

Media and Society
Journalism 500
Fall, 2007

Ed Cray

Monday, 2:00-4:40 p.m.

ASC 225

This seminar is intended to introduce you to the problems confronting journalism in the United States, to explore the manifold ethical and commercial issues bedeviling the profession and, at the same time, to sharpen your critical thinking. As a seminar, the majority of the class time will be devoted to discussion – hopefully, one would add, intelligent discussion. To that end, students will be expected to keep up with the assigned reading, to read a major newspaper each day, to follow a favored television news program and to keep abreast of the major websites devoted to the profession.

The key websites are listed here; these will lead you to other sites:

Romenesko: <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=45>

Shoptalk: <http://www.tvspy.com/shoptalk.cfm?page=1>

Online Journalism Review: <http://www.ojr.org>

Nieman Foundation Watchdog: <http://www.niemanwatchdog.org>

Kevin Roderick: <http://laobserved.com>

It is expected students will attend all classes or inform the instructor if he/she will not be in class. Grading will be based on the three 1500-word papers due in the fifth, tenth and fifteenth week of the semester (each worth 25 percent of the grade), and leadership of in-class presentations (24-25 percent of the grade).

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 who undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to one percent of the total available semester points for this course.

Week I (August 27): The Introductory Questions

What is news? Who decides? What is the role of the press in society? The question of objectivity.

Reading for Week I: Kovach and Rosenstiel, *The Elements of Journalism*, 2nd ed., pp. ix-34, assigned earlier.

Reading for Week II: Kovach and Rosenstiel, pp. 35 – 112; plus handouts.

Week II (September 10): The Ever-Changing Structure of the News Industry

A hasty survey and discussion of the news media, and their performance.

Reading for Week III: Kovach and Rosenstiel, pp. 113-185.

Week III (September 17): The Process of Disbelief

A historical survey of how and why the pencil press moved from "objectivity" to "analysis" and "context."

Reading for Week IV: Selected articles from Cray's file on conglomeration

Week IV (September 24): Massive Media and Niche Marketing

Who owns what: The political, social and cultural impacts of conglomeration.

Reading for Week V: Selected articles from Cray's files on elitism and the Judith Miller case; Kovach and Rosenstiel, pp. 162-225.

First Paper Due Next Week

This will be a 1500-word, critical essay surveying the various media -- print (newspapers and magazines), broadcast (both radio and television) and online -- to assess the quality of the news content of each of these forms of public information. The paper is due at the beginning of class on September 25. There are no exceptions.

Week V (October 1): Who Makes the News and Why?

The problems with news sources including conflicts of interest, self-aggrandizement, and "big-foot" journalists as celebrities.

Reading for Week VI: Selected articles from Cray's ever growing plagiarism and Diana Griego files; Kovach and Rosensteel, pp. 226-255.

Week VI (October 8): Ethics

Plagiarism, conflation and other fakery, hoaxes, staged TV, theft, secret taping, doctored photographs and other patently illegal (immoral?) acts.

Reading for Week VII: Selected articles from Cray's files on the Judith Miller case and Reporters Privilege files

Week VII (October 15): Ethics Again

Confidentiality, reporters' privilege, the use of anonymous sources, checkbook journalism — and what we don't usually print or air: rape victims' names, gory photographs, suicides.

Reading for Week VIII: Cray's file on bias and the "liberal" press

Week VIII (October 22): Bias

How liberal is the press? Or is it liberal at all? In which we take a look at Fox News.

Reading for Week IX: *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (The Kerner Commission), Chapter 15, pp. 362-389.

Week IX (October 29): Diversity in the Newsroom

Gender, race and social class as they affect the news.

Second paper is due next week.

The second of three 1500-word essays is due at the beginning of class next week. This will be based on an assigned ethical question.

Reading for Week X: Selected articles from Cray's files on the role of the press in wartime

Week X (November 5): Prior Restraints

Government secrecy; the role of the press in wartime; when government lies.

Reading for Week XI: Selected articles from Cray's file on celebrity journalism and sports journalism.

Week XI (November 12): Celebrity Journalism and Sensationalism

Entertainment and sports journalism revealed. Questions of privacy.

Reading for Week XII: Cray's file on conflicts of interest

Week XII (November 19): Conflicts of Interest

Junkets and press tours; at play with the Establishment; elitism; wine and travel writers among other sinners; advertising versus editorial tensions; the Winans case.

Reading for Week XIII: To be assigned.

Week XIII (November 26): Guest Speaker (TBA)

Week XIV (December 3): Summary: A Snarl of Problems

The third 1500-word paper is due on Friday, December 14 at 2 p.m., handed in at my office, Annenberg 307C. The paper will concern itself with your opinion as to which of the mass media is most likely to change in the next decade, how that medium will change (for better or worse) and why. You are to base your paper on research, including interviewing at least three authorities on the mass media. You may NOT use more than one member of the Annenberg faculty as a source.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own; in journalism, this includes appropriating the reporting of another without clear attribution. The following is the Annenberg 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 rule."

On Plagiarism

The rash of recent firings at newspapers and magazines across the country has once again raised the question of plagiarism in journalism. Those embarrassing firings — and the axe fell on some rather well-regarded reporters and columnists — have suggested that the definition of the term and what constitutes plagiarism have grown vague over time.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of another's ideas or creative effort, whether fiction or non-fiction, pictorial or non-pictorial. It may be deliberate, or it may be accidental, or unintentional, that is, a misappropriation. It is still plagiarism. There is no such thing as an "innocent borrowing." It may be careless, it may be forgetful, it may be accidental. It is still plagiarism.

Obviously, deliberately copying someone else's work and submitting it as one's own is plagiarism. So too is copying that person's reporting, idea, concept, or line of argument even if you put it into your own words. (In other words, those elementary school reports on dinosaurs merely rephrased from the encyclopedia were plagiarism.)

The simplest way to avoid plagiarizing someone else's work is to credit your sources in the body of the article whether it be an essay, term paper, news story or Web page; television, radio or motion picture script; or public relations

campaign material including, but not limited to news releases, speeches or brochures. (If appropriate to the medium — for example, in a book, an academic paper, term paper or thesis — a footnote or endnote would also be required.) The attribution need not be elaborate, but it should be appropriate, and it should suggest how a reader might find the original source, for example:

"According to Associated Press..."

"The New York Times reported today..."

"In her celebrated book *Growing up in Samoa*, anthropologist Margaret Mead argued..."

"The Online Journalism Review today listed..."

Some editors, still laboring under the misapprehension they are crediting the competition, are quick to strike such attributions. You should insist on the attribution; it is vital to your personal credibility, to your work and to the profession itself that you credit your sources.

You need not burden every single sentence with an attribution — so long as the reader immediately recognizes that the unattributed material stems from the previously cited source. Surround borrowed material with attributions. If in doubt, attribute.

At the University of Southern California School of Journalism such careful attribution can save you considerable anguish. As the school's policy statement makes clear — and it is repeated in every class syllabus every semester — the penalty for plagiarism in the J-school is expulsion from the program. It is no more than the profession demands. — E.C.

Academic Accommodations

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 when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union, room 301, and the phone number is (213) 740-0776.

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Resume

Ed Cray

Professor, University of Southern California, School of Journalism

B.A. 1957, UCLA, anthropology; postgraduate studies, UCLA, 1957-1959, in anthropology, folklore and ethnomusicology

At various times since 1959, I have been director of editorial training programs for the *Los Angeles Times*; director of publicity and advertising Los Angeles Philharmonic-Hollywood Bowl Association; director of publications, American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California; assistant editor and business manager *Frontier* magazine; assistant director of public affairs, KPFK-FM; and a freelance writer.

Author of *Ramblin' Man: The Life and Times of Woody Guthrie* (W.W. Norton, 2004, 2006); *Chief Justice* (Simon & Schuster, 1997); *General of the Army: George C. Marshall, Soldier and Statesman* (W.W. Norton, 1990; Touchstone Books, 1992; Cooper Square, 2000); *Chrome Colossus: General Motors and Its Times* (McGraw Hill, 1981); *Levi's: The History of Levi Strauss & Co.* (Houghton Mifflin, 1979); *Burden of Proof: The Trial of Juan Corona* (Macmillan, 1973); *The Enemy in the Streets* (Doubleday-Anchor, 1972); *In Failing Health* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1971); *The Erotic Muse* (Oak Publications, 1969; 2nd ed. University of Illinois Press, 1991); *The Big Blue Line* (Coward-McCann, 1967); and with Jon Kotler and Miles Beller, *American Datelines* (Facts on File, 1990; University of Illinois Press, 2001), etc.

Articles, reviews published in the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Daily News* (Van Nuys), *California History*, *California Lawyer*, *National Law Journal*, *New West*, *The Nation*, *Change*, *Coast*, *Frontier*, *Emmy*, *Channels*, *Electronic Media*, *American Journalism Review*, etc.