

USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
Journalism 309 – Introduction to Online Media
Spring 2008

Instructor: David Banks
Office hours: By appointment

BIOGRAPHY

David Banks is currently working on special interactive projects for American Public Media – the folks who bring you Marketplace and Lake Wobegone. It's all about the tote-bag sector for Dave: He also worked at NPR as an editor and producer for six years.

Before then, he was happily riding the Internet bubble economy as an independent Web consultant for clients such as Knight Ridder in San Jose, TechTV in San Francisco and various Web projects in Dublin, Ireland and across California.

There's more! David worked as an editor/producer for Cox Interactive in Orange County and San Francisco, and got his start in interactive journalism with Reuters.

After earning a B.A. in English Literature from UC Santa Cruz (go Slugs!), Dave enjoyed a semi-career as a freelance journalist, surfer, chef, and office furniture salesman before attending USC for a graduate degree in journalism.

He spent the next eight years in Los Angeles, working for a variety of newspapers (including The Los Angeles Times and the Torrance Daily Breeze), magazines and wire services as an editor, writer and managing producer.

He also developed and worked with information architecture, HTML, high-end graphics and animation at a boutique media company named REZN8 in Hollywood, California.

COURSE SPECIFICS AND OUTCOMES

Through this course, you will acquire the skills to develop a basic online story package with multiple elements, including text, visuals (video, photos, graphics, etc.), audio, interactivity and navigation. You will:

- Complete at least three online news feature story packages (approved by the instructor before work begins):
 - **Story Project 1:** Print or broadcast-based online story package. You will take a completed or in-progress print or broadcast story and develop a full online story package. This will likely require additional reporting (more research, interviews, shooting, re-

- editing). Stories must be original, individual work. University policy prohibits the use of the exact same story for two classes.
- **Story Project 2:** An original online story package developed, reported, written and edited specifically for this class.
 - **Final Project:** Your choice of an original package or one already completed or in-progress.
 - Complete each weekly assignment. Some may be brief; some may be complex.
 - Understand online ethics and basic copyright law.

CLASS MATERIALS

- **USB flash drive:** Although not required for in-class work or homework, you will find it convenient to have a flash drive to organize and transport files and assignments. Be sure to label your flash drive so it can be returned if you lose it.
- **AP Stylebook:** Your work is expected to conform to AP style. You may wish to bring your stylebook to class.
- **“Rule the Web”** by Mark Frauenfelder – order online at Amazon.com.

REGULAR NEWS READINGS

You already are expected to keep up with local news by following the Los Angeles Times, either in print or online. In addition, you should regularly visit:

- A mainstream, print-oriented national news site (like nytimes.com).
- A mainstream, broadcast-oriented national news site (like cnn.com).
- One or two non-traditional information sites (like slate.com or etonline.com).

GRADING

Criteria

- Projects earning an “A” are professional and ready to publish; they are accurate, clear and comprehensive, and include multiple online elements. Headlines and text are well-written and require only minor editing for AP style, grammar/punctuation/spelling and consistency. Visual or audio elements are relevant (e.g., no video just for the sake of having video), and edited or cropped effectively and appropriately.
- Projects earning a “B” require more than minor editing, and have a few style or spelling errors. There is at least one significant online element omitted.
- Projects earning a “C” need considerable editing or rewriting. There are online elements missing or incomplete.
- Projects earning a “D” require excessive rewriting and have numerous errors. They likely go little beyond the original print or broadcast story (if

- there is one), or are sloppy and/or unprofessional. They are not publishable and should not have been submitted.
- Projects earning an “F” have failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, have numerous errors or both. They may be misleading or contain content from third parties used without attribution. They are not publishable and should not have been submitted.
 - Unless specified otherwise, assignments should be turned in at the beginning of class. They will be graded and returned the following week.
 - Rewrite policy: I will determine which assignments can be rewritten. The rewrite grade will be averaged with the original grade.

COURSE GRADES

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| • Weekly assignments | 20% |
| • Preparation/participation/quizzes | 15% |
| • Story package 1 | 15% |
| • Story package 2 | 20% |
| • Final story package | 30% |

Assignments and projects will be judged on elements including text, visuals (photos, graphics, video), interactivity, navigation and adherence to assignment specifics. Design and color decisions will be judged on appropriateness and usage of concepts discussed in class. Because the class is cumulative, students should demonstrate an understanding of all previously covered concepts in each assignment, even if the assignment does not specifically address those issues.

Assignments and projects are to be turned in on time and in a professional manner, edited to AP style, and by the assigned deadline (some projects may be time-specific). Late or incomplete work will be marked down. Students should turn in each assignment as specified – some may be sent by e-mail, some turned in as hard copy, some posted to your Web space.

IMPORTANT: Do not remove materials from your Web space until you have received confirmation from your instructor that the material has been graded.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is expected. If a class is to be missed:

- For illness: The student must leave an e-mail message at dabusan@gmail.com **and** a phone message at 310-210-3981 **prior** to the start of class or the absence will be considered unexcused.
- For reason other than illness: The instructor’s approval before class day must be sought.

If an absence is unexcused, material missed – including quizzes, in-class assignments or other work – cannot be made up, and your participation mark will be affected.

PLAGIARISM / ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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 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 the school's policy.”

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. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301; phone 213-740-0776.

WRITING COACHES

Writing coaches are available in ASC 227 during posted drop-in times and by appointment. Note: Writing coaches will only review assignments after an assignment has been graded/marked-up by the instructor.

Print writing coaches:

- Bob Berger: rberger@usc.edu
- Ed Boyer: edjboyer@ca.rr.com

Broadcast writing coach:

- Mike Daniels: danielsm@usc.edu

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 of an amount equal to one percent

of the total available semester points for this course.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Each week, the class time will be divided as necessary between topical lecture/discussion, and practical instruction targeting the skills needed for assignments. The order of one or more of the topics may shift due to the availability and schedule of some guest speakers.

Week 1 – January 15

Course Introduction

Class Topics:

- Course overview and reviewing the syllabus
- Favorite news and information sites
- Writing for online and blogs
- Activate your USC Web account
- Overview of major projects including **Story Project 1**, **Story Project 2** and **Final Assignment**.

Skills:

- Screenshots and grabbing content
- Understanding URLs
- Viewing Web source code

Week 2 – January 22

Fundamentals

Class Topics:

- Writing for the Web
- Further discussion of **Story Project 1** assignment

Skills:

- Begin learning basic HTML, page layout and wireframing
- Creating blogs and the Blogosphere
- FTP and uploading content

Homework Assignment:

- **“Rule the Web” Chapter 1**
- **Blog entry #1**

Week 3 – January 29

Video and Multimedia

Class Topics:

- Multimedia elementals – audio, video, slideshows
- Non-linear storytelling – what to use, what to lose

Skills:

- Continuation of basic HTML, page layout, wireframing
- Introduction to images and graphics
- Upload of project templates

Homework Assignment:

- Take a basic HTML template and use it to post a news brief to your own webpage, including a video.
- “Rule the Web” Chapter 2
- Blog entry #2

Week 4 – February 5

Intellectual Property and Copyright Law

Class Topics:

- Ethics, intellectual property and copyright law
- Plagiarism, fair use and open source
- Brief introduction to blogs and wikis
- User-generated content in the newsroom

Skills:

- Photoshop images
- Online photo galleries

Homework Assignment:

- Text outline of **Story Project 1**.
- “Rule the Web” Chapter 3
- Blog entry #3

Week 5 – February 12

Design and Typography

Class Topics:

- Web design fundamentals
- Fonts
- Review of skills needed to create required **Story Project 1** components including wireframes, basic HTML and Photoshop.

Skills:

- Photoshop tricks and tips
- Making HTML look good
- In-class work time for **Story Project 1**

Homework Assignment:

- **Story Project 1** due next class.
- “Rule the Web” Chapter 4

Week 6 – February 19

Search Engines and Web Portals

STORY PROJECT 1 DUE AT START OF CLASS

Class Topics:

- Search engines and search engine optimization (SEO).
- News sites: Aggregators vs. original source reporting.

Skills:

- Meta tags for personal Web spaces

Homework Assignment:

- “Rule the Web” Chapter 5
- **Blog entry #4**

Week 7 – February 26

The Collaborative Newsroom

Class Topics:

- Realities of the modern "covergent" newsroom
- Skillsets for the modern journalist

In-Class Project

- Break into teams and create a real-time collaborative news page on a daily news breaking story.

Homework Assignment:

- Begin work on **Story Project 2** – bring an outline of the project to the next class.
- “Rule the Web” Chapter 6

Week 8 – March 4

Ethics

Class Topics:

- Ethics, blogs, "citizen journalism," and the modern newsroom

Skills:

- Creating and embedding video into your site
- Wireframes for **Story Project 2**

Homework Assignment:

- Email **Story Project 2** wireframes and proposal for approval.
- **“Rule the Web” Chapter 7**
- **Blog entry #5**

Week 9 – March 11

Graphics

QUIZ – ETHICS, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND COPYRIGHT LAW

Class Topics:

- How graphics, text and photos work together
- Infographics – how to make them, what works and what doesn't
- In-class work on **Story Project 2**

Skills:

- How to create custom graphics in Photoshop
- Online maps and graphics resources

Homework Assignment:

- **Story Project 2** due next class, March 25.
- **“Rule the Web” Chapter 8**

Week 10 – March 18

NO CLASS – Enjoy Spring Break!

Week 11 – March 25

Photos and Photo Editing

STORY PROJECT 2 DUE AT START OF CLASS

Class Topics:

- Photo editing basics – what makes a good picture?
- Taking photos in the field – what to shoot, what to skip depending on the story

Skills:

- In-class photo assignment – shoot, edit and upload photos in real time

Homework Assignment:

- Wireframes for **Story Project 3 (AKA Final Project)**.
- “Rule the Web” Chapter 9
- **Blog entry #6**

Week 12 – April 1

Making Video for the Web

Class Topics:

- Video on the Web – what works, what doesn't
- Analysis of effective video in non-linear storytelling – best sites, best practices
- Video streaming technologies: Forget RealMedia or Windows, it's all about Flash video

Skills:

- Class will meet at the downstairs computer lab to get a tutorial on how to render and upload their videos for **Story Project 3 (AKA Final Project)**

Homework Assignment:

- “Rule the Web” Chapter 10
- **Blog entry #7**

Week 13 – April 8

The Future of News and Journalism

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

Class Topics:

- Newspapers, radio, TV and the Internet – where do they all fit in?
- Skills of the modern journalist – what really happens in the field and at the edit desk
- Reality check: Content management systems, audio and video software, multimedia slideshows – the tools of the modern online newsroom
- Where we're headed: "Citizen journalism," non-linear storytelling and advanced storytelling techniques.
- Review of final projects from previous semester

Skills: An introduction to Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

Homework Assignment:

- Continue work on **Story Project 3 (AKA Final Project)**.
- **"Rule the Web" Chapter 11**

Week 14 – April 15

Interactivity

Class Topics:

- Producing interactive features using Flash, JavaScript, video, XML

Homework Assignment:

- Continue work on **Story Project 3 (AKA Final Project)**.

Week 15 – April 22

Final Project In-Class Work

Class Topics: In-class time devoted entirely to consultation on final projects, skills, collaboration, and review, plus anything we didn't quite get to in the weeks prior.

WEEK 16 – April 29

FINAL PROJECTS DUE AT THE START OF CLASS.

QUIZ – HTML BASICS

Class Topic:

- Presentation and discussion of individual projects.

FINALS WEEK

Any rewrites, revisions or resubmissions will be due on the scheduled exam time.