

Amara Aguilar

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Biography

Amara Aguilar is a journalism associate professor of professional practice at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. She teaches journalism for mobile/emerging platforms, social media, visual journalism, and interactive design, among other courses. Amara has written for the Los Angeles Times, CNN and other outlets. She has worked as a designer, visual journalist, reporter, freelance social media engagement producer and consultant. She's conducted social media, data, 360 journalism, and digital journalism training for the Associated Press, ABC News, the National Football League and more. Amara was named a TOW Knight Disruptive Educator for innovation in 2018, MediaShift's top innovative journalism educator in 2018, a Scripps Howard Foundation-AEJMC visiting social media fellow in 2017, and is an Apple Distinguished Educator. She has led reporting trips to Spain, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and has spoken at journalism conferences around the world. She has a doctorate in organizational change and leadership from USC's Rossier School of Education.

Experience

USC Associate Professor of Professional Practice, Journalism

August 2014 - present

Position includes teaching journalism courses, such as: Visual journalism, engaging diverse communities, mobile and emerging journalism, emerging technology, graduate capstone courses, journalism immersion courses for master's students, magazine production, interactive design, social media storytelling for Latinx audiences, experiential storytelling, among others. Accomplishments include: Launching USC's first Latinx-focused media outlet, Dímelo; developing curriculum focused on design, Latinx, social media, emerging technology, engaging diverse communities. Awarded a Center for Excellence in Teaching fellowship and selected as a Center for Public Diplomacy fellow. Served on university-wide campus climate committee, Annenberg diversity task force, undergraduate and graduate curriculum committee, various hiring committees, among others. Also Annenberg Media faculty adviser for Dímelo and led several student reporting trips to Mexico and Puerto Rico.

ieiMedia Valencia, Spain Study Abroad Program Director and Faculty

Summers 2015 – present

Served as director for two summers and also worked as a faculty member. Director responsibilities include recruitment, curriculum development, itinerary design, securing translators, fixers, housing, excursions, classroom space, Spanish lessons, etc. Also taught intercultural lessons on customs, culture, food, safety tips, and journalistic practices in Spain.

Saddleback College, Department Chair and Assistant Professor of Journalism (tenure track)

September 2012 – August 2014

Tenure track teaching position included teaching multimedia, journalism, radio, and video courses; development of curriculum; establishing degrees and certificates; advising the development of mobile and tablet apps; advising student publications (newspaper, magazine, online/social media sites); developing department policies, contributing to development and implementation of vision of the Journalism Department that includes the fusion of a variety of media related disciplines (TV, radio, journalism), writing program review, serving on committees, applying for and managing grants, organizing and leading advisory board meetings, training students on new technology, community outreach, etc.

Pierce College, Assistant Professor of Multimedia (tenured)

September 2008 – August 2012

Tenure track teaching position included teaching multimedia, journalism, radio, and broadcasting courses; development of curriculum; establishing degrees and certificates; created and advising a public radio model internet radio station; advising student publications (newspaper, magazine, radio station and online sites); developing department policies, contributing to development and implementation of vision of the Media Arts Department, writing program review, serving on Distance Ed Tech, accreditation committees, among others, organizing and leading advisory board meetings, etc.

Long Beach Press-Telegram Faculty Apprentice

Summer 2009

Worked as a video journalist during summer 2009 for the Long Beach Press-Telegram as part of a Pierce College faculty apprenticeship program. I researched stories, conducted and shot interviews, edited pieces using Final Cut Pro and worked with the video and web editors at the Press-Telegram to publish shot video documentaries.

Cal State Long Beach, Adjunct Journalism Professor

October 2005 – August 2008

Classes taught included online journalism, writing for the web, media design, writing across the media, reporting and information gathering, photojournalism, etc. Duties include developing course content, lecturing, grading, etc. Also advised the online editions of the Daily 49er and Dig Magazine.

Cerritos College, Adjunct Journalism Professor

August 2005 – December 2008

Hired to teach intro to multimedia reporting, talonmarks.com production class, beginning news writing, advise the student magazine Wings. Wings was honored in 2007 with a state general excellence award by the Journalism Association of Community Colleges. Duties for Cerritos College also included advising, developing course content, teaching fundamentals of magazine writing and design, lecturing on other various topics, grading, etc. Also serving on vocational advisory board for the journalism program, and contributed to curriculum development and program review.

Cerritos College Performing Arts Promotions Specialist

May 2004 – February 2006

Responsible for all publicity for music and theatre events. This entailed composing press releases and feature stories for local media and taking photographs. In addition, duties included creating brochures, monitoring budget, as well as researching and developing audience base. Also responsible for designing advertisements, posters, postcards, programs and all other print and online publicity materials. Responsibilities consisted of maintaining theatre and music web sites, including content development. Also responsible for ticket sales and as a new feature made tickets available for purchase online.

Cerritos College Instructional Aide/Advertising Manager

March 2002 – May 2004

Duties included instructing Cerritos College journalism students in the department's open lab on use of computer design software such as InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop. I also taught students how to use digital cameras and video cameras, and provided input on journalism curriculum and yearly goals. In addition, I was responsible for selling and billing of ads, designing ads and interacting with clients. I also assisted in training students on how to maintain and utilize the college newspaper website (www.talonmarks.com), voted one of the top online student newspapers in the state by the Journalism Association of Community Colleges.

LA Times Community News, Designer/Writer

January 2000 – March 2002

Duties included planning and designing A1 cover pages and sports pages for the Daily Pilot, a daily community newspaper with 40,000 circulation that covers Newport Beach and Costa Mesa. Also was responsible for some copy editing, writing headlines, decks and captions as well as proofing pages. Job also required writing features and game stories. I was the college beat writer for the Daily Pilot and had a column that ran once a week. Beat included covering UC Irvine athletics. Job also entailed creating sports cover designs and graphics using Quark, Illustrator and Photoshop. In my first assignment as a designer, I was responsible for designing the Westside Weekly, a regional supplement to the Los Angeles Times. Job involved planning and designing the entire publication by working with photographers, photo editors, reporters, city editors and copy editors. Job also entailed creating Page 1 designs, graphics and logos using Quark, Illustrator and Photoshop.

The Hockey Players Corp. Content Publisher

January 2001 – August 2001

Team beat writer for the Anaheim Mighty Ducks. Duties included compiling stories as well as writing columns for www.worldhockey.net, a website supported by The Hockey Players Corp., based in Canada. The web site was discontinued due to the slowing economy and cutbacks.

Los Angeles Times (Orange County) Sports Stringer and Reporter

August 1997 – September 2000

Duties included covering high school and some college sports events as well as working on the sports desk (taking calls, inputting agate and writing game summaries). Also freelanced for OC Calendar Weekend section.

Education

- **Doctorate in Education**, December 2020

University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education, Organizational Change and Leadership

- **Master's Degree**, 2006

California State University, Fullerton, Communications (Journalism/New Media)

- **Bachelor's Degree**, 2000

California State University, Fullerton, Journalism

- **Associate in Art's Degree**, 1997

Cerritos College, Journalism

- **Certificate in Online Teaching**, USC Center for Excellence in Teaching, 2020

- **Apple Certified Trainer**, Final Cut Pro

- **Apple Developer**, iOS, iPad, iPhone

- **Android Developer**, Google Play

- **Certificate in Graphic Design**, Cal State Long Beach

- **Certificate in html**, North Orange County Community College District

Skills

Experienced educator and journalist, social video producer, audience/community engagement and content strategist, multimedia producer and print/web/graphic/ tablet designer. Proficient in iPad/iPhone application development and other mobile platforms. Proficient writing, editing, reporting, storytelling and interviewing skills, familiar with AP Style, 360 journalism, augmented reality, virtual reality, data journalism, html, SEO, web analytics, web design skills, photo and digital imaging skills, copy editing skills, online reporting skills, podcasting skills, blogging, multimedia skills, video editing, sound editing, videography, extremely computer literate on PC platforms and Macintosh (including basic networking and server management, Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Final Cut Pro, InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, WordPress, ProTools, After Effects, content management systems). • Grant writing: Won Online News Association Education Innovation Challenge (\$20,000), USC Good Neighbors grant (awarded \$20,000-\$30,000 for 4 years), managed radio grant at Pierce College (\$99,000), helped create \$120,000-a year Rotten Tomatoes fellowship at USC Annenberg, earned and managed \$30,000 grant at Saddleback College for streaming project.

References

Jay Wang, USC Center for Public Diplomacy Director

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Laura Castaneda, USC Annenberg Diversity Task Force Chair and Professor of Practice

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Jeff Brody, Cal State Fullerton journalism professor and former director of ieiMedia Spain study abroad program

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