

JOUR 302 – Print Reporting
Spring, 2008

INSTRUCTOR

Prof. Larry Pryor

COURSE INFORMATION

Class Number: 21078, Meets Mondays, 2 to 4:40 p.m., AHF 259 3 Units

COURSE OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

Importance

This Core Curriculum course extends your print news-writing experience into the realm of reporting. You will now practice the gathering, ordering and selection of information – the very soul of journalism. The way reporters go about this function and the constitutional protections extended to them are fundamental to democracy. As reporters, you are the public’s surrogates.

News-gathering techniques may be unfamiliar to you. The thought of having to demand access to files or to confront sometimes reluctant – yes, even hostile – interview subjects can be unsettling at first. This will soon pass.

This course will be demanding, but we at the Annenberg School believe you will find it exhilarating and rewarding, as well.

If you do not immerse yourself in the life of Culver City, it will be impossible to pass this class. We hope you will work to become more than a reporter who parachutes in and darts away with a story. The best reporters hang out sometimes and get a feel of place, people and issues. They often find good stories just by “just poking around.”

Objectives

The **goals of this class** are for you to gain:

- An overview and understanding of both multi-source reporting and the management of metro beats;
- A knowledge of the role of reporters and the technical, journalistic and ethical problems they confront;
- An ability to write stories for publication in a clear, concise, accurate and fair manner;
- A commitment to critical thinking and precision when dealing with complex story material.

You will learn, through practice, 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 and overcome your fears and frustrations.

You will need to view issues from a wide range of perspectives – to be sensitive to the needs and values of the entire community. We will consciously and conscientiously address diversity throughout the course. **Diversity, like ethical journalism and fair and insightful reporting, is a fundamental mission**, not a secondary task. To fulfill this goal, we will not wait for stories from diverse parts of the community to fall in our laps; we will aggressively seek them out.

At the same time, as you get a first exposure to work in the field, we – as an editorial team – will watch carefully for ethical questions that can arise during reporting assignments and we will address them.

Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you will be expected to have achieved these outcomes:

- *At least eight stories, plus a final story of a minimum of 1,500 word on an extended topic;*
- *Continued improvement on grammar, punctuation, spelling, AP style;*
- *Development of effective interviewing skills;*
- *Facility with story research, finding sources, making story pitches (This includes familiarity with U.S. Census/American FactFinder and other databases), digging out story ideas, organizing assignments, working with editors and fellow reporters;*
- *Familiarity with beats and specific story areas: government (city/state/national), police, courts, elections, environment/urban affairs, business/development, etc.;*
- *Familiarity with a variety of story types: spot news, profiles, meetings, speeches/news conferences, analysis.*

TEXTBOOKS

Required

ISBN: 0465004881

Title: Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law

Author: Norm Goldstein

Publisher: Basic Books/Perseus

ISBN: 0073526142

Title: Inside Reporting
Author: Tim Harrower
Publisher: McGraw Hill

ISBN: 0205262589
Title: Creative Interviewing
Author: Ken Metzler
Publisher: Allyn & Bacon

Dictionary: Merriam Webster, www.m-w.com

I strongly urge that you buy a tape recorder and learn how to use it this semester. They are essential tools for reporters. It doesn't have to be an expensive one. Just make sure it has a tape counter.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL READING

For many reasons, you need to be a “news junkie” this semester. Our focus will be on local news, but many local story ideas come from news events that happen elsewhere. It's unlikely that you will understand your own community if you don't understand the world around you.

You should be looking at news from a wide range of media and across the ideological spectrum. My reading list this semester would include:

- State and metro coverage in the *Los Angeles Times*
- The Internet: slate.com, nytimes.com, washingtonpost.com, pointer.org/medianews, laweekly.com, instapundit.com, huffingtonpost.com, news.bbc.co.uk, laobserved.com, thenation.com, nationalreview.com ... and more. ...
- *The Daily Breeze* (online or in print) and other newspapers, Web sites and blogs that cover the South Bay and our target city.

I also strongly suggest that you **subscribe to “Al's Morning Meeting,”** an e-mail newsletter from Poynter.org by Al Tompkins. It is perhaps the best example we have of how to come up with good story ideas each day.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Basic Requirements:

Our classroom sessions will be structured as weekly editorial meetings of a local newspaper. Relying on textbooks, source materials, ongoing editorial discussion and a rigorous and disciplined schedule of research, reporting and writing, you will learn by doing. **Weekly reporting assignments will involve coverage of our target city.**

Much of each class session will be dedicated to discussion of story pitches, plus problems and discoveries in the field. **You will be expected to become an expert on your assigned beats in Culver City** and share that with others in the class.

You will have a full seven days to turn in your weekly stories. You will also be expected to fully develop your assigned beats, as well as occasionally covering other institutions, agencies, trends and stories in Culver City. **One assignment must be to cover a trial at the county courthouse that serves residents of that area.**

You must come to class on time, prepared, having done your readings and outside assignments. Be ready to talk about what is happening in our community.

The topics for **all weekly writing assignments – and the long-form writing project – must be approved by me beforehand.**

Sources and Source Lists:

You will learn to rely on sources inside institutions and in the community at large. **With each assignment, you will be asked to provide a source list**, with phone numbers, which will allow your stories to be fact-checked. You will be expected to build a database of sources throughout the semester.

The Editorial Process:

I will function as the managing editor of our newsroom. As the semester progresses, you will be asked to take on more of the responsibilities of a city editor or assistant city editors (who go by the wonderful acronym, ACEs). I will select assignments from your budget lists, but you will work with me in coordinating them among various reporters, in forming reporting teams, resolving transportation problems and maintaining the city desk's master story list.

You will learn how to pitch stories to an editor, manage story budgets and evaluate proposed story ideas, yours and those of others, on their news merits.

The Final Project:

In addition to the weekly news stories you will write this semester, you will be expected to undertake a writing project with more scope, a major story that will replace the final

exam. It must be a **minimum of 1,500 words** and have a **source list of at least five live sources** (i.e. quotes from reports, studies, budgets, etc. will be **in addition** to the sources that you interview and quote in the story).

The topic for this story **must be agreed upon between us**, preferably by the mid-term of the course. You may change topics, with my approval, but you should not put this assignment off.

Class Communication:

As your editor, I expect that you will stay in touch with me during the week. You can e-mail me, call or visit me in my office. If you are having problems with an assignment, **let me know during the week and we can make adjustments**. Don't postpone into the weekend, when you won't be able to do interviews. Remember, **it is difficult to reach sources on Monday mornings**. Most public officials are in meetings and will not return calls until the afternoon – too late for our deadline of 2 p.m. Use weekends and/or Monday morning for writing.

I will be **using Blackboard to post notices**, draw your attention to events that could affect our assigned city and call attention to problems reporters are having that might affect you. If something is particularly important, I will e-mail you and ask you to go to Blackboard.

You will be assigned **readings from the Harrower text** that we used in the J202 writing class. They will relate to your reporting assignments and will be useful. I will also assign chapters from “Creative Interviewing,” by Ken Metzler. His examples, anecdotes and instructions on how to conduct a strong interview, how to get good quotes and how to build rapport with sources will improve your skills.

“The Associated Press Stylebook” will be the authority on style. You are expected to know the stylebook from the outset of this semester. I will grade you on style and the quizzes will include questions that deal with persistent style problems that we have discussed but still turn up in stories.

Every student is required to schedule at least one meeting with me sometime around the semester's mid-point. This is similar to personnel meetings between editors and reporters. We will discuss any nagging problems you may have and find ways to fix them.

You should have a tape recorder and know how to use it to back up your written notes.

QUIZZES

Quizzes will be given at the start of class. If you are late, you can't make up the test later.

They will cover grammar, spelling, style and current events. The grammar, style and spelling questions will be taken from problems that arose in your stories and that we discussed at the editorial conference or that I explained by giving a short lecture. In other words, these will be persistent problems that need to be understood and corrected.

Some questions will be based on prominent news events of the past week.

Quizzes will take no more than 10 minutes. They will have 10 questions and a bonus question, giving you a possible perfect score of 11. The “Bs” start at 8 correct answers and below 6 indicates you need to focus.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Basic Requirements:

All stories **MUST** include a **COMPLETE** source list. Interview subjects must be Identified by title, organization, phone number and e-mail address; Web sites must have URLs; printed sources must have bibliographic information. In other words, **you must include back-up information for all quoted or cited sources.**

Stories without source lists will get an F. Stories with partial source lists will be graded down appropriately.

Note: Some stories may be randomly fact-checked during the semester.

Core policy on late assignments: No late assignments will be accepted. Assignments turned in late will be assigned an F. I may grant exceptions for extraordinary circumstances.

Stories and memos will be due on Mondays. If you miss the deadline, your work will not be accepted. Nor can you make up missed assignments, especially in-class assignments or quizzes with extra homework assignments.

Note: If you wish to do the same assignment for both the print and broadcast part of this class, it must be cleared with both me and Mike Daniels. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Rewriting Stories

I allow students to rewrite stories, particularly if the assignment got a poor grade. You may wish to revise the writing or do more reporting to complete a story that leaves out important points. **This must be done during a timeframe that we agree to, perhaps 24 hours.** I will correct and grade the rewritten story, discuss it with you,

and average the previous grade with the new one, assuming that it's higher.

REPORTING ASSIGNMENTS, BEAT NOTES, STORY PITCHES

Team Reporting

Reporting assignments during the semester may be carried out singly, in pairs or in groups. But we require that each student write his or her stories independently. When I read your stories, I need to know that it is your own work.

Transportation can be a logistical barrier for an undergraduate reporter, even when you own a car, given the price of gasoline and parking. But Los Angeles *does* have public transportation, and we will discuss how to get back and forth from our target city by bus and light rail. You are allowed to report in teams and **carpooling is strongly recommended**. The telephone and e-mail are other options.

Our Mythical Local Newspaper

All assignments will be edited by me as though they were being turned in to me by a reporter at a local paper that covers Culver City and the South Bay. Each story will be turned back with written comments and corrections. We will talk about your stories in class.

You will be writing stories from your assigned beats in the city and you will be expected to become an expert in that topic. Note: The beats will rotate. Those assignment changes will be negotiated at our editorial conference.

You will be writing stories from the other ongoing beats in our assigned city: city council, education, police and fire department, crime trends, human and race relations, the homeless, business and finance, traffic, planning and zoning, etc. Again, this will be coordinated with your fellow reporters at the editorial conference.

One assignment during the semester will be a 600-word trial story. You may wish to wait until we have had a chance to discuss the courts before taking on this assignment, but you may also undertake this valuable assignment at any time.

Unless otherwise agreed upon between us, the weekly story should be on a hard-news topic and be in the 500-750 word range. Stories must have a minimum of three quoted sources.

Source lists are required for all stories that you write this semester. This is now standard procedure at many publications, especially when editors accept stories from freelance writers. The source list format asks you to supply the name, telephone number and e-mail address of interview subjects, as well as details on any published background materials used in the story..

Story Pitches

No story should be undertaken without getting my clearance. As in a newsroom, we have to allocate your time carefully. You will get story approval by submitting a list of at least two story ideas as budget lines during our weekly in-class editorial meeting. You will be expected to then verbally pitch these story ideas at the meeting.

You can test an idea on me via e-mail or at my office, but the story must be eventually sent in written form, be pitched at the editorial meeting and, if approved, listed on the city desk list of stories.

Beat Notes, Budget Items and Slugs

The budget lines, or story proposals, will accompany your beat notes. Beat notes will include three new sources (with phone numbers and e-mail addresses) each week and a brief description of how you spent the week. The new sources may be drawn from the assignment you are handing in.

Beat notes are a memorandum that starts with a narrative or discussion of what you did this week, what sources you talked with, meetings attended, reports copied and read. The memo should have a list of “slugs” or story ideas with a brief explanation of where you are on each story. As the semester progresses, this list should grow, including a weekly discussion on where you are with your major project. You will be graded on these weekly memos as you would on stories.

The beat notes memo is also where you list the new story ideas that you will be pitching that week.

The “slugs” or story identifiers are usually one word, but sometimes two, and are written in upper case (CULVERCOUNCIL, DOGBARKS, PARAMED SHORTAGE). They identify your story pitches and approved budget items. After stories are approved, the slugs and budget items are transferred to your list of active stories in the beat notes and eventually become the slug for your completed story.

If we were a metro newspaper, the slugs and budget items would be circulated to all of the editorial departments to alert them that you have this story in the works. In this class, once you submit a story idea and I accept it, the topic is yours exclusively. You may offer or trade the story with another reporter but I have to be consulted and you both have to change your story lists in your beat notes.

Story and Memo Formats

Assignments must be done in Microsoft Word, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font. Stories should have this information in the upper-left corner:

Your Name

STORY SLUG
Journalism 302
Word Count

Be sure to leave about a quarter of the first page blank at the top to give me room to write comments. Use normal margins and **double-space** the copy (1.5 space is fine, too).

A memorandum such as beat notes or a written story pitch should look like this:

MEMORANDUM

TO: Larry Pryor
FROM: Your Name
DATE: (Date memo is due or turned in)
SUBJECT: Beat Notes and Budget Items

These memos should be single-spaced, but, like stories, they have to be coherent, organized and follow the rules of grammar, spelling, style. Memos are shared by many editors and it is a chance to show them your writing ability and professionalism.

Conduct in Class and on Assignments:

I expect you to stay alert and on topic during class sessions. We will not, in general, be using the computers in the classroom as part of our news meetings. Instead, you will need to focus on how we can best cover our city to capture the interest, enthusiasm and participation of sources and readers.

When in the field, you need to dress the part of the reporter in Southern California, which might be described as **casual business attire**. That means no jeans, T-shirts, cutoffs, shorts or running shoes. Hair should be trimmed and combed. Etc.

Your sources will treat you as a professional if you look and act like one. You will be doing the work of professional journalists, and several students in this class previously have sold or placed their stories in local papers that covered their cities. In other words, don't think of yourself as a lowly "student reporter." You aren't.

Use good street sense when reporting. Night assignments should be done in pairs or groups. Street crime reporting must be limited to police ride-alongs.

GRADES AND GRADING POLICIES

You will be treated by me as a professional reporter and writer at all times in this course. That means that your stories should be free of errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. Nor should there be any "holes" or omissions in your stories.

Any misspelled proper nouns – a name or a place or thing – will result in an automatic “F” on the assignment. A factual error also will result in an automatic “F” on assignments. A factual error can be defined as one so substantial that it requires a printed correction in the next day’s publication.

Accuracy and clarity will be key characteristics for “A” stories, as will context and completeness. I will also consider the creativity, originality and freshness that writers display. We do not have to be dull or boring in this class. We want to be read.

Roughly speaking, stories will be graded on these criteria:

- An `A` requires little editing because it is accurate, clear, comprehensive, well-written and has few, if any, mechanical flaws.
- A `B` story requires more editing work because it is incomplete, has spots where it is unclear or it has some minor mechanical or structural problems.
- `C` stories are average student work, with much editing required for mechanical or structural problems, as well as matters of clarity, completeness or concision.
- `D` stories are flawed efforts, replete with mechanical and structural problems, misspellings, errors of style and major issues of incompleteness or incoherence.
- The `F` mark will go to stories falling below even this low-water mark. And errors of fact or misspellings of proper names, as discussed, will prompt automatic failing grades, as will **assignments filed after deadline.**

The final grade will be determined according to these percentages:

Weekly Writing Assignments	40 %
Budget Lines and Beat Notes	15
Class Participation	10
Quizzes	10
In-Depth Story in Place of the Final Exam	<u>25</u>
Total:	100 %

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance and punctuality are vital. You must get my approval **in advance** if you will miss a class. That may be done by e-mail or telephone, preferably before class. Unexcused absences will detract from your performance and from your overall grade in the course.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting class notes from other students. I am not able to hold separate "catch-up" sessions outside of class. **You can't make up in-class assignments or quizzes with extra homework assignments.** You should never miss any other USC class (journalism or non-journalism) to cover a story for this class.

PLAGIARISM AND JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism and other ethical lapses have become a big problem in the pressure-filled journalism business, as well as for schools of journalism. Don't be tempted to cut corners. Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own. This is not only about copying sentences and phrases, but also about slightly altering a few words. In journalism, plagiarism includes appropriating the reporting of another *without clear attribution*. This is theft but it's also a lie, since you are representing to the reader that you and your news organization have verified the facts when you have not.

Fabrication of content for stories, such as making up sources, quotes and facts, must be avoided at all costs. Sooner or later, it catches up to you. (If you haven't seen it, rent "Shattered Glass.")

ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

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.

WRITING COACHES

We have the best writing coaches you are likely to find – anywhere. They are available to review your assignments **after they're graded**. You may go on your own, or I may require some students to consult with them. They are available in ASC 227 during posted drop-in times and by appointment.

Bob Berger, Print: rberger@usc.edu

Ed Boyer, Print: edjboyer@ca.rr.com

Brad Hanson, Print: brad.hanson@latimes.com

Mike Daniels, Broadcast: danielism@usc.edu

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. Its phone number is 213-740-0776.

INSTRUCTOR'S BIO

Larry Pryor was a reporter for *The Louisville Courier-Journal* and then for the *Los Angeles Times*, where he was an environment writer and assistant metro editor, among a variety of positions he held there. In 1982 he became the news editor for Times Mirror's pioneering videotex online project, Gateway, until that project ended in 1986. When the Times re-entered electronic publishing in 1994 in a project with Prodigy, he returned to online journalism, eventually becoming editor of the paper's Web site, latimes.com, in 1996. He moved to the USC/Annenberg School of Communication in 1997 as the school's first online journalism program director and helped launch and edit the Online Journalism Review. He is an associate professor and teaches reporting and writing, with a focus on environmental journalism and urban affairs. He writes fiction, including a novel that he is finishing this semester.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is subject to change.

WEEK 1 – Jan. 14

Class Topics: Course Overview & Syllabus Review

- General Introduction to class process and procedures
- What are beats, beat notes and beat assignments?
- How to develop story ideas and make story pitches
- Student reporter rights
- Professional dress, conduct, safety
- Introduction to Census and crime data

Assignment: Create a statistical profile of our target city, using U.S. Census/FactFinder data and other databases. Write a memo to your editor with a discussion of points that stand out and three story ideas based on the profile. (This must be e-mailed by Monday, Jan. 21, at 2 p.m.)

Readings:

- Metzler, Chapters 1, 2
- Harrower, Chapter 4, “Reporting Basics”

WEEK 2 – Jan. 21**(Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – USC Holiday)**

Assignments: Compare the crime rates for key crimes with the rates of six other cities in the South Bay. Write a memo to your editor discussing the significance of your findings and propose three story ideas based on this analysis.

Readings:

- Metzler, Chapters 3,4
- Harrower, Chapter 5, “Covering the News”

WEEK 3 – Jan. 28**Quiz****Class Topic: Building a Beat**

- Interviewing Skills: Discuss first four chapters of Metzler
- Reporting basics: Discuss Harrower chapters
- Discuss statistical profile of target city: urban ecology
- Hard news and time pegs – keeping stories fresh
- Finding helpful sources and newsworthy people
- Using tape recorders
- Beat assignments in target city

Assignments: Write a 500-word story. Write a beat note.

Readings:

- Metzler, Chapters 5,6
- Harrower, Chapter 6, “Beyond Breaking News”

WEEK 4 – Feb. 4**Quiz****Class Topic: Covering City Hall**

- Forms of local government
- Role of the press in government
- Covering local politics and elections
- Covering city council meetings
- Digging for stories

Assignments: Write a 500-word story. Write a beat note.

Readings:

- Metzler, Chapters 7,8
- Review Harrower, pgs. 98-102 (Crime and Courts), Read pgs 140-142 (Libel)
- California Judges Association, Chapter 4, “Pretrial Criminal Procedure” (Handout)

WEEK 5 – Feb 11.

Quiz

Class Topic: Covering the Police Beat

- Accessing public crime records – LAPD, sheriff, CHP and local police department
- Defining crimes – homicides, murder, felonies, robberies etc.
- Dealing with Watch Commanders
- Arrests and persons “held for questioning”
- Should you name a suspect; when is someone in custody considered a suspect?
- A primer on libel law and how to deal with police reports – what’s “privileged” or part of the court record and what is not
- District attorneys, grand juries, information hearings
- Indictments and the court records

Assignments: Write a 500-word story. Write a beat note. (These must be emailed to me by 2 p.m. Feb. 18)

Readings:

- Metzler, Chapters 9,10

WEEK 6 – Feb 18

(President’s Day – USC Holiday)

Readings:

- Metzler, Chapters 11,12
- Covering the Courts (Handout)
- California Judges Association, Chapter 1, “California Courts”; Chapter 5, “Trial Procedure;” Chapter 7, “Access to the Courts” (Handouts)

Assignment: TBA

WEEK 7 – Feb. 25

Quiz

Class Topic: The Courts

- Criminal procedure and the judicial system
- Criminal vs. civil courts
- Key phases of a trial – when to be there
- Preparing to cover a trial
- What happens if the judge closes trial proceedings?
- Writing the trial story

Assignments: Write a 600-word story. Write a beat note

Readings: Metzler, Chapters 13,14

WEEK 8 – March 3

Quiz

Class Topics: Finding the Untold Stories

- Mid-term editorial analysis – what do we know about our community, where are the holes in our coverage?
- What skills do you most need to work on?
- Discuss stories that are hard to cover and lack time pegs
- Mid-term story memo on diversity is due today
- Set up appointment to see me

Assignments: Write a 500-page story. Write a beat note.

Readings:

- Environment and Urban Affairs stories (TBA)

WEEK 9 – March 10

Quiz

Urban Affairs and Local Government

- Planning and Zoning
- Urban renewal, redevelopment and free-tax zones
- Transportation corridors and access
- Urban ecology: What creates the psychology of a city?

Assignments: Write a 600-word story. Write a beat note.

Readings:

- Metzler, Chapters 15, 16
- Handouts on Computer Assisted Reporting

Note: E-mail, call or speak with me about setting up a time to meet and discuss your work so far this semester.

WEEK 10 – March 17

SPRING BREAK!

WEEK 11 – March 24

(Note: Easter is on March 23rd. If you plan to be out of town for this weekend, you must make plans to be back in time for class on Monday. You should build extra time in case of flight delays, cancellations or bad weather. Travel inconveniences are not a valid excuse for missing class.)

Quiz

Class Topics: Covering Education

- How schools, school districts are managed at local and state levels
- School finances – the governor, legislature and ballot propositions
- School governance structures
- Current education issues
- Covering school board meetings
- Discuss proposals for final project – finding ideas for in-depth stories

Assignments: Write an 800-word story (note length). Write a beat note.

Readings:

- Metzler, Chapters 17,18

WEEK 12 – March 31

Quiz

Class Topics: Speeches and News Conferences

- Finding speeches and news conferences; how to cover them
- Press release journalism and how to avoid
- Public relations people and how they can be helpful (or not)
- Staged news – what is reality?
- How to deal with misleading re-enactments and props
- Discuss final projects

Assignment: Find a speech or news conference to cover in our city and write a 600-word story.

Readings:

- Metzler, Chapters 17,18
- Harrower, Chapter 7, “Law and Ethics”

WEEK 13 – April 7

Quiz

Class Topics: Journalism Ethics Revisited

- What have we learned about the role of the reporter this semester?
- Discuss ethical problems encountered on assignments
- Are reporters truly independent or is this a myth?
- How can you be passionate, concerned *and* objective?
- Have the sources you have been accumulating been reliable?
- Preserving neutrality in the community

Assignment:

- Work on Final Project

Reading: Excerpts from budget of our target city (Handout)

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

WEEK 14 – April 14

Class Topic: Public Finance

- City budgets and public priorities
- How to read budgets and what to look for
- Where do budgets tend to hide the bad news
- City, County, State and Federal levels of finance: partnerships and disconnects
- How will the latest federal budget affect our target city

Assignment: Work on Final Project

Readings: Handouts on CAR

WEEK 15 – April 21

Class Topic: The Long-Form Story

- Analyze story structures
- The value and dangers of chronology
- Alternative story structures; nonlinear writing
- The use of sidebars and news packages
- How to organize the final story

Class Topic: Introduction of Computer Assisted Reporting

- Where to find reliable story material and data on the Internet
- Research on the Web – Google Scholar, Wikipedia, Search Engines
- Locating databases – crime, school data and political contributions
- Downloading data into spreadsheets
- Boiling down Excel fields to what you want to analyze
- Crunching numbers in Excel
- Turning numbers into stories

Assignment: Work on Final Project

WEEK 16 – April 28

Class Topics: The Semester That Was; Reporting as a Career

- Looking back and ahead on the last day of class
- Types of reporting: General Assignment, Specialists
- Specialty fields – which one might be right for you?
- Building on our successes
- Finding stories that no one else will
- Discuss drafts of final projects

Assignment: Final Project in Place of the Final Exam

NOTE: The Final Project is due by 4 p.m. Monday, May 12, at my office. (You may hand it in any time from May 5 to May 12.)