ASCJ 200 Discover, Deconstruct, Design:
Navigating Media & News in the Digital Age
21910R/11R, 4 units
Spring 2024 T/Th 11 a.m.-12:20 p.m. +
Required Lab Sections (times/instructors vary)

*USC*Annenberg

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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 and interacting with technology. ***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 we face in this digital age, from advertising, film and television images to news, opinion and machine generated content.
➔ **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 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 LinkedIn Learning on USC's IT site for online tutorials on a range of software here: https://itservices.usc.edu/linkedin-learning/

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 p.m. 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 <u>timely</u> 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%
SMELL test	10%
Portfolio (see below)	5%
Including posting and clear categorization of all assignments	
DIY Assignments (2 total, 10%, 20%)	30%
Written Posts (2 total, 5% 10% see below)	15%
AI Hackathon	10%
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. <u>*NOTE*</u>*: Failure to complete <u>ONE OR MORE</u> course assignments will result in an F in the class.*

Portfolio

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 analysis 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 (Re)Creation (10%)
  2. Video Remix OR PSA (20%)

Posts
There will be three (2) written post assignments (approximately 500 words each):
  1. Media Consumption (5%)
  2. 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 (only applicable to individual assignments, NOT course grade)	C+	= 79-77
		C	= 76-74
A	= 96-94	C-	= 73-70
A-	= 93-90	D+	= 69-67
B+	= 89-87	D	= 66-64
B	= 86-84	D-	= 63-60
B-	= 83-80	F	= 59-00

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 wait 24 hours (cooling off period) before providing a written argument in support of their position to the appropriate laboratory section instructor. All grade appeals on specific assignments must be made within 10 days 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.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Generative AI (such as ChatGPT, Bard, Claude and many others) is a tool which offers opportunities and raises concerns. As students of communication and journalism, we need to be thoughtful and ethical consumers/users of the technology. For our class, there may be times when it is appropriate to use AI, such as for brainstorming topic ideas. But please keep in mind some important notes when using generative AI:

1. You must **give credit** to the specific AI used in your assignment. Check Blackboard and the specific assignment instructions for information about how to do that appropriately. Failing to cite AI use is an academic integrity violation and will be treated as such, with potentially serious consequences. There will also be instances where the use of AI tools are explicitly not allowed.

2. Generative AI often is incorrect and gives **misinformation.** You cannot rely on AI output; you must check for accuracy. You are held accountable for the work you turn in.

3. The **quality and nature of the prompts** shapes the quality of the output of generative AI. As these tools develop, our skills in "conversing" with them will need to change and grow too.

4. AI should never be a substitute for your own **thoughtful, critical contributions** to the subject matter. ***Expressing oneself through writing is an important part of learning, refining thought, and demonstrating understanding that cannot be ceded to AI tools.***

These are just a few of many considerations that are important for us to collectively ponder and consider. If you have questions or thoughts on any of these policies, please share them. Please see USC's Using Generative AI in Research for information on citations, limitations and warnings and ethical considerations.

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 (as compared to sharing about yourself via other distribution channels, e.g. social media).*

1/9:
➔ Course introduction: mapping literacies and making meanings

1/11:
➔ 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)
➔ REVIEW: "Teens, Social Media and Technology" (Pew, 2023)
➔ **TUTORIAL**: WordPress.com tutorial #1 (15 mins) + review ASU Graduate School, "10 Tips for Creating Your Digital Portfolio"

ASSIGNED: CREATE *a* **WordPress site** *(share URL)*
DOWNLOAD/INSTALL Adobe Creative Cloud desktop
Getting to know you **SURVEY**

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 and critique.*

1/16:
➔ Greg M. Smith, Chapters 1, 2, 4 (from *What Media Classes Really Want to Discuss*)
➔ LISTEN: True Crime with Emma Berquist (52 mins, *You're Wrong About*)
➔ OPTIONAL/ADDITIONAL: Emma Berquist, "True Crime is Rotting Our Brains," *Gawker* and/or Sarah Marshall, "Violent Delights"

DUE: *WordPress URL by 11:59 pm 1/16*
Adobe Creative Cloud download by 11:59 p.m. 1/16
Getting to Know You Survey by 11:59 p.m. 1/16

ASSIGNED: *Post #1 Media Consumption*

1/18:
- ➔ Gabriel Kahn, *"Transparency is the New Objectivity"* (*Media Shift*)
- ➔ Wesley Lowery, "A Reckoning Over Objectivity, Led by Black Journalists" (*The New York Times*)
- ➔ Jodi Kantor, Megan Twomey, chapter 1 (from *She Said*)
- ➔ **TUTORIAL**: WordPress.com tutorial #2 (19 mins)

Week 3: News Literacy, Propaganda and the Meaning of "Fake"
- ➔ *We will discuss the ideological power of the 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.*

1/23:
- ➔ John McManus, "The SMELL Test"
- ➔ Clay Shirky, *"Truth Without Scarcity, Ethics Without Force," (from The New Ethics of Journalism: Principles for the 21st Century*)

DUE: *Post #1 Media Consumption 11:59 p.m. 1/23*

1/25:
- ➔ Mozur, Satariano, Krolnik, "An Alternate Reality: How Russia's State TV Spins the Ukraine War," (New York Times)
- ➔ Max Rizuto, "AI Propaganda Will Be Effective and Easily Accessible," *(Tech Policy Press)*
- ➔ Watch: "Can you spot misinformation?" (Retro Report)

ASSIGNED: **SMELL test (due 1/27)**

Week 4: 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 consider how images get produced, constructed and framed to create and convey meanings, ideas, values. You will explore principles and "rules" of visual language, specifically how framing, cropping, composition, perspective, rule of thirds and other choices contribute to meaning making.*

1/30:
- ➔ 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 (28 mins, *Code Switch*)
- ➔ OPTIONAL: D.M. McLeod & James Hertog, "Social Control, Social Change and the Mass Media's Role in the Regulation of Protest Groups"

2/1
  ➔ Ron Rosenbaum, "Against Normalization: The Lessons of the Munich Post," (*Los Angeles Review of Books*)

ASSIGNED: DIY #1 Image (Re)Creation (due 2/27)

==Week 5: 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 extend the discussion of visual language by exploring the basics of photo editing and AI generation, considering how these digital practices can shape meaning as well as 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.*

2/6:
  ➔ 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*)
  ➔ **TUTORIAL**: photo editing #1 (15 mins)--watch before lab

2/8:
  ➔ Henry Jenkins, "What Do You Mean by Culture Jamming?" (*Confessions of an Aca Fan*)
  ➔ Gideon Jacobs, "AI is the Future of Photography. Does That Mean Photography is Dead?" (New York Times)
  ➔ WATCH: "AI Art: How Artists Are Using and Confronting Machine Learning" (MOMA, 15 mins)
  ➔ Kashmir Hill, Jeremy White "Designed to Deceive: Do These People Look Real to You?" (*The New York Times*)
  ➔ **TUTORIAL:** photo editing #2 (12 mins)
  ➔ OPTIONAL/RECOMMENDED: Renee Hobbs, "Images" (from *Create to Learn*)

LAB CHECK-IN: DIY #1 (ideation)

==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 (re)creations. You will further explore how meaning can be digitally altered through editing and how to export quality images.*

2/13:
  ➔ Lori Kido Lopez, "Racism and Mainstream Media" (from *Race and Media: Critical Approaches*)
  ➔ Kristen Warner, "In the Time of Plastic Representation"

➔ Terry Nguyen, "The spectacle of anti-Asian violence on Instagram" (Vox)
➔ OPTIONAL: Notes on Terminology (from *Race and Media: Critical Approaches*)

2/15:
➔ LISTEN: Anna Marks, "To Find Freedom, Gen Z Girls Are Looking Back to Girlhood" (New York Times)
➔ Natasha Tiku, Kevin Schaul, Szu Yu Chen, "These Fake Images Reveal How AI Amplifies Stereotypes" (*Washington Post*)
➔ TBD

LAB CHECK-IN: DIY #1 (sketch)

Week 7: 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 present/critique DIY #1.*

2/20:
➔ LISTEN: "Political Correctness" (*You're Wrong About*)
➔ LISTEN: "Nikole Hannah Jones and Ta-Nehisi Coates on the Fight Over US History" (*Ezra Klein Show*)

2/22:
➔ Sheera Frankel, Nicholas Casey, Paul Mozur, "In Some Countries, Facebook's Fiddling Has Magnified Fake News" (*The New York Times*)
➔ LISTEN: (it's short): "How Far Should Big Tech Go in Policing Speech;" (*1A*)

LAB CHECK-IN: DIY #1 (rough draft)
LAB CHECK-IN: WordPress check-in and installation of Adobe Rush and/or Premiere

Week 8: 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 do you choose a subject that's important to you and a genre that's relevant (remix, PSA, vox pop, video essay)? How can video (and editing) help you?*

2/27:
➔ 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)

DUE: DIY #1 Image (Re)Creation by 11:59 p.m. on 2/27

2/29:
- ➔ Zac Gershberg, Sean Illing, Introduction to *The Paradox of Democracy* (on Blackboard)
- ➔ Siva Vaidhyanathan, "Elon Musk's Real Threat to Democracy Is not What You Think," The Nation, Dec. 11, 2023

ASSIGNED: DIY #2: Video

- ➔ *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 workshop ways to create a story, how you develop and play with story structure through storyboarding (planning) and editing.*

3/5:
- ➔ Thomas Schatz, "How 2 Companies Came to Dominate the Media Business" (*The Nation*)
- ➔ Kashmir Hill, "Your Memories, Their Cloud" (New York Times)
- ➔ "Big Tech Backslide: How Social Media Roadblocks Endanger Democracy" (Free Press)
- ➔ *OPTIONAL*: Sigal Samuel, "10 Things We Should All Demand From Big Tech Right Now" (*Vox*)
- ➔ *OPTIONAL*: Liz Pelly, "Big Mood Machine" (*The Baffler*); "How Netflix Reverse-Engineered Hollywood" (*The Atlantic*)

3/7:
- ➔ "The government's case to break up Amazon," explained (Vox)
- ➔ Keach Hagy, Jeff Horowitz, "Facebook Tried to Make its Platform a Healthier Place, It Got Angrier Instead," (The Wall Street Journal)

ASSIGNED: Post #3 Surveillance

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

- ➔ *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 consider best practices for acquiring video footage and understanding file formats. You will begin to explore the basics of audio and visual editing 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.*

3/19:
- ➔ Safiya Noble, "Google Has a Striking History of Bias Against Black Girls" (*Time Magazine*)

- ➔ Sigal Samuel, "[Why It's So Damn Hard to Make AI That's Fair and Unbiased](#)" (*Vox*)
- ➔ CHOOSE: Sara Morrison, "[Should I Delete My Period App? And Other Post-Roe Privacy Questions](#)" **OR** Jason Parham, "[Tik Tok and the Evolution of Digital Blackface](#)" (*Wired*)
- ➔ OPTIONAL LISTEN: [The Facebook Files Pt 2](#): 'We Make Body Image Issues Worse'" (WSJ)
- ➔ **TUTORIAL**: [Video Editing Tutorial #1](#) (24 mins)

3/21:
- ➔ Kevin Roose, "[Inside the White-Hot Center of AI Doomerism](#)," (The New York Times) " (The Atlantic)
- ➔ LISTEN: Krissy Clark, "[My Boss Is an App](#)" (*The Uncertain Hour*)

LAB CHECK-IN: *Surveillance data downloaded*
LAB CHECK-IN: *DIY #2 checklist due during lab*

Week 11: Artificial Intelligence and You
- ➔ Why the AI revolution is happening right now and how it works. You are living at the very moment when AI is filtering into every corner of our lives in ways we both do and do not detect. How does AI work and what ethical challenges does it present?
- ➔ *In LAB: you will continue to explore video editing and consider best practices for creating media in a world of AI. You will consider video editing as a tool and form of expression (by reframing found media, using techniques such as cross cut, jump cut, sound design). You will also discuss citing sources and maintaining ethics while exploring and using new forms and technical innovation.*

3/26:
- ➔ Ted Chiang, "[ChatGPT Is a Blurry JPEG of the Web,](#)" (The New Yorker)
- ➔ Madhumita Murgia, "[Generative AI exists because of the transformer,](#)" Financial Times, Sept. 11, 2023
- ➔ **TUTORIAL**: [Video Editing #2](#) (37 mins)

DUE: *Post #3 Surveillance by 11:59 p.m. 3/26*

3/28
- ➔ *Hackathon in Lecture: ATTENDANCE REQUIRED*

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

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 present your group projects from the Hackathon week 11.*

4/2:
- ➔ David Spiegelhalter, "[Citizens Need to Know Numbers](#)" (*Aeon*)
- ➔ Alberto Cairo, slidedeck, "What you show is not what I see."
- ➔ TUTORIAL: Exporting and Uploading Images (text)

4/4:
- ➔ 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*)

LAB CHECK-IN: Hackathon presentations

Week 13: (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 review transitions, title cards, subtitles and voice overs, white balance, color correction and exporting video. You will begin to engage in open critiques of your DIY 2 projects.*

4/9:
- ➔ Allissa Richardson, *Bearing Witness While Black: African Americans, Smartphones and the New Protest* (pp. 3-22)
- ➔ LISTEN: "For the Rohingya, Blurred Lines Between Trauma and Truth" (*On the Media*)

4/11:
- ➔ Sarah Jackson, Moya Baily, Brooke Foucault Welles, "Women Tweet on Violence: From #YesAllWomen to #MeToo" (from *Hashtag Activism)*
- ➔ Chris Hedges, "The Cost of Bearing Witness" (ScheerPost)

LAB CHECK-IN: DIY #2 rough cut

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 and receive a WordPress checklist.*

4/16
- ➔ 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"

4/18
➔ **Listen**: "[Synthetic Media: AI and Journalism](#)," from the Knowing Machines podcast. (Scroll to the correct episode.)

LAB CHECK-IN: DIY #2 rough cut cont'd

<mark>*Week 15: Putting Literacies to Work*</mark>
➔ *How do we apply what we've learned to our daily lives, habits, and work moving forward?*
➔ *In LAB: continue DIY 2 critiques.*

4/23
➔ Alumni Panel

DUE: DIY #2 Video Remix or PSA by 11:59 p.m. 4/23

4/25
➔ Course wrap up, final review + showcase student work

DUE: Portfolio Due by 11:59 p.m. on 4/26

DUE: **FINAL EXAM no later than 1 p.m. on May 7** (The exam will be distributed on May 6 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* BEFORE LAB	Lab Agenda	Assigned	Lab Check-Ins (due in lab)	DUE on WP/BB*
Week 1: Media Consumption 1/9-1/11	WordPress Portfolio Tutorial #1 (15 mins)	Intro to design basics; Constructing online identities	Portfolio set up + Adobe CC desktop installation Getting to Know You Survey	Introductions	
Week 2: Making Meaning/ Understanding Conventions 1/16-1/18	WordPress Portfolio Tutorial #2 (19 mins)	Design basics. Being intentional in creating meaning.	Post #1: Media Consumption	WordPress and Adobe check in (make sure Photoshop is installed!)	WordPress URL due 1/16
Week 3: News Literacy, Propaganda, Fake News 1/23-1/25		SMELL test exercise	Smell Test		Post #1: Media consumption due 1/23 on WP SMELL test due 1/27 on BB
Week 4: Normalization, Media Frames 1/30-2/1		Visual language and photography; making meaning and setting norms via framing, cropping, composition, perspective Reverse image search exercise	DIY #1-Image (Re)Creation		
Week 5: Visual 2/6-2/8	Photo editing #1 (15 mins)	Digital imaging, editing, and generation; Visual iconicity; Using text, color, saturation		DIY #1 Ideation check in due in lab	
Week 6: Representation 2/13-2/15	Photo editing #2 + generative fill (12 mins)	Making meaning through representation; ethics of representation; fair use Advanced digital image editing, exporting high quality images		DIY #1 Rough sketch check in due in lab	

Week 7: Free Speech/ Expression 2/20-2/22		How does free expression impact what you produce and consume? Showcase/Critique DIY #1 Drafts		WordPress Check in due in lab Make sure to install Adobe Premiere Rush or Pro before week 8	
Week 8: Civic 2/27-2/29		DIY / citizen/ participatory media— how can media (+ editing) be used to elicit change? Choosing subjects, telling impactful stories using video. Remix and PSA and other video forms as genres.	DIY #2: Video		DIY #1 Due 2/27 on WP
Week 9: Industry/Platform 3/5-3/7		What is the relationship between DIY content production and distribution and media industries and platforms? Video storytelling, workflow and pre-production planning; storyboarding	Post #2 Surveillance		
Spring Break 3/11-3/15					
Week 10: Algorithm 3/19-3/21	Video editing part 1 (24 mins)	Best practices for working in a world of algorithms. Video production basics, acquiring video footage, understanding file formats		Data download check in due in lab DIY #2 Checklist (worth 2.5% of DIY 2 grade) due in lab	

Week 11: AI 3/26-3/28	[Video editing part 2](#) (36 mins)	Best practices for working in a world of AI. Video editing as expression (using and reframing found media), video editing techniques (cross-cut, j-cut, jump cut) soundtracks and sound design, exporting video		DIY #2 Storyboard (worth 2.5% of DIY 2 grade) due in lab	Post #2: Surveillance due 3/26 due on WP
Week 12: Data 4/2-4/4		Hackathon Presentations		Hackathon Presentations due in lab	
Week 13: Witnessing/ Activism 4/9-4/11		Open Critiques Transitions, title cards, subtitles, voiceovers, white balance, color correction		DIY #2 Rough Cut due in lab	
Week 14: Everyday 4/16-4/18		Open critiques		DIY #2 Rough Cut cont'd due in lab	
Week 15: Wrap up/panel 4/23-4/25		Open critiques			DIY #2: Video PSA or Remix due 4/23 on WP WP Portfolio Due 4/26
Final Exam 5/7 exam due 1 p.m. (distributed 5/6, 1 p.m.					Final exam due 5/7, 1 p.m. PT, on BB

These short videos should be viewed as instruction to support your digital literacies and your DIY projects. You should watch them BY or BEFORE the designated lab. You may need to review or watch more than once to clarify how to use digital tools. You may also visit the Digital Lounge.

All WordPress posts (DIY #1, DIY #2, Post #1, Post #2) will be turned in via Blackboard as hyperlinks to the post's unique URL.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), 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 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 School of Communication 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 of Communication. 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.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class is prohibited without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is also prohibited. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the

class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](), page 13).

AI Policy
See above

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
[Annenberg Student Success Fund]()
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]()
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.

[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.

TrojansAlert
TrojansAlert is an alert system that allows university officials to contact you during an emergency. It is your connection to real-time updates, instructions on where to go, what to do, or what not to do, who to contact and other important information. Visit the website to sign up.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis
In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

ITS Customer Support Center (CSC): (213) 740-5555

The ITS Customer Support Center (CSC) provides support to the USC community for connecting to the USC Network and using supported applications. For help with network connectivity and software, contact CSC. Walk-in support is available in Leavey Library's Information Commons.

Violence-Free Campus
Visit the website to read more about prohibited behaviors, reporting responsibilities and where to report.

Student-Athlete Travel Excuse Letters
Prior to a university-sponsored away competition, Student-Athletes are responsible for providing their Instructor with a Competition Excuse Letter (provided by their academic counselor) for the classes missed while on the road (i.e., excused absence). It is the responsibility of the Student-Athlete to provide the letter prior to leaving on their trip and to make arrangements for a make-up of any missed assignments or exams. Please refer to the SAAS site where they detail travel and travel excuse letters.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001
(15 weeks: 1/8/2024 – 4/26/2024; Final Exam Period: 5/1-8/2024)

Link: https://classes.usc.edu/term-20241/calendar/
Last day to add: Friday, January 26, 2024
Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund: Friday, January 26, 2024
Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Friday, January 26, 2024 [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 30, 2024
Last day to withdraw without a "W" on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade: Friday, February 23, 2024 [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 5, 2024