



JOUR (499): Future of Baseball Writing 2 Units

Spring 2023 - Day - Time

Section: Five-digit section number from the [Schedule of Classes](#)

Location: Classroom and/or course-related URLs, etc.
[See [Schedule of Classes](#) for assigned classroom.]

Instructor: Rob Parker

Office: Room or meeting area

Office Hours: General guideline: 1 weekly office hour for each 4 unit class taught.

Contact Info: getrobbedla@gmail.com, 313-948-6100

Pronouns:

Teaching Assistant / Grader (if applicable):

Office: Room or meeting area

Office Hours:

Contact Info: Email, phone number (office, cell), Skype, etc.

Course Description

The goal is to establish the first ever baseball writing class in the country. This class will create a specific learning environment tailored to journalism students that want to pursue their interest in baseball writing. The class will provide hands-on instruction to current writing styles and content, as well as real life examples to provide clarity and transparency. This will give the students an instant networking ability to get job out of college; while giving them the necessary tools to produce the correct style of baseball stories.

Student Learning Outcomes

- 1) Learn the basics of covering baseball, rules and protocol
- 2) Develop writing and reporting skills to cover the game effectively

Description and Assessment of Assignments

There will be weekly written assignments. Most will be either from work done in the classroom or online or based on a guest speaker's experience, or original reporting done by students outside of class. There will also be written quizzes in classes, and there will be some deadline writing during class. Both will be based on classroom work and demonstrate the ability to work under pressure situations. A live sports column written on deadline after watching an event in class will serve as the final. There will be a number of guest speakers, including media personalities and former athletes. Students will cover the speakers and write about them for assignments.

Required Readings, hardware/software, laptops and supplementary materials

- 1) AP Stylebook (online version)
- 2) The Year's Best Sports Writing 2023
- 3) Memoirs of Summer

All USC students have access to the AP stylebook via the USC library. ([https://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://www.apstylebook.com/usc_edu/.](https://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://www.apstylebook.com/usc_edu/))

Students will be graded on adherence to AP style in assignments, including when writing about race and ethnicity. The updated AP style guidelines include capitalizing Black and deleting the hyphen in terms such as Asian American.

News Consumption and Knowledge of Current Events

As journalists, you should keep up with what is happening on campus, in the Los Angeles area, in the United States and around the world. USC provides subscriptions for students, staff and faculty to The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times, as well as the Wall Street Journal.

Through the USC library, you have access to many regional news outlets and a variety of publications that cover specific communities. You should be familiar with publications covering the many communities of Los Angeles such as The Los Angeles Sentinel, The Los Angeles Blade, The Los Angeles Wave, La Opinión, L.A. Taco, The Eastsider, The Armenian Weekly, High Country News, the Asian Journal and others. You should keep up with the Daily Trojan and uscannenbergmedia.com, including USC student-led verticals Dímelo and Black., listen to NPR and news radio, watch local and national television news, read news email newsletters and push alerts and follow news organizations social networks, including Twitter, Instagram and TikTok. You're encouraged to sign up for Nieman Lab's newsletter, which publishes brief, readable articles on important issues in the media. Following the news will sharpen your judgment and provide good (and bad) examples of the state of mainstream journalism.

Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Weekly assignments	50%
Participation w/ Guests	10%
Midterm	20%
Final	20%
TOTAL	100%

b. Course Grading Scale

Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range		
95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	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

Journalism

Our curriculum is structured to prepare students to be successful in a professional news organization with the highest standards. Students will be evaluated first on accuracy and truthfulness in their stories. Good journalism prioritizes transparency, context and inclusivity. All stories should be written in AP style unless Annenberg style conflicts, in which case students can follow Annenberg style.

The following standards apply to news assignments.

“A” stories are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor copyediting (i.e., they would be aired or published). Video work must also be shot and edited creatively, be well paced and include good sound bites and natural sound that add flavor, color or emotion to the story. Sources are varied, diverse and offer a complete view of the topic.

“B” stories require more than minor editing and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission. For video, there may be minor flaws in the composition of some shots or in the editing. Good use of available sound bites is required. Sources are mostly varied, diverse and offer a complete view of the topic.

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

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

“F” stories have failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, are late, have numerous errors or both. Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. Any misspelled or mispronounced proper noun will result in an automatic “F” on that assignment. Any factual error will also result in an automatic “F” on the assignment. Accuracy is the first law of journalism. The following are some other circumstances that would warrant a grade of “F” and potential USC/Annenberg disciplinary action:

- Fabricating a story or making up quotes or information.
- Plagiarizing a script/article, part of a script/article or information from any source.
- Staging video or telling interview subjects what to say.
- Using video shot by someone else and presenting it as original work.
- Shooting video in one location and presenting it as another location.
- Using the camcorder to intentionally intimidate, provoke or incite a person or a group of people to elicit more “dramatic” video.
- Promising, paying or giving someone something in exchange for doing an interview either on or off camera.
- Missing a deadline.

For assignments other than conventional news reporting, quality of research and clarity of expression are the most important criteria. In research papers, good research should be presented through good writing, and good writing should be backed up by good research. Clarity of expression includes thoughtful organization of the material, insight into the subject matter and writing free from factual, grammatical and spelling errors. Research should draw on a diverse range of sources.

Students are encouraged to submit their work for consideration to Annenberg Media or the Daily Trojan, or pitch it to mainstream media outlets. Visit <http://bit.ly/SubmitAnnenbergMedia> for more information about that submission and review process and email Daily Trojan news editors at dt.city@gmail.com for more on how to pitch work to the campus newspaper.

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/>

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: Friday, January 27, 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:

Monday, January 30, 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.

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	Topics	Readings	Due Dates
Week 1	History of Major League Baseball Guest: MLB Commish Rob Manfred	"Memoirs of Summer" by Roger Kahn - Read pages 1-24 Stylebook - Read A and B	
Week 2	Rules and Umpires Guest: Retired Umpire Jeff Kellogg	Read pages 25-48 Stylebook - Read C and D	
Week 3	Basic Baseball Writing	Read pages 49-80 Stylebook - Read E and F	
Week 4	Beat Reporting	Read pages 81-94 Stylebook - Read G and H	
Week 5	Interviews and Quoting	Read pages 95-110 Stylebook - Read I and J	

	Topics	Readings	Due Dates
Week 6	Front Office and Sourcing	Read pages 111-125 Stylebook - Read K and L	
Week 7	Column Writing	Read pages 127-130 Stylebook - Read M and N	
Week 8	MIDTERM	Read pages 131-148 Stylebook - Read O and P	
Week 9	Guest Speaker: Tom Verducci, SI	Read pages 149-157 Stylebook - Read Q and R	
Week 10	Dealing with Media Relations Department	Read pages 159-169 Stylebook - Read S and T	
Week 11	Reporter Ethics and Professionalism	Read pages 171-179 Stylebook - Read sports section U and V	
Week 12	Spanish/ Japanese Baseball language	Read pages 181-192 Stylebook - Read W and X	
Week 13	Guest Speaker: Julian McWilliams Boston Globe	Read pages 193-205 Stylebook - Read sports section Y and Z	

	Topics	Readings	Due Dates
Week 14	Steroids and Controversies	Read pages 207-227	
Week 15	HOF Voting + BBWAA	Read pages 229-238	
FINAL EXAM	Live Sports Column: You will watch event on TV and write off of it on deadline.		

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

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

Rob Parker is a sports analyst on MLB Network. He has a nightly national talk-show on Fox Sports Radio. Rob is the founder and editor of MLBbro.com - which covers Black and brown MLB players. He covered the Cincinnati Reds for the Cincinnati Enquirer. Parker also worked at ESPN and FS1. He was also a sports columnist at the Detroit Free Press, Newsday in New York and the Detroit News. Parker - who was born in NYC - graduated from Southern Connecticut State University and has a master's degree from Columbia University.