

**USC Annenberg School of Journalism**  
**Syllabus**  
**REPORTING (Journalism-302 Print, Section 21081)**  
**Spring 2008**  
**Mondays, 2 to 4:40 p.m.**  
**ASC 330**

**Mr. Julio Moran**  
Executive Director  
CCNMA

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Office Hours: by appointment only

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:** By the end of this course you should be able to report and write a well-researched news story of at least 1,000 words on deadline in a clear, concise, accurate and fair manner. You should also be able to incorporate basic computer-assisted reporting concepts in your stories.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OUTCOMES:** Journalism 302 (Reporting) is really an extension of Newswriting. That means it is as much about writing as it is about reporting. The two are inseparable. However, most of your time will likely be spent on the reporting of stories, that is, the gathering of information. By the end of the semester, you will know what kind of information is needed for various types of stories, where to track down that information, how to hone your interviewing skills, how to find good sources, and how to turn the information you collect into a cohesive and interesting story. You will learn how to think on your feet, develop your critical thinking skills and overcome your fears.

The course will focus on learning by doing. Your weekly assignments will usually revolve around coverage of the city of Santa Monica. I will act as City Editor and you will be Metro reporters. The idea is to become an expert on the city of Santa Monica by covering its government, crime and schools, and features, among other things. You will be expected to file a weekly beat note explaining what you did on the beat for the week.

With each assignment, you will be asked to provide a source list so I can spot fact-check your stories for accuracy. A sample form for your source list is attached.

There will **not** be an official mid-term test or project. You will be told what your grade is for the class after Week 8. The final project will be a 1,500-word hard news feature story about a topic of your choice. The topics for the final – and for as many other weekly writing assignments as possible -- must be approved by me beforehand. You will get story approval by submitting a budget line.

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 news-related issues.

Typing skills are essential in this course. You must be able to write on a personal computer. When working on a computer, save often, make a back-up copy of your work on a floppy, and print it out at various stages of the writing process. Always keep a hard copy for yourself. **Claims that “the computer lost it” or “the computer crashed” will not be accepted as an excuse.** Every student is required to schedule at least one meeting with me sometime around the semester’s mid-point.

**PROFESSIONAL DRESS CODE:** For the purposes of this class, you are a bona fide member of the working press. You should expect to be treated with all of the normal courtesies and privileges afforded to the press. In return, you are expected to represent the profession in a dignified and appropriate manner. If you do not take yourself seriously, no one else will. While conducting interviews and field research for this class you are expected to dress in proper business attire. That means when you conduct interviews do not dress like you are going to a nightclub or to the beach. You don’t have to wear business suits, but dress appropriately.

**E-MAIL:** You should use your USC e-mail address rather than a personal e-mail address, which is usually not that professional, when corresponding with sources via the Internet.

#### **TEXTS/READINGS:**

##### **Required:**

1. **“Associated Press Stylebook,”** Norm Goldstein, Editor, ISBN: 0465004881, Basic Books/Perseus
2. **“Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism,”** Tim Harrower, ISBN: 0073526142

##### **Optional:**

1. **“Creative Interviewing,”** 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Ken Metzler, ISBN: 0205262589, Allyn & Bacon
2. **“The Courts and the News Media,”** 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, California Judges Assn.

**Dictionary:** The following online dictionary will be the official reference for in-class assignments, homework assignments, midterms and finals: Merriam-Webster Dictionary, [www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)

**WRITING COACHES:** Writing coaches are available in ASC 227 during posted times and by appointment. They will review graded papers only, not help you write assigned stories. They are:

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

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

**Brad Hanson,** Print, [brad.hanson@latimes.com](mailto:brad.hanson@latimes.com)

**Mike Daniels,** Broadcast, [danielsm@usc.edu](mailto:danielsm@usc.edu)

**QUIZZES:** There will be weekly quizzes throughout the semester on current events and lectures and related reading assignments. Reporters must know what is happening in the world around them. For the aspiring reporter, reading the newspaper thoroughly every day and watching television newscasts are essential and strengthen your writing skills. If you find this to be a chore, you’ll never be a journalist.

Read at least one major daily newspaper, as well as magazines. I recommend The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, Time, or U.S. News and World Report. For news Web sites, try MSNBC.com or CNN.com For radio, listen to KNX (1070 AM) or KFVB (980 AM).

**ASSIGNMENTS:** There will be few in-class assignments. Much of your time for this class will be spent outside the classroom. If you do not have a car, become friends with someone who does, or learn the bus schedule between

USC and Santa Monica. Class time will be reserved for lectures and discussion of current events and assignments. Class participation is important. Reporters cannot be shy about asking questions or expressing opinions.

With each assignment, you must provide a list of your sources so I can spot fact-check your stories for accuracy. This includes people, web sites, articles or reference books. A sample form for your source list is attached.

**As you know, fabricating quotes or sources is unacceptable and will result in an "F" for the course and possibly expulsion from the Annenberg School of Journalism and the University.**

**GRADES:**

**Assignments:** All assignments will be edited on a professional basis. Each story will be returned with a grade and written comments and explanations of any editing that is more than routine. Our style guide is "The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual." You are expected to know AP style. You may copy edit your assignments by hand prior to turning them in provided it is readable and neat. **Do not use red ink.**

Grades will be based on overall contents and construction of the story. Did you get the lead correctly? Is it well written? Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. There should not be any omissions, either. **In fact, after the first week, any misspelled proper word (even if it's due to a typographical error) will drop the grade one-half grade on that assignment. A factual error will 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.

Please don't be discouraged if your stories receive low grades at the outset. Your work will improve. Reporting and writing are hard work, but the only way to get better is to keep at it, regardless of the difficulties.

**Course:** Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Weekly Assignments	55 percent
Quizzes	10 percent
Final	35 percent

- Generally speaking,  
"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 spelling errors or one significant error of omission.  
"C" stories are stories that need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have spelling, style or omission errors.  
"D" stories require excessive rewriting and have numerous errors, and should not have been submitted.  
"F" stories have one proper name misspelled or a factual error.

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is required for all classes, particularly since we will have two fewer classes because of school holidays. If you expect to miss class due to a family emergency, a medical problem, or a religious holiday, you should contact me beforehand by sending me an e-mail or giving me a call). Tardiness is unacceptable. It reflects on your credibility, not only with me but with your sources. Students are responsible for getting class notes from other students in the class. Students can **not** make up in-class assignments or quizzes with extra credit assignments.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignments are due Mondays at 2 p.m. in class or via e-mail as a **Word attachment**. You must turn in assignments on the day they are due even if you know you will miss class and have contacted me beforehand. You can either give it to another student to hand in for you, leave it in my mailbox with a time stamp from Student Services, or send it to me via e-mail attachment.

**Late assignments will not be accepted and an “F” will be given to any missed assignments.**

**REWRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** You may rewrite a homework assignment, especially those that received an “F” for factual errors, to achieve a higher grade. Such rewrites must be completed by 5 p.m. Friday of the week graded stories are returned. The old grade and the new grade will be averaged for the recorded grade for that assignment. Rewritten stories should be sent via e-mail. This policy does not apply to the final project.

**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 School of Journalism’s policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalog: *“Since its founding, the USC Annenberg 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 as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to this policy.”*

**USC STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:** The following is the University’s policy regarding students with disabilities: *“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 me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in the Student Union room 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 today’s 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 USC Student Counseling Services at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

(Readings are to be done prior to the class on the indicated date. **The syllabus will be flexible and is subject to change consistent with the class's progress or the availability of speakers or extenuating circumstances.**)

### **Week 1 (Jan. 14): Course Overview/Syllabus Review**

**What is reporting?** (How it differs from Newswriting last semester)

**What is a beat?** (How we'll use beats this semester)

Explain incorporated city; unincorporated area; communities within a city).

**Developing story ideas.**

**Building a complete Rolodex.**

**Student reporter rights.**

**Shoe leather/telephones vs. e-mail.**

**Professional dress, conduct, safety.**

**Tape recorder requirements.**

**Fact-checking**

**Writing budget lines, story proposals**

**Homework:** Find demographics and ten story ideas for Santa Monica  
Student bio

**Readings: (OPTIONAL)** "Creative Interviewing," Chapters 1, 2.

**Homework/Diagnostic writing assignment:**

### **Week 2 (Jan. 21): MLK Holiday NO CLASS**

**Homework:** E-mail demographics and story ideas for Santa Monica. (DUE TUESDAY 1/22 by 5 p.m.)

### **Week 3 (Jan. 28): Covering Press Conferences, Part I/US. Census**

**Covering speeches and news conferences**

**Determining what the story is**

**How to write non-chronological stories**

**Researching U.S. Census/American FactFinder Information**

**Readings: (OPTIONAL)** "Creative Interviewing," Chapters 3, 4.

**Homework:** Watch "Meet the Press," "Face the Nation" or another weekend news interview television show and write a story about one of the issues discussed on the program.

### **Week 4 (Feb. 4): Developing a Beat**

**Interviewing Skills** (basic techniques, attribution)

**Hard news vs. soft news** (deciding when to use a hard or soft lead).

**Finding helpful sources; newsworthy people**

**Using tape recorders**

**Homework:** Interview a newsworthy resident or business owner in Santa Monica. Tape the interview if possible. Note: You cannot interview someone you know or are related to. Write a 500-word story.

**Readings: (OPTIONAL)** "Creative Interviewing," Chapters 5,6.

### **Week 5 (Feb. 11): Covering a multicultural community**

How do race, gender, geography, class and age affect how stories are written and how they are perceived by society?

**Homework:** Write a 500-word story regarding diversity in Santa Monica.

**Week 6 (Feb. 18): Presidents' Day Holiday NO CLASS**

Homework: Diversity story due Tuesday 2/19 by 5 p.m. via e-mail.

**Week 7 (Feb. 25): Covering City Council Meetings, Part 1**

**Discussion of City Council**

**Local politics**

**Making dull material interesting**

**Homework:** Story on a City Council item from meeting. 500 words.

**Readings:** (OPTIONAL) "Creative Interviewing," Chapters 7, 8.

**Week 8 (March 3): Covering Local Government, Part II**

**Expanding beyond agenda items.**

**Analysis and Interpretation**

**Homework:** Write an analysis/interpretation or follow-up story on Council action. 1,000 words.

**Readings:** (OPTIONAL) "Creative Interviewing," Chapters 9, 10.

**Week 9 (March 10): Covering Law Enforcement, Part I**

**Relationship between journalists and police; police and public**

**Accessing public crime records – LAPD, Sheriff, CHP**

**Preparing for crime stories (misdemeanors and felonies)**

**Homework:** Visit the Santa Monica Police Station and write a crime story from a police report or from interviewing a police officer. Write a 300 to 500-word story; due next week.

**Readings:** (OPTIONAL) "Creative Interviewing," Chapters 11, 12.

**Week 10 (March 17): SPRING BREAK**

Proposal for final project due March 24. Explain what you expect the story will say and who you plan to interview. Story must have a minimum of five live sources.

**Week 11 (March 24): Covering Law Enforcement, Part II**

**Daily vs. second-day, trend crime stories**

**Analysis and interpretation**

**Homework:** Write a crime trend story or follow-up story. 800 words.

**Readings:** "Creative Interviewing," Chapters 13, 14

**Week 12 (March 31): Covering Education Part 1**

**How is the Board of Education similar/different than the City Council?**

**Homework:** Cover a Santa Monica board of education meeting and write a story about an action item taken by the board.

**Readings:** (OPTIONAL) "Creative Interviewing," Chapters 15, 16

**Week 13 (April 7): Covering Education Part 2**

**Analysis/interpretation of education issues**

**Homework:** Write an analysis/interpretation education story. 800 words.

**Readings:** (OPTIONAL) "Creative Interviewing," Chapters 17, 18

**FRIDAY APRIL 11 IS THE LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH A MARK OF A "W."**

**Week 14 (April 14): Courts**

**Criminal procedure; judicial system**

**Criminal vs. civil courts**

**Preparing to cover a trial**

**Homework:** Cover a trial from your beat. Write a 500-word story.

**Week 15 (April 21): Covering Speeches and News Conferences, part II**

**Covering speeches and news conferences**

**Determining what the story is**

**How to write non-chronological stories**

**Homework:** Cover a speech or news conference in Santa Monica. If you can't find one, cover a speech or news conference at USC. Write a 500-word story.

**Week 16 (April 28): Writing the long story; Feature and Specialty Reporting**

Organization and approach to writing the long story.

Entertainment, sports, consumer affairs are all specialty reporting. How are they different from hard news stories?

**Homework:** Work on Final project

**FINAL (Monday May 12) -- Turn in your Final story via e-mail by 4 p.m.**

Story may be turned in sooner if completed earlier.

## JULIO MORAN

### Biography

Julio Moran was named Executive Director of CCNMA: Latino Journalists of California on June 1, 1997. He also has been an adjunct professor at the USC Annenberg School of Journalism since 1998, and at Cal State Northridge since 2005.

After brief stints at the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* and the weekly *San Fernando Sun*, Moran in 1979 moved to New York to work as an editor for *Nuestro Magazine*, a national general interest magazine for Latinos. In 1980, he reported on both the Republican and Democratic national conventions for the magazine.

In 1981, he returned to Los Angeles to work for the *Los Angeles Times* as a general assignment reporter. In 1984, Moran was among the team of editors, reporters and photographers that was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Meritorious Public Service for a comprehensive 21-part series on Latinos in Southern California that ran in 1983. Moran also was on the Metro staff that was awarded Pulitzer Prizes for coverage of the 1992 Los Angeles civil disturbance and the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

In mid-1995, he left the newspaper as part of company-wide downsizing.

Between 1995 and mid-1997, Moran was a freelance writer and a consultant to CCNMA, before being hired as its executive director in mid-1997. In 1998, Moran began teaching news writing and reporting as an adjunct professor at the USC Annenberg School of Journalism.

Throughout his career, Moran has been active in efforts to bring diversity to our nation's newsrooms. In 1982, he served on the planning committee that organized the first national conference for Latino journalists, which was held in San Diego.

He sat on the first Board of Directors of the National Assn. of Hispanic Journalists in 1984, and was elected vice president/print in 1986. He left the NAHJ board in 1987, but returned to the board in 1991, where he served until 1996. That year, NAHJ presented him with its President's Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Moran also sat on the Board of Directors of Unity '94, an umbrella group of the four largest national associations of journalists of color. Unity '94 was a gathering of journalists of color that was held in Atlanta, GA in July 1994, and attracted more than 5,000 participants. He remained on the board through June 1996.

Moran is a graduate of Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., where he earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in journalism and history in 1978. In 1996, he completed the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education's Management Training Center program at the Kellogg School of Management and the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

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01/08

1-1-1-1-1  
**SOURCELIST**  
J-302  
Name:  
Date:  
Story:

**INTERVIEWS**

Name	Title	Telephone Number	E-mail Address
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**WEB SITES**  
URLs

**BACKGROUND MATERIAL**

Name and date of publication; story headline; byline.