class. NOTE: Failure to complete ONE OR MORE course assignments will result in an F in the class.

Portfolio (WordPress site)

Students will create an online portfolio using WordPress at the beginning of the semester. This portfolio will

- Serve as a clearly **organized and categorized repository for your assignments** throughout the semester. General categories/menu items should include: “About,” (telling the world who you are, what you’re about), “Writing” (where you will put your posts) and “Media” (where you will put your DIY projects). **ALL content** on WordPress should be categorized.
- Offer a place for you to create a **public and digital identity**. You may include additional content outside of our coursework that showcases who you are, what you can do.

- Demonstrate **intentional design choices** (decisions re: colors, fonts, layout, etc. should be cohesive and align with your assignments and the identity you are trying to convey to your public/audience).

DIY Assignments

You will have two (2) DIY assignments over the course of the semester. Both DIY projects will offer arguments and/or commentary and will be accompanied by brief written analysis (250-300 words) that explains design choices and ties to course readings/lectures. Each assignment will also require pre-production exercises and rough drafts in lab section (see schedule). These rough drafts will be part of your assignment grade.

1. Image Manipulation (15%)
2. Video Remix OR PSA (20%)

Posts

There will be three (3) written post assignments (approximately 500 words each):

1. Media Consumption (5%)
2. SMELL Test (10%)
3. Data / Surveillance (10%)

Best practices for writing posts will be covered in class and you may see some samples on BB, but in general, you should view these posts as short essays with an argument/thesis and analysis. Keep these points in mind as you write:

- Use a clear opening statement that sets up your position/argument, indicating how you plan to frame your commentary or analysis.
- Offer appropriate set-up or context so a reader outside of our class can understand what you are writing about (do not assume your reader has seen the prompt).
- Use evidence (analysis of text, direct quotes, images, etc.) to support your conclusions.
- Use succinct, clear, and straightforward prose.
- Include compelling images/video to help keep your reader engaged or to illustrate/substantiate the points you are making. Any media you reference should be embedded in your post.
- Include hyperlinks where appropriate to reference other sites and sources. NB: hyperlinks should be descriptive copy, not clickable URLs.
- Use a catchy headline and post title (i.e., not "Post Assignment")
- Proofread for spelling and grammar

A post in this class is **not** a diary entry or an opinionated rant. It can be casual and somewhat informal (in your own voice, first person), but should adhere to the above criteria.

Course Grading Policy

Grades will be assigned as follows:

- A: outstanding, thoughtful, and insightful work and analysis, showing an ability to think beyond the basic course material. A grade of A+ (97-100) *may* be given to *individual* assignments in *rare* instances where expectations are exceeded.
- A-/B+ above average work, demonstrating effort and keen understanding of conceptual ideas
- B/B- average work, needs improvement on ideas, execution, and argument
- C+/C shows little effort, lacks clarity and/or argument
- C- fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material

- D no understanding of the material and/or does not meet bare minimum criteria
- F failure to meet minimum criteria

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned to each. Your percentage scores on the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade per the scale shown below:

A+	= 97-100	C	= 76-74
<small>(only applicable to individual assignments, NOT course grade)</small>		C-	= 73-70
A	= 96-94	D+	= 69-67
A-	= 93-90	D	= 66-64
B+	= 89-87	D-	= 63-60
B	= 86-84	F	= 59-00
B-	= 83-80		
C+	= 79-77		

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must wait 24 hours (“cooling off” period) before appealing it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate. All concerns should be addressed within 10 days of receiving the graded assignment. After that, no appeals will be accepted for review and the grade will be considered final.

Grievance Procedure

Occasionally, students are dissatisfied with evaluation of their work or some other dimension of a course. For concerns with specific grades, students should first provide a written argument in support of their position to the appropriate laboratory section instructor. All grade appeals on specific assignments must be made within one week of the return of the assignment. The laboratory instructor will then review that petition and evaluate its merits. Your professors will consider grade appeals only after this process has been completed. You may, of course, approach any of the instructors with any general concerns.

Tentative Weekly Schedule (open to revision)

Reading/assignments are all due on the specified day/week.

OPTIONAL readings can enhance/extend understanding of topics/assignments.

Week 1: Introduction: Media & News Consumption

- How do we consume media and news? How do we play roles as producers of media and news content? How are media and news integrated into our daily lives, our identities, and our understanding of the world?
- **In LAB**, you will explore what it means to construct an online identity, be a digital author, and produce/share content through an online portfolio.

1/10:

- Course introduction: mapping literacies and making meanings

1/12:

- Renee Hobbs, "Create to Learn: Consider Your Identity as a Digital Author" (from *Create to Learn*)
- OPTIONAL: Renee Hobbs, "Blogs and Websites" (from *Create to Learn*)
- Farhad Manjoo, "[For Two Months I Got My News from Print Newspapers. Here's What I Learned](#)" (*The New York Times*)
- Tressie McMillan Cottom, "[How to Avoid Drowning in an Ocean of Information](#)" (NY Times)
- TUTORIAL: WordPress.com tutorial (text) + review ASU Graduate School, "[10 Tips for Creating Your Digital Portfolio](#)"

ASSIGNED: Create a **WordPress site** (share URL) and **DOWNLOAD/INSTALL** Adobe Creative Cloud

Week 2: Making Meanings & Understanding Conventions

- By focusing on patterns in form, structure, visual conventions, and point of view, we will explore the basics of how to decipher and deconstruct media and consider the range of meanings (intended, negotiated, and oppositional) embedded in them and the ways we respond to them. By extension, we will consider the ideological power of media and news.
- **In LAB**, after engaging in a skills assessment, you will explore some of the basics of design: how design conveys meaning, what it means to work within design conventions, and how to be "intentional" in your choices. You will also consider how to give and receive constructive feedback.

1/17:

- Greg M. Smith, Chapters 1, 2, 4 (from *What Media Classes Really Want to Discuss*)
- LISTEN: [True Crime with Emma Berquist](#) (*You're Wrong About*)
- OPTIONAL/ADDITIONAL: Emma Berquist, "[True Crime is Rotting Our Brains](#)," Gawker and/or Sarah Marshall, "[Violent Delights](#)"

1/19:

- Gabriel Kahn, "[Transparency is the New Objectivity](#)" (*Media Shift*)
- Jodi Kantor, Megan Twomey, chapter 1 (from *She Said*)

DUE: WordPress URL by 11:59pm 1/17; Adobe Creative Cloud download

ASSIGNED: Post #1, Media Consumption

Week 3: News Literacy, Propaganda and the Meaning of “Fake”

- We will discuss the ideological power of media, the construction of alternative facts and the evolving of separate “realities” based on ideological differences. How do we engender trust and transparency in news media? How do news publishers convey or erode trust?
- **In LAB**, you will engage in exercises to understand the SMELL test and bias and learn about reverse image search.

1/24:

- John McManus, “The SMELL Test”
- Clay Shirky, “Truth Without Scarcity, Ethics Without Force,” (from *The New Ethics of Journalism: Principles for the 21st Century*)

1/26:

- Carolyn Jack, “[Lexicon of Lies: Terms for Problematic Information](#)” (*Data & Society*)
- Mozur, Satariano, Krolnik, “[An Alternate Reality: How Russia’s State TV Spins the Ukraine War](#),” (New York Times)
- Max Fisher, “[Disinformation for Hire, a Shadow Industry, Is Quietly Booming](#)” (*New York Times*)
- Watch: “[Can you spot misinformation?](#)” (Retro Report)

DUE: Post #1 Media Consumption 11:59pm 1/24

ASSIGNED: Post #2 SMELL test

Week 4: Visual Literacy

- Why do certain images have power; how do they become iconic? Why do they spread or go viral? How are they appropriated for different uses and practices? We will explore how meaning is visually constructed in an age of traditional photography as well as an age of remix and reuse.
- **In LAB**, you will consider how images get produced and constructed and how they convey meanings. You will explore how framing, cropping, composition, perspective, rule of thirds and other visual choices contribute to meaning making.

1/31:

- Robert Harriman and John Louis Lucaites, “The Borders of the Genre: Migrant Mother and Times Square Kiss” (pp. 49-67; 87-92)
- Sarah Boxer, “[Whitewashing the Great Depression](#)” (*The Atlantic*)
- Isabel Wilkerson, “The Man in the Crowd” (from *Caste*)

2/2:

- Henry Jenkins, “[What Do You Mean by Culture Jamming?](#)” (*Confessions of an Aca Fan*)
- Ryan Milner, “The Fundamentals of Memetic Participation”
- Kashmir Hill, Jeremy White “[Designed to Deceive: Do These People Look Real to You?](#)” (*The New York Times*)
- OPTIONAL/RECOMMENDED: Renee Hobbs, “Images” (from *Create to Learn*)
- **TUTORIAL:** photo editing #1

ASSIGNED: DIY #1 Image Manipulation (due 2/28)

Week 5: Normalization and Media Frames

- How do we define “propaganda,” “mainstream,” “extreme,” “radical,” or “conspiratorial” frames? What does normalization mean and what role do media and news play in creating and perpetuating norms? How do we decide something is “newsworthy”?
- **In LAB:** you will explore the basics of photo editing and digital manipulation, considering how altering an image can change its meaning (and possibly perpetuate or challenge broader social/cultural/political norms). You will explore how changes in color, lighting, saturation, contrast, and adding text can frame, shape meaning and add commentary. You will workshop your selected images for your first DIY assignment.

2/7:

- Hua Hsu, “[What Normalization Means](#)” (*The New Yorker*)
- Elliot Ackerman, “[Our narrative of mass shootings is killing us](#)” (*The Atlantic*)
- LISTEN: [Hold Up! Time for an Explanatory Comma](#) (*Code Switch*)
- OPTIONAL: D.M. McLeod & James Hertog, “Social Control, Social Change and the Mass Media’s Role in the Regulation of Protest Groups”
- **TUTORIAL:** photo editing #2

2/9

- Ron Rosenbaum, “[Against Normalization: The Lessons of the Munich Post](#),” (*Los Angeles Review of Books*)
- Richard Fausset, “[A Voice of Hate in America’s Heartland](#),” (*The New York Times*)

DUE: Post #2, SMELL Test 2/7, 11:59 pm

Week 6: Representational and Critical Media Literacy

- How do facets of our identity, including gender, race, class, and sexuality get constructed by and impact the way we interpret media, tell stories, and understand ourselves and others? How does the business of news determine the representations we see?
- **In LAB,** you will consider how and why representational choices are important and bound by ethical considerations. You will discuss the relevance of fair use in the context of your image manipulations. You will further explore how meaning can be digitally altered through layering, mixing.

2/14:

- Lori Kido Lopez, “Racism and Mainstream Media” (from *Race and Media: Critical Approaches*)
- Terry Nguyen, “[The spectacle of anti-Asian violence on Instagram](#)” (Vox)
- Kristen Warner, “In the Time of Plastic Representation”
- SKIM: [Measuring Fair Use: The Four Factors](#)
- OPTIONAL: Notes on Terminology (from *Race and Media: Critical Approaches*)

2/16:

- Wesley Lowery, “[A Reckoning Over Objectivity, Led by Black Journalists](#)” (*The New York Times*)
- Viet Than Nguyen, “[Vietnamese Lives, American Imperialist Views](#),” (*The New York Times*)

LAB CHECK-IN: Sketch/ideation for DIY #1

Week 7: (Literacy via) Witnessing and Activism

- *Who can witness? Who can be an activist? And how do technologies support these roles? How is witnessing an act of representation and activism? How can witnessing and media activism make visible what is often otherwise invisible or unheard? How can witness testimony be used/abused? How can witnessing provide faithful documentation of history and how can it betray us?*
- **In LAB**, you will consider how digital media and techniques can be used as tools of witnessing, activism, and community-building. You will share rough drafts of your DIY #1 and consider what it means for an image to have “aesthetic force.”

2/21:

- Allissa Richardson, *Bearing Witness While Black: African Americans, Smartphones and the New Protest* (pp. 3-22)
- Margaret Sullivan, [“What’s a Journalist Supposed To Be Now? A Stenographer? An Activist?”](#) (*The Washington Post*)
- LISTEN: [“For the Rohingya, Blurred Lines Between Trauma and Truth”](#) (*On the Media*)

2/23:

- Sarah Jackson, Moya Baily, Brooke Foucault Welles, “Women Tweet on Violence: From #YesAllWomen to #MeToo” (from *Hashtag Activism*)
- Sarah Lewis, “Beauty, Error and Justice” (from *The Rise: Creativity, The Gift of Failure, and the Search for Mastery*)

LAB CHECK-IN: WordPress check-in AND Image manipulation rough draft check

Week 8: Free Speech and Free Expression

- *What does “freedom of the press” mean in a world controlled by platforms? What does it mean in a world where anyone can publish anything? Are there limits to free speech/free expression? How does our understanding of free speech and free expression need to evolve with technology? Is it freedom to speak or freedom to be heard?*
- **In LAB**, you will explore the basics of communicating with video as well as the potential and limitations of expression in this medium. How do you choose subjects? What’s the story/point of view/idea and what are different/best ways of presenting it? You will also discuss different video genres, specifically remix and PSA? When and why would we employ those genres?

2/28:

- Sheera Frankel, Nicholas Casey, Paul Mozur, [“In Some Countries, Facebook’s Fiddling Has Magnified Fake News”](#) (*The New York Times*)
- Steven Levy, [“Inside Meta’s Oversight Board: Two Years of Pushing Limits,”](#) (Wired)
- LISTEN: (it’s short): [“How Far Should Big Tech Go in Policing Speech;”](#) (1A)

3/2:

- LISTEN: [“Nikole Hannah Jones and Ta-Nehisi Coates on the Fight Over US History”](#) (*Ezra Klein Show*)
- LISTEN: [“Political Correctness”](#) (*You’re Wrong About*)
- TUTORIAL: Video Editing Tutorial #1 (video) on BlackBoard
- OPTIONAL: Video Production and Remix Production (from Create to Learn)

ASSIGNED: DIY #2: Video

Week 9: Civic Literacies and Ethics

- *What is civic media, and what are the avenues for civic engagement, participatory politics, and possibilities for social change in the digital age? What tools can we use (old and new) to encourage change and create impact?*
- *In LAB, you will consider your role as a DIY citizen/producer: What is your intention? Do you want to advocate for or change something in the world? How can video (and editing) help you? You will workshop ways to create a story, how you develop and play with story structure through storyboarding (planning) and editing.*

3/7:

- Henry Jenkins, Sangita Shrestova, Liana Gamber-Thompson, Neta Kligler-Vilenchik, “Superpowers to the People! How Young Activists Are Tapping the Civic Imagination”
- Danny O’Brien, “[Introducing the Public Interest Internet](#)” (EFF)
- OPTIONAL: “Reflecting and Taking Action” (from Create to Learn)

3/9

- Zac Gershberg, Sean Illing, Introduction to *The Paradox of Democracy* (on Blackboard)
- TUTORIAL: Basics of Video Editing Tutorial #1

LAB CHECK-IN: DIY #2 storyboard check in during lab

*******SPRING BREAK*******

Week 10: Industry and Platform Literacies

- *How do economic imperatives play a role in the production and distribution of media and news? How do platforms shape the way we see and digest content? What power do TikTok, Facebook, Google, and other platforms have? How are our everyday experiences and habits being tracked? Are we performing free labor?*
- *In LAB, you will continue to consider your role as a DIY content producer in the digital age. What is **your** role in relation to mainstream media and big tech platforms? You will further explore editing of visuals and sound as a way to make meaning, considering how found footage, music, and other sounds can help you re-frame the media you (and others) receive.*

3/21:

- LISTEN: [Shoshana Zuboff on Surveillance Capitalism](#) (Recode)
- Sigal Samuel, “[10 Things We Should All Demand From Big Tech Right Now](#)” (Vox)
- Kashmir Hill, “[Your Memories, Their Cloud](#)” (New York Times)
- OPTIONAL: Liz Pelly, “[Big Mood Machine](#)” (*The Baffler*); “[How Netflix Reverse-Engineered Hollywood](#)” (*The Atlantic*)

3/23

- “[Google’s Three Antitrust Cases, Briefly Explained](#)” (Vox)
- Jeremy B. Merrill and Will Oremus, “[Five Points for Anger, One for a ‘Like’](#),” (*The Washington Post*)
- TUTORIAL: Video Editing Tutorial #2

ASSIGNED: Post #3 Surveillance

Week 11: Algorithmic and AI Literacy

- *What is algorithmic bias and why should we care? How do these biases affect us? What ethical challenges does AI present? How do we establish guidelines for a technology that is so powerful?*
- **In LAB:** *you will continue to explore video editing and consider best practices for creating media in a world of algorithms. You will discuss citing sources and maintaining ethics while exploring and using new forms and technical innovation.*

3/28:

- Safiya Noble, "[Google Has a Striking History of Bias Against Black Girls](#)" (Time Magazine)
- Jason Parham, "[Tik Tok and the Evolution of Digital Blackface](#)" (Wired)
- Sigal Samuel, "[Why It's So Damn Hard to Make AI That's Fair and Unbiased](#)" (Vox)
- Sara Morrison, "[Should I Delete My Period App? And Other Post-Roe Privacy Questions](#)"
- OPTIONAL LISTEN: [The Facebook Files Pt 2: 'We Make Body Image Issues Worse'](#)" (WSJ)

3/30:

- Stephen Marshe, "[The College Essay Is Dead](#)," (The Atlantic)
- LISTEN: Krissy Clark, "[My Boss Is an App](#)" (The Uncertain Hour)
- TUTORIAL: Video Editing Tutorial #2

Week 12: Data Literacy and Data Visualization

- *How do we read and communicate with data? We will explore how data design and visualization are important to strategic communication and a key part of visual literacy. What is data journalism and how should we evaluate it? Does it provide a more sound basis for conveying "truth"?*
- **In LAB,** *you will explore how infographics and data visualization are key facets in conveying data in a digestible format. You will consider how and why you might incorporate data visualizations in other media to tell a story, support an argument, champion a cause.*

4/4:

- David Spiegelhalter, "[Citizens Need to Know Numbers](#)" (Aeon)
- Maria Popova, "[How to Be an Educated Consumer of Infographics](#)" (The Marginalian)
- Alberto Cairo, slidedeck, "What you show is not what I see."
- TUTORIAL: Exporting and Uploading Images (text)

4/6:

- Excerpts from *W.E.B. DuBois's Data Portraits Visualizing Black America: The Color Line at the Turn of the Century*
- James Vincent, "[Made to Measure: Why We Can't Stop Quantifying Our Lives](#)" (The Guardian)
- OPTIONAL/RECOMMENDED: Renee Hobbs, "Infographics and Data Visualization" (from *Create to Learn*)

DUE: Post #3 Surveillance by 11:59pm 3/28

LAB CHECK-IN: DIY #2 rough cut (stage 1)

Week 13: Eco Literacy

- The climate crisis is the biggest threat humanity has ever faced. How we respond and act around this issue is defined in many ways by the media we make and consume. What is our responsibility in this crisis? How do we respond to information about the environment we see in a range of media (mainstream, independent, activist, conspiratorial etc.)? How do we react to environmental activism online? How do we participate?
- **In LAB**, you will engage in open critiques of your DIY 2 projects.

4/11:

- Antonio Lopez, "Ecomedia Literacy: Decolonizing Media and the Climate Emergency"

4/13:

- Watch: "[A Year to Change the World](#)," episode 1
- TUTORIAL: Exporting for online video hosting (text)

LAB CHECK-IN: DIY #2 rough cut (stage 2)

Week 14: Everyday Literacies

- We will consider the role technologies play in our everyday lives, how we use them, and how they shape us.
- We will specifically think about ethics and civility, cancel culture, and how we behave and perform in digital spaces.
- What does it mean to be responsible and ethical when producing media and news?
- **In LAB**, you will engage in open critiques of your DIY 2 projects.

4/18

- Ryan Milner, Whitney Philips, [The Internet Doesn't Need Civility; It Needs Ethics](#), (Vice)
- Elizabeth Bruenig, "[Modern Porn Education is Totally Unprepared for Modern Porn](#)" (The Atlantic)
- Sheera Frankel, [The Metaverse's Dark Side: Here Come Harassments and Assaults](#) (The New York Times)
- OPTIONAL: Theresa Senft, Nancy Baym, "What Does the Selfie Say? Investigating a Global Phenomenon"

4/20

- Osita Nwanevu, "[The Cancel Culture Con](#)", (The New Republic)
- LISTEN: "[What we talk about when we talk about 'cancel culture.'](#)" (1A)

DUE: DIY #2 Video Remix or PSA by 11:59 p.m. 4/18

Week 15: Putting Literacies to Work

- How do we apply what we've learned to our daily lives, habits, and work moving forward?
- **In LAB:** review for the final exam.

4/25

- Alumni Panel

4/27:

→ Course wrap up, final review + showcase student work

DUE: FINAL EXAM no later than 1p.m. May 9 (The exam will be distributed on May 8 and you will have 24 hours to complete it and upload to BB). **LATE exams will NOT be accepted.**

Weekly Due Dates At-A-Glance

Week	Watch/Async*	Lab Agenda	Assigned	Lab Check-Ins	DUE on WP/BB
Week 1: Media Consumption 1/10-1/12	WP: Why create a portfolio?	Intro to WP + design basics; Constructing online identities	WordPress and Adobe installation		
Week 2: Making Meaning/ Understanding Conventions 1/17-1/19		Skills assessment. Design basics. Being intentional.	Post #1: Media Consumption	WordPress and Adobe check in	WordPress URL (due 1/17)
Week 3: News Literacy, Propaganda, Fake News 1/24-1/26		SMELL test/reverse image search exercise	Post #2 SMELL		Post #1: Media consumption (due 1/24)
Week 4: Visual 1/31-2/2	Photo editing #1	Photography and making images; making meaning with forms (framing, cropping, composition, perspective);	DIY #1-Image Manipulation		
Week 5: Normalization, Media Frames 2/7-2/9	Photo editing #2	Digital imaging and manipulation; setting norms through frames (using text, color, saturation)		Image selection/ research check in	Post #2: SMELL (due 2/7)
Week 6: Representation 2/14-2/16	Exporting + Uploading Images	Making meaning through representation; ethics of representation; fair use		Ideation/ Sketch check in	
Week 7: Witnessing + Activism 2/21-2/23		Aesthetic force of images; workshop image drafts		Image rough draft + WordPress check-in	
Week 8: Free Speech/ Expression 2/28-3/2		Choosing subjects, telling stories. Communicating with video. What is a remix? PSA?	DIY #2: Video		DIY #1: Image (due 2/28)

Week 9: Civic 3/7-3/9	Basics of video editing	Audio/video production and planning. DIY/citizen/participatory media—how can media (+ editing) be used to elicit change?		Video topic check in	
Spring Break 3/13-3/17					
Week 10: Industry, Platform 3/21-3/23	More on video editing	DIY content production and distribution; Using and reframing found media. Arranging content and sound design.	Post #3 Surveillance Reading Quiz		
Week 11: Algorithm/AI 3/28-3/30	More on video editing	Best practices for working in a world of algorithms. Citations, Ethics; [title cards, subtitles, transitions, white balance]		Storyboard/structure	
Week 12: Data Visualization 4/4-4/6		Finalizing design (color grading)		Rough cut (stage 1)	Post #3: Surveillance (due 4/4)
Week 13: Eco 4/11-4/13	Exporting for online video hosting	Open critiques		Rough cut (stage 2)	
Week 14: Everyday 4/18-4/20					DIY #2: Video PSA or Remix (due 4/18)
Week 15: Wrap up 4/24-4/26		Exam review			
Final Exam 5/9 exam due 1pm (distributed 5/8 1pm)					Final exam (due 5/9 1pm PT)

****These short videos should be viewed as a SUPPLEMENT to your workshopping in lab. You may review these videos to clarify how to use digital tools and/or use the Digital Lounge.***

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

The Annenberg School maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

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. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and 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](#) - 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 \(RSVP\)](#) - (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 \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (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](#) - (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 \(OSAS\)](#) - (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](#) - (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](#) - (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](#) - 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](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (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](#) - (323) 442-2850 or 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://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.