

**USC Annenberg School of Journalism**  
**Syllabus**  
**JOURNALISM 202: NEWSWRITING - PRINT**  
**Fall 2007**  
**Room ASC 329**  
**Thursdays, 2 p.m. to 4:40 p.m.**

**INSTRUCTOR: ROSA MARIA SANTANA**

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

My goals are to sharpen your writing and critical thinking skills, as well as teach you about news values/judgment, ethics, and how to accurately write about our increasingly diverse world.

Journalism School Director Michael Parks writes that “good journalism starts with good reporting, but good writing tells the story.” Our Core Convergence Curriculum begins with news writing. We believe it is easier to teach students how to be good reporters after they’ve had a chance to learn about what makes a story newsworthy, what elements should be included in basic news stories, and what elements should be included in specific types of news stories such as trial verdicts and obituaries. That means you will use fact sheets to complete your print assignments.

I expect you to come to class on time, prepared (i.e., having done your readings and homework assignments, and followed the news), and ready to discuss various news-related topics.

Your Broadcast instructor and I will work together to make sure you understand the concepts covered in class, the importance of convergence and how it works, that assignments are logical and clear, and that we are moving at the right pace. You should feel free to talk to either of us at any point during the semester to simply chat or discuss any issues with our classes.

You learn best by doing. So expect weekly in-class and take-home writing assignments. Both types of assignments will use fact sheets, which are in your Course Reader. The in-class assignments will be on deadline. The first half of the semester will emphasize the basics of news judgment, and writing news leads and briefs. The second half of the semester will focus on how to cover specific types of news stories that are commonly assigned to beginning reporters. You will complete at least one reporting assignment outside the classroom.

All homework assignments should be turned in to me at the beginning of class the following Thursday. I will return your edited homework and in-class assignments by the following class. We will discuss the assignments in class using students’ work as examples.

Typing skills are essential in this course. You must be able to use a computer, type fast, and use Microsoft Word. When working on a computer, save often, make a back-up copy of your work, and print it out at various stages of the writing process. Always keep a hard copy for yourself. Claims that “the computer lost it” will not be accepted as an excuse.

You must know how to insert accents, tildes and other symbols in Word, or be sure to write them in before turning in assignments. Also, see copyediting/proofreading symbols in AP Stylebook. Do not use a red pen to make any marks. I will be using a red pen to make corrections.

Every student is required to schedule a one-on-one meeting with after the midterm. You’re all welcome to meet with me more often, of course.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

All textbooks are available at the USC Bookstore. Some may be available at [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). All textbooks, including the course reader, are also available on reserve at the Annenberg Resource Center and at Leavy Library.

ISBN: 0-465-00489-X

Title: Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law

Author: Norm Goldstein

Publisher: Perseus Publishing

**BRING YOUR AP STYLEBOOK TO EVERY CLASS FOR USE DURING IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, MIDTERMS AND FINALS.**

ISBN: 0-07-352614-2

Title: Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism

Author: Tim Harrower

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Title: COURSE READER: "Newswriting Workbook," with CD.

Author: Staff

Publisher: USC Bookstore

**BRING YOUR WORKBOOK TO EVERY CLASS FOR IN-CLASS AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS.**

Dictionary: The following online dictionary will be the official reference for in-class assignments, homework assignments, midterms and finals:

Merriam-Webster: [www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)

## LEARNING LAB REQUIREMENT

You are required to become a staff member of a campus media organization. Broadcast majors must work for ATVN (Annenberg TV News). Print and Public Relations majors may join the Daily Trojan, Impact, or Online Journalism Review. Your learning lab participation will be counted 10% toward your Broadcast news writing course grade. Full information on the learning lab requirement will be given at your Broadcast class.

## DAILY NEWS READINGS

Journalists must know what's happening in the world around them. For the aspiring writer/reporter, reading the newspaper and news Web sites thoroughly every day, listening to radio news, and watching television newscasts, are essential and strengthen your writing skills. Read at least one major daily newspaper, as well as weekly newsmagazines. I recommend the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Orange County Register, Los Angeles Daily News, Newsweek, Time or U.S. News and World Report. For news Web sites, try [msnbc.com](http://msnbc.com) or [cnn.com](http://cnn.com)

## QUIZZES

Print news writing will cover AP style and assignments will be graded for it. We will have eight (8) weekly AP Style quizzes and weekly current events quizzes. A list of AP topics to memorize is in the Course Reader. Both quizzes will be held during the first 20 minutes of class, and can NOT be made-up FOR ANY REASON. If you miss a quiz it will be recorded as an "F."

#### GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION/SPELLING EXAM

The GPSE is not part of your print course grade, but it is a catalog requirement and you must pass it to continue in the School of Journalism. The first GPSE will be given during the first day of class. The second opportunity will be on two different dates in December during Finals week. If you pass the exam in August with at least a 75, you do not need to re-take the exam in December. If you do not pass the December test, you can retake it in February 2008 and again in May 2008. If you do not pass the GPS exam by May, you will be dismissed from the School of Journalism. There is a grammar section in the course reader for review.

#### IN-CLASS/HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

We will be doing weekly in-class assignments on deadline. Students should print out assignments and keep a back-up. **NO MAKE-UPS FOR IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS.**

There will be homework assignments every week. If you are having problems with your homework you should contact me immediately by phone or e-mail.

#### ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be in class every week. If you must miss class please call or e-mail me as soon as possible for excused absences. If you miss class you must send me your assignments via e-mail by 2 p.m. Thursday. Students are responsible for getting the class notes from other students in the class.

Although the syllabi are similar, every core class is different and students can't make-up a class by going to another core class in the same sequence. For example, if you miss this print class, you can't go to a Monday or Wednesday print class.

#### WRITING COACHES

Writing coaches are available in ASC 227 during posted drop-in times and by appointment.

Ed Boyer, Print: [edjboyer@rr.ca.com](mailto:edjboyer@rr.ca.com)

Bob Berger, Print: [rberger@usc.edu](mailto:rberger@usc.edu)

#### GRADING CRITERIA: ASSIGNMENTS, MIDTERMS, FINALS

All assignments will be edited on a professional basis. Each story will be returned with written comments and explanations of any editing that is more than routine. Our style guide will be "The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual."

Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. Assignments will be graded down accordingly. There should not be any omissions, either. In fact, after the first week, any misspelled proper noun (even if it's due to a typographical error) or any inaccuracy, may result in an automatic "F" on that assignment. Accuracy is the first law of journalism. Professional journalists are expected to get their facts right, to spell and punctuate correctly, and to respect grammar and syntax. In case of doubt, check your facts, consult the AP Stylebook or a dictionary. It only takes a minute or two to avoid mistakes.

Please don't be discouraged if your writing receives low grades at the beginning of the semester. Your grades will improve. News writing is hard work, but the only way to get better is to keep writing, regardless of the difficulties. I'm more concerned with how you do in the final weeks of the course than how you do in the first weeks of the course. Grades on assignments in the first four weeks will be weighted less for the final grade for the course. This policy does not apply to quizzes.

Your final exam will be given Dec. 6, 2007, the last week of scheduled classes.

Your course grades will be determined as follows:

PRINT	
Quizzes	
(Current events, AP Stylebook, readings)	10%
Assignments/Leads test (Week 4)	40%
Midterm - Week 8	20%
Final	30%
Total	100%

Traditional grades and grade point averages are assigned as follows:

“A” stories are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor editing (i.e., they are publishable).

“B” stories require more than minor editing, and have a few style or minor spelling errors or an error of omission.

“C” stories are stories that need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many minor spelling and style errors.

“D” stories require excessive rewriting; have numerous minor spelling and style errors, and should not have been submitted.

“F” stories have at least one proper name misspelled, and/or one factual error. A misspelled name would be an example. A wrong intersection in a traffic story would be another.

#### LATE ASSIGNMENTS

No late assignments will be accepted. Assignments turned in late will be assigned an “F.” You must turn in assignments on the day they are due even if you know you will miss class and have contacted me beforehand. Send it to me via e-mail attachment. The story must arrive by the beginning of that day’s class session (2 p.m. Thursdays).

#### REWRITING STORIES

Students may rewrite assignments that received an F or a D grade (including late assignments). The highest grade rewritten assignments can get is a “C.” Such rewrites must be completed by the next class session.

#### PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one’s own. Plagiarism is a serious violation of the School of Journalism’s policy on academic integrity, and a student found guilty of plagiarism is subject to dismissal from the journalism major.

The following is the School of Journalism’s policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalog:

“Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to this policy.”

## DISABILITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

## STRESS AND ANGST

I realize that students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

## ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

The following information should be in the upper left hand corner of each page:

Your Name

Instructor Name

SLUG - a slug is a 1-2 word description of the story

Word Count - in Microsoft Word, highlight the story, then click Tools/Word Count.

Date - put the date the assignment is due

Start your story about one-half of the way down the first page to allow space for your grade and the instructor's notes. Be sure to double-space all stories. Use 12-point type - preferable Times, Times New Roman or Ariel font - and 1.25-inch margins. Do not use italics, underline or bold.

Indent the first line of each paragraph five spaces or half-inch. Use a left justification, leaving a ragged right margin. Do not break words at the end of lines. Put two spaces after the period of each sentence.

If you make last-minute fixes, do so with a black or blue pen or pencil using standard symbols (see Copyediting and Proofreading Symbols in your AP Stylebook).

Staple multiple pages in the upper left-hand corner.

Type or write "-30-" or "# # #" at the bottom of the last page.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

The schedule is subject to change. Readings should be done before class on the date shown.

### **WEEK 1 - AUG. 30** Review Syllabus/What is Convergence? What is News?

Introduction, review syllabus, copy preparation, using the AP Stylebook

What is convergence? What is News?

In-class writing assignment: (This will not be graded. It is a diagnostic tool to evaluate your writing).

Homework: Read ethics statement from the Society of Professional Journalists website

[http://www.spj.org/ethics\\_code.asp](http://www.spj.org/ethics_code.asp)

Be prepared to discuss next week.

Quiz: GPS Exam

Homework: TBA

### **WEEK 2 - SEPT. 6** Newsrooms, Story Structure, Leads

Basic newsroom structure; leads, datelines, quotes and attribution, and how to use them

Readings: Harrower, Chapters 1 (The Story of Journalism), 2 (How Newsrooms Work), 3 (Newswriting Basics), and 8 (Online Reporting/media convergence)

AP Stylebook: Topics 1

Quiz: AP Stylebook #1

Current Events

Homework: TBA

### **WEEK 3 - SEPT. 13** The News Lead

Lots of leads in class, for homework.

Readings: Harrower, Chapters 3 (Newswriting Basics) and 4 (Reporting Basics).

AP Stylebook: Topics 2

Quiz: AP Stylebook #2

Current Events

Homework: TBA

### **WEEK 4 - SEPT. 20** Leads Test

Leads/News Judgment Test [this test will take 1 hour]

Readings: Harrower Chapter 3 (Newswriting Basics)

AP Stylebook: Topics 3

Quiz: AP Stylebook #3

Current Events

Homework: TBA

**WEEK 5 - SEPT. 27** Story Structure, Briefs, Short Stories  
How to organize a basic news brief, short story.

Readings: Harrower, Chapter 3 (Newswriting Basics)  
AP Stylebook: Topics 4

Quiz: AP Stylebook #4  
Current Events

Homework: TBA

**WEEK 6 - OCT. 4** Story Structure, Briefs, Short Stories

Readings: Harrower: Chapter 3 (Newswriting Basics)  
AP Stylebook: Topics 5

Quiz: AP Stylebook #5  
Current Events

Homework: TBA

**WEEK 7 - OCT. 11** Obits  
How to write a basic obituary.  
Review for midterm

Readings: Harrower: Chapter 5 (Covering the News/writing obituaries)  
AP Stylebook: Topics 6

Quiz: AP Stylebook #6  
Current Events

Homework: TBA

**WEEK 8 - OCT. 18** MIDTERM: three stories

Homework: TBA

**WEEK 9 - OCT. 25** Speeches and News Conferences  
How to cover speeches and news conferences.  
(mock press conference)

Readings: Harrower: Chapter 5 (Covering the News/covering speeches)  
AP Stylebook: Topics 7

Quiz: AP Stylebook #7  
Current Events

In-class assignment: Guest speaker will visit the class. Be prepared to write a story based on the guest speaker's speech.  
Homework: TBA

**WEEK 10 – NOV. 1** Covering Meetings

How to cover City Council and other public meetings

Readings: Harrower: Chapter 5 (covering the News/covering meetings)  
AP Stylebook: Topics 8

Quiz: AP Stylebook #8  
Current Events

In-class assignment: Guest speaker will visit the class. Be prepared to write a story based on the guest speaker's speech.

Homework: TBA

**WEEK 11 - Nov. 8** Fires, Accidents and Disasters

Readings: Harrower: Chapter 5 (Covering the News/covering accidents, disasters and fires)

Quiz: AP Stylebook #8  
Current Events

Homework: TBA

**WEEK 12 - NOV. 15** Crimes and Courts

NOVEMBER 16: LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH A MARK OF "W"

Readings: Harrower: Chapter 5 (Covering the News/covering crimes and courts)

Quiz: Current Events

Homework: TBA

**WEEK 13 - NOV. 22** Getting the Whole Story/Features

Why is diversity/inclusiveness valuable in stories? How are feature stories different from news stories

Readings: Harrower: Chapter 6 (Beyond Breaking News)  
Course Reader: Diversity section

Quiz: Current Events

In-class assignment: Guest speaker will visit the class. Be prepared to write a story based on the guest speaker's speech.

Homework: TBA

**WEEK 14 - NOV. 29** Online Reporting/Law and Ethics

Writing for Online media/journalistic ethics

Readings: Harrower: Chapter 8 (Online Reporting) and 7 (Law and Ethics)

Quiz: Current Events

Homework: TBA

## **WEEK 15 - DEC. 6**

FINAL: two stories

### Instructor's Biography

Rosa María Santana is the Senior Communications Associate for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. In that position, she writes press releases for this nation's leading Latino civil rights organization. She also organizes national press conferences for MALDEF's regional offices located throughout the country. On a daily basis, Santana fields from phone calls from reporters who are writing stories about Latino civil rights.

Prior to becoming Senior Communications Associate for MALDEF, Santana was the West Coast Parity Project Associate Director for the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. Through the Parity Project, she worked closely with West Coast newsrooms that wanted to increase the number of Latinos working for them. She also organized community forums, bringing area residents and journalists together to talk about news coverage of area Latinos.

A former newspaper reporter, Santana worked for such publications as The Arlington Morning News in Texas, The Chicago Tribune and The Plain Dealer in Cleveland, Ohio before joining the association. While at the Arlington Morning News, she won two first-place awards from the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors for her series about a set of Mexican American triplets preparing for their fifteenth birthday. She also won a second-place statewide award from the Ohio Society of Professional Journalists for a series of stories published in The Plain Dealer about immigrants who moved from a central Mexican state to resettle in a small town in northeastern Ohio.

From 1999 to 2003, she sat on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Hispanic Journalists representing Latino journalists in the Midwest. She organized several Midwest journalism conferences and fundraisers to support scholarships for journalism students.

Santana graduated from California State University, Fullerton in 1990 with Bachelor of Arts degrees in both Spanish and Communications, with a print journalism emphasis. From 1993 to 1995, she was a recipient of the Haynes Foundation Fellowship from the Claremont Graduate University, where she received a master's degree in Politics.

For three recent semesters, she taught journalism classes at Los Angeles Trade Tech College, a community college in downtown Los Angeles. She also teaches a journalism class at Santa Monica College.