

**University of Southern California**  
**Annenberg School for Communication**  
**Journalism 505-American Media History Seminar**  
**Autumn 2007**

**Instructor:** Félix F. Gutiérrez, Professor of Journalism and Communication

**Class Details:** Tuesday, 2:00 p.m.-4:40 p.m., ASC 228

**Textbook:**

Judith and William Serrin, Eds., *Muckraking! The Journalism That Changed America*,  
The New Press, 2002.

**Writing Style:**

Since this is a journalism class, you should approach all assignments as an opportunity to develop your long-form writing and term project for public audiences, not as a something written for a professor. This means that assignments should be presented in a clear, readable and understandable style that can be appreciated by someone who is not necessarily a historian. You may find it helpful to think of a personal acquaintance or family member and write your papers in a style that would be effective in communicating to that person the important and interesting information you have found and wish to share.

**Academic Integrity Policy:**

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 immediately receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to the school's policy. Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own; in journalism and in public relations, this means appropriating the words or ideas of another without clear attribution.

**Academic Accommodations:**

Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are 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.-5 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union room 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.

**Internship Credit**

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 internship during this semester shall earn academic credits as part of the Class Participation and Contributions portion of the final grade.

**Grades:**

All written assignments will be read, marked and graded on two criteria: (1) Reporting/analysis and (2) Writing/presentation. Each will receive a letter grade. The final grade for the assignment will be the average of the two grades. Any assignment with five or more grammar, spelling or punctuation errors will receive an F for the writing/presentation portion of the grade. The final grade of late papers will be reduced by one third of a grade for every day they are late.

Weighting of the assignments for the final seminar grade will be as follows:

(1) First Two Writing Assignments	30%
(2) Course Project Proposal	10%
(3) Course Project In-Class Presentation	10%
(2) Course Project	20%
(3) Examination	20%
(4) Class Participation and Contributions	10%

**Journalism History on Blackboard:**

A site for this course has been activated on USC's Blackboard system. If all goes well you will be able to access the supplemental readings and participate in other course activities by accessing the course on Blackboard. The URL is Blackboard.usc.edu. To enter the site you must be registered in the class.

## Guide to Schedule of Seminar Activities

Content: Material to be covered in the seminar that day.

Read: Read this material before coming to the seminar that day.

Due: Assignment to be turned in at this seminar session.

Do: Do before the next seminar.

## Schedule of Seminar Activities

### **August 28: Welcome to the Seminar. Introduction to Reporting Journalism History. Media Archival Research 101.**

Content: Introduction to the course and students, the importance of understanding the historical role of journalists and journalism, archival research tools for journalism history. Introduction to accessing and using USC archival news media print, microfilm and online resources by Grace Xu, Journalism Librarian, [gracex@usc.edu](mailto:gracex@usc.edu).

Read: Serrin, "Introduction."

Do: Select an issue area from the list provided for the class and email your selection to me. If it's not already taken, it's yours for the semester. I'll let you know. Then pick a newsworthy event that happened before 1900 from your issue area and examine how it was covered in the news media at the time through archival research in the USC libraries or online.

### **September 4: News Media: From Class to Mass to Class?**

Content: The First Amendment and the development of class media and mass media. The non-Anglo roots of United States media, early news coverage of the undercovered, and the emergence of class media for women and people of color.

Read: In Serrin, "The Press," pp. 305-309; Schudson and Tifft, "American Journalism in Historical Perspective," pp. 17-47; Wilson, Gutiérrez and Chao, "Alternatives: Colorful Firsts in Class Communication," pp. 261-288; and Beasley and Gibbons, "Voicing Women's Experiences," pp. 31-52 .

Due: Your approved issue area and news event.

Do: Archival research on how your event was covered in the news media of the era.

### **September 11: Journalism Flexes Its Muscles: Late 19<sup>th</sup> into Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.**

Content: The development of national magazines and city/regional newspapers and their influence on society.

Read: Fellow, "The Yellow Press and the *Times*," pp. 150-180 (Handout).

Do: First and final drafts of your first writing assignment (1,500 words). If you need help between the first and final drafts, please let me know via email or phone by September 10<sup>th</sup>.

**September 18: Muckrakers and the Muck they Raked. First Writing Assignment Due.**

Content: Muckraking journalists of yesterday and their influence on journalism today.

Read: Serrin, “Muckraking!” pp. 139-171, and “A Muckraking Magazine Reveals the Truth Behind Patent Medicines,” pp. 309-315 and Emery, “The Magazines: An Era of Muckraking,” pp. 226-229.

Due: First Writing Assignment (1,500 words).

Do: Second Writing Assignment. Pick a newsworthy issue or event related to your issue area from and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (prior to 1950) and see how it was covered by different news media or public sources of information in the news media of the era.

**September 25: Objectivity as Ideology: “All the News that’s Fit to Print” to “That’s the Way it Is”.**

Content: The rise of objectivity as a journalistic ideal and the development of the watchdog and civic advocacy role of journalists

Read: Schudson, “Objectivity Becomes Ideology: Journalism After World War I.” pp, 121-159.

Do: Archival research on how your issue or event was covered in the media of the era.

**October 2: Broadcast Journalism: The Immediate and Constant Companion**

Content: The development and rise of radio and television journalism from the 1920s through the 1980s.

Read: Wooten, “The Voice that Reached a Nation: Edward R. Murrow,” and Stephens, “New Technologies—Improved Means to an Unimproved End,” pp. 267-289.

Do: First and final drafts of your second writing assignment (1,500 words). If you need help between the first and final drafts, please let me know via email or phone by October 1.

**October 9: A Powerful Press is Confronted by the Public, Government and the Profession. Second Writing Assignment Due.**

Content: Efforts to control, harness or limit the role of the press by the public and government and to develop ethical standards by journalism professionals.

Read: Serrin, “The Press,” pp. 315-342. Journalistic Codes of Ethics.

Due: Second Writing Assignment (1,500 words).

Do: Think about the assignment that you would like to take on as your term project examining the historical angle of a journalistic aspect of your issue area. This can be about a person, an organization, how something was or was not covered. It can be presented as a term paper, a reporting project, a broadcast production or script, or a PowerPoint or website.

**October 16: Building a More Diverse and Inclusive News Media. Developing Your Term Project Proposal.**

Content: Initiatives to make news media coverage more accurate and employment more inclusive of groups that have traditionally been under covered and underrepresented. Preparing your project proposal.

Read: Wilson, Gutiérrez and Chao, “Advocacy: Pressuring the Media to Change,” pp. 245-262” and Beasley and Gibbons, “Challenges to Mass Media,” pp. 183-209.

Due: Term project ideas.

Do: Proposal for your term project (3-5 pages).

**Monday, October 22: Term Project Proposal Due by 2 p.m.**

**October 23: No Class. Individual Term Project Meetings.**

Do: Begin research and reporting on your term project.

**October 30: First Two Term Project Progress Reports.**

Read: Assigned readings for the project presentations.

Due: Progress Report on your Term Project.

**November 6: Second Three Term Project Progress Reports.**

Read: Assigned readings for the project presentations.

Due: Progress Report on your Term Project.

**November 13: Third Three Term Project Progress Reports.**

Read: Assigned readings for the project presentations.

Due: Progress Report on your Term Project.

**November 20: Fourth Three Term Project Progress Reports.**

Read: Assigned readings for the project presentations.

Do: Progress Report on your Term Project.

**November 27: Fifth Two Term Project Progress Reports.**

Read: Assigned readings for the project presentations.

Do: Progress Report on your Term Project.

**December 4: Final Examination**

**Friday, December 14: Project Due, 2 p.m., Annenberg Mail and Copy Center, First Floor, Annenberg Lobby, ASC 138. Or between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. in ASC 204.**