COMMUNICATION 449:
 PERSPECTIVES ON THE NETWORKED PRESS

Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism
University of Southern California
[Fall 2016]
Mondays, 2pm-4:50pm | ANN-406

INSTRUCTOR
Mike Ananny, PhD
Assistant Professor, Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism
http://mike.ananny.org  ananny@usc.edu  @ananny

Office Hours: Mondays & Tuesdays 1:10-2pm (or email for appointment)
Office Location: ANN-310B

There are no required books to purchase. All readings are provided through Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The work of journalism—the production, consumption, circulation, critique, and funding of news—is not housed within any single set of organizations, professions, or values (and it never really was). Today, the work of journalism is distributed among a new set of actors who, together, constitute what might be called the “networked press.” But we’re only beginning to understand the shape, function, and study of this type of press.

Intended for senior undergraduates and graduate students in Communication and Journalism, this course discusses how and why news emerges from networked institutions and sociotechnical systems. It situates contemporary debates about the press in historical contexts; reviews professional traditions and organizational routines of news production; discusses how and why presses and publics intersect; and helps students learn how to critique existing, experimental, and envisioned forms of networked journalism.

This class will be a chance for students to do three things: (1) read some foundational and emerging literature on how and why the networked press functions; (2) experiment with connecting this literature to contemporary examples of the networked press (technologies, organizations, journalism practices); (3) craft critiques of the networked press grounded in examples and theories. Each week we will examine systems, institutions, events, or organizations relevant to the networked press, and practice developing conceptually grounded interpretations and critiques of how and why the networked press works as it seems to.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY
Mike Ananny is an Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, and an Affiliated Faculty with USC’s Science, Technology and Society research cluster. He studies the public significance and sociotechnical dynamics of networked news systems. He has held fellowships and scholarships with Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society, Stanford’s Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, the LEGO Corporation, and Interval Research. He was a founding member of Media Lab Europe’s research staff, a postdoctoral scholar with Microsoft Research’s Social Media Collective, and has worked or consulted for LEGO, Mattel, and Nortel Networks. His PhD is from Stanford University (Communication), SM from the MIT Media Lab (Media Arts & Sciences), and BSc from the University of Toronto (Human Biology & Computer Science). He has published in a variety of venues including Digital Journalism, Critical Studies in Media Communication, International Journal of Communication, the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, American Behavioral Scientist, Science, Technology & Human Values, New Media & Society, and Television & New Media. He is writing a book on press freedom in an age of networked journalism (under contract with MIT Press).
THE BEST WAY TO GET AN ‘A’ IN THIS CLASS

- do all the assigned readings before the class (doing so will help the material make sense and we’ll draw on both the required foundational and application readings);
- turn your phone off during class;
- make friends with fellow students, trade notes, form discussion groups;
- leave yourself time to edit and revise your responses to the ‘reflection’ assignments (i.e., don’t leave it until the night before to write them);
- stay in touch with me, participate often and thoughtfully in discussion sections, and come to my office hours (this will help you stay connected to the course);
- practice applying the concepts we discuss in class immediately as you use and encounter new press communication technologies.

This course is designed not only to expose you to a variety of ideas and controversies associated with press communication technologies, but also the varied ways that people communicate about and debate press communication technologies.

I’m asking you to consider a variety of materials in this class – everything from videos, podcasts, and long-form popular press articles to easily accessible book chapters and more challenging scholarly pieces published in academic journals. Each class has a list of materials you are required to read and make notes on – but you are not responsible for readings labeled ‘Recommended/Background’.

Some readings are more challenging or longer than others. Give yourself sufficient time to read and flag difficult bits for us to talk about in lecture, discussion sections, or office hours. A large class like this works best if everyone has done the reading ahead of time and you come to class with questions. I love it when students ask questions and try to make even large classes as conversational and interactive as possible – please always feel free to speak up.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Weekly Questions & Participation (100 points)
You are expected to do all of the assigned readings, come to class prepared to participate, and actively contribute to each week’s discussion. To that end, you must submit via the Blackboard ‘Discussion’ link one question on that week’s assigned materials by 10am Monday. The best questions will help open the conversation and start good discussions (e.g., “What kind of privacy rules should algorithm designers follow?”) and not be simple definitional questions (e.g., “What’s an algorithm?”) Individual questions will not be graded but must be completed each week. Failure to submit questions will result in a low grade on this component.

‘Opening’ a Reading (30 points)
Once during the semester, you will individually ‘open’ one of the foundational readings. I’ll say more in class about what this means and will distribute a sign-up sheet, but the ideal opening is very short summary of the paper’s key themes and then active leadership of a discussion that: stays close to the reading (does not divergence beyond what it says); compares it to other readings and the course themes; and generates new ways to help your fellow students understand and relate to it. It’s not required, but you may provide a hand-out or show supporting media if you think they’ll help the conversation about that reading.

Nieman Lab Style Post (140 points)
A key skill in the digital economy is the ability to explain what a technology is and why it matters to an audience outside the classroom – to interpret and analyze for an interested audience. Harvard University’s Nieman Lab (http://www.niemanlab.org/, @NiemanLab) is a leading source of analysis and commentary on the networked press read by many journalists, academics, and the general public (e.g., 250,000 Twitter followers) and provides many models of how to analyze the networked press. Your task, through two iterations and a peer review, will be to produce an analysis in the Nieman Lab style:
• **Draft 1** *(due September 26, 60 points):*
  o A first draft of an analysis of some aspect of the networked press (a technology, a practice, an organization, an event) describing what it is, what it is similar to or different from, and why it matters to the role that news plays in society.
  o You can reference the weekly “application” materials if you wish but you must also thoughtfully connect to at least two of the course’s readings Foundational or Recommended readings (any combination of foundational and recommended is fine as long as there are two).
  o In addition to submitting this draft to me, you must also submit this draft to one other student in the class who will be your peer critic.

• **Peer Critique** *(due October 3, 30 points):*
  o Part of this assignment involves learning how to give and accept feedback on your work. You will partner with one other student in the class as “peer critics” for each other. You will receive a copy of his/her draft on September 26th, prepare written feedback that you will give to me and him/her during class on October 3rd (I’ll provide feedback guidelines), and meet with him/her during class on October 3rd to discuss the feedback and plan revisions to your drafts.

• **Draft 2 & Reflection on Peer Critique** *(due October 31, 50 points):*
  o The final part of the assignment is to prepare a revised draft that shows significant improvement over the first draft, goes beyond your paper’s initial analysis to present a more sophisticated way of thinking about your topic.
  o In addition to submitting this revised draft, you will also submit a short memo reflecting on the feedback you received from your peer critic. This will be a short (2-3 paragraphs) discussion of what you heard from this feedback and how you addressed it in your revised draft.

**In-Class Case Study & Activity (60 points)**
Once during the semester, individually or in pairs, you will lead a discussion on an emerging networked news technology, organization, or event (different from your Nieman Lab post). You have considerable freedom to define the topic of the case study and I can provide ideas if necessary. The list of “application” materials for each week is a good start for ideas but I’m happy to talk with you if you need ideas. You will make a very short (5-minute) presentation on the technology/organization/event and then lead a 20-30 minute discussion on it. I expect you to come prepared with discussion questions, a short activity, or other materials that engage your fellow students in the case.

**Final Project Proposal (25 points): November 14**
In preparation for your final paper (see below), you will submit a short proposal describing the topic of your final project, what you’re going to do to complete it, which readings you plan on working with, what questions or materials you’ll be analyzing, what your timeline is, what resources you require, what potential risks you anticipate, and a plan for how to resolve those risks. This is meant to be a check-in so that you and I can understand what your final project will be and what you need to make it successful.

**Final Presentation (40 points): November 28**
In the final class you will give an individual 10-12 minute presentation on the current state of your final paper. Since the final paper is not due at that class (it is due May 8), the presentation should be a preliminary discussion of your analysis and an opportunity to have a class discussion about challenges you’re encountering and to get feedback from me and your fellow students.

**Final Paper (100 points): December 9 (when final exam would have been)**
You have considerable freedom to decide the topic of your final project (e.g., you might choose to expand on your Nieman Lab post or your in-class case study), but I ask you to choose one of the following formats:

1. A traditional “deep analysis” (2,000-3,000 words) in which you closely analyze, compare, and synthesize at least 5 of the class’s “Foundations” readings on a topic of your choice;
2. A **system evaluation** (2,000-3,000 words) in which you apply **at least 3** “Foundations” readings to an existing communication technology, using the readings to analyze the technology and suggest ways that it might be changed in light of the readings;

3. A **system design** in which you prototype a new communication technology (we can discuss different design approaches and prototyping materials) and write a paper (1,500 words) on how your prototype at least 2 of the class’s “Foundations” readings. For this third, system design option, you may work in groups to **prototype** a system, but each group member must submit his/her own paper.

For all formats and papers, you are encouraged to use the readings we’ve discussed in class, consult the “recommended/supplemental” reading list at the end of the syllabus, and find sources of your own. I will say more about this project in class. In the final class, you will give a 10-15 minute presentation on the state of your final project, getting feedback from the class that should feed into your final paper submission (due during the exam period).

**Recommended Subscriptions (0 points):** Although I won’t be evaluating you on their contents, I **strongly recommend** that you subscribe to these two email lists and listen to this podcast every week (all free):

- **Harvard’s Nieman Journalism Lab (daily email):**
  [http://www.niemanlab.org/subscribe/](http://www.niemanlab.org/subscribe/)

- **Pew Research’s Journalism Project (daily email):**
  [http://www.journalism.org/](http://www.journalism.org/) → submit email address under ‘Get the Daily Briefing’ in the top-right corner of the page

- **On The Media (weekly podcast)**

You should at least skim headlines, get a sense of the topics being covered, and think about how these contemporary topics relate to class themes. These are leading sources of news **about** the news industry, regularly read by practicing journalists and news industry analysts. Following them should get you in the habit not only of reading news, but thinking about where news comes from.

**TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 500 points**

Final grades will be assigned to the following total point ranges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500-467</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>466-450</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>449-433</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>432-416</td>
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<td>315-300</td>
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<td>299-Below</td>
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**CLASS POLICIES**

**Late Work**

Unless there is a valid, documented medical/family reason and you have communicated with me before an assignment’s due date, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. If an assignment is submitted late, I will subtract one partial letter grade for every 24 hours the assignment is late. E.g., an assignment handed in 24 hours late can only earn a maximum possible grade of A-minus; 48 hours late, B-plus, etc. No assignment will be accepted more than 72 hours past the due date, unless discussed with the instructor before the original due date.
I’ll generally answer your email within about 24 hours, but I usually don’t answer email on weekends or after 7pm on weekdays. If it’s an urgent matter (e.g., an emergency that will prevent you from completing an assignment), please mark the subject line of your email ‘urgent’. If you have a longer question that would be best addressed in a conversation, please my office hours or make an appointment. I’m always happy to meet with students and more involved questions are often best addressed face to face.

Please make friends with your fellow students – they’re often your best first point of contact if you missed a class. I can’t summarize whole classes either in person or email so please be sure to have a few friends you can borrow notes from if you miss a class. It’s also a good idea to form small study groups to review material.

**Laptops & Phones**

Your phone must be switched off during class and I will ask you to turn it off if I see you using it. You should bring your laptop to class with you every day but, unless I ask you to bring it out for an in-class exercise, laptops are NOT allowed to be used during class. Research shows that using phones or laptops in class for things other than class work harms your learning and that of those around you.

### ACADEMIC CONDUCT & SUPPORT SYSTEMS

**Statement for 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. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

**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 (http://scampus.usc.edu/), the Student Guidebook, contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

**Emergency Preparedness / Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness: http://preparedness.usc.edu/

**Stress Management**

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 the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

**Your @usc.edu Email Address**

Please be sure that you either check your @usc.edu email address regularly, that it doesn’t go over quota, or that you forward it to an email address you do check regularly. Your USC email the primary way for us to communicate and it is linked to Blackboard announcements.
# COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 22</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 29</td>
<td>What is the Networked Press &amp; How Does it Relate to Democracy?</td>
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<td>Sept 5</td>
<td>Labor Day, no class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 12</td>
<td>Rituals and Routines of Networked News Production</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 19</td>
<td>Social Media Audiences, User-Generated Content, and Participatory News</td>
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<td>Sept 26</td>
<td>Automation, Algorithms, Metrics, and the Personalized Press</td>
<td>Draft 1</td>
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<td>Oct 3</td>
<td>Peer Critique Meetings</td>
<td>Peer Critique</td>
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<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Funding the Networked Press</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 17</td>
<td>“Foreign” Correspondence &amp; the Globally Networked Press</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 24</td>
<td>Data Journalism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 31</td>
<td>Places &amp; Spaces of the Networked Press</td>
<td>Draft 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 7</td>
<td>Virtual Reality Journalism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 14</td>
<td>Networked News Time</td>
<td>Final Project Proposal</td>
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<td>Nov 21</td>
<td>Making Sense of New Actors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 28</td>
<td>Course Wrap-Up, Student Presentations</td>
<td>Final Project Presentation (Final Paper Due Dec 9)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** I know it looks like there’s a LOT of reading. It isn’t. Although all of the “foundations” readings are required each week, you only need to come to class prepared to discuss any **one** of the “applications” readings (your choice). And the “recommended” readings are not required.

I include so many “applications” and list so many “recommended” readings because many of your assignments ask you to critically analyze examples of networked press technologies, organizations, and events – see these as starting points and examples that will help you pick the topics you’ll write about.
Week #1: August 22

INTRODUCTION

There is no required reading, but come to class prepared to talk about:

- your own definition of “digital journalism” and “the networked press”;
- one example news technology, company, or event that you think fits your definition;
- ways that you think that journalism has changed in the last 3 years;
- why these changes matter, what’s at stake;
- reasons why you think it is important to study the networked press;
- your learning goals for the semester.

Week #2: August 29

WHAT IS THE NETWORKED PRESS & HOW DOES IT RELATE TO DEMOCRACY?

Reading / Listening Due

FOUNDATIONS: Read all.


Week #3: September 5

NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Week #4: September 12

ROUTINES & RITUALS OF NETWORKED NEWS PRODUCTION

Reading / Listening Due

FOUNDATIONS: Read all.


APPLICATIONS: Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.

Benton, J. (2014, May 15, 2014). The leaked New York Times innovation report is one of the key documents of this


Ingram, M. (2014, May 22, 2014). Facebook’s product guy is right, the media sucks — but journalists are also right: Facebook has to share the blame. [GigaOm](http://www.onthemedia.org/story/yeah-baby-yeah-baby-yeah-baby/).

Lichterman, J. (2014, May 29, 2014). Who’s behind that tweet? Here’s how 7 news orgs manage their Twitter and Facebook accounts. [Nieman Lab](http://www.niemanlab.org/2014/05/whos-behind-that-tweet-heres-how-7-news-orgs-manage-their-twitter-and-facebook-accounts/)


### Week #5: September 19

**SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCES, USER-GENERATED CONTENT, AND PARTICIPATORY NEWS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading / Listening Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOUNDATIONS:</strong> Read all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **APPLICATIONS:** Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss. |
Week #6: September 26

AUTOMATION, ALGORITHMS, METRICS, AND THE PERSONALIZED PRESS

Reading / Listening Due

FOUNDATIONS: Read all.


APPLICATIONS: Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.


Recommended:


**Week #7: October 3**

**PEER CRITIQUE MEETINGS**

Part of the *Nieman Lab Style Post* assignment involves learning how to give and accept feedback on your work. You will partner with one other student in the class as “peer critics” for each other. You will receive a copy of his/her draft on September 26th, prepare written feedback that you will give to give to me and him/her during class on October 3rd (I’ll provide feedback guidelines), and meet with him/her during class on October 3rd to discuss the feedback and plan revisions to your drafts.

I’ll provide a worksheet of questions and expectations and we’ll discuss this in class, but below are some sample resources to get a better sense of what I mean by peer feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #8: October 10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUNDING THE NETWORKED PRESS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading / Listening Due</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**FOUNDATIONS: Read all.**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.


**Recommended:**


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**Week #9: October 17**

**“FOREIGN” CORRESPONDENCE & THE GLOBALLY NETWORKED PRESS**

**FOUNDATIONS: Read all.**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Permission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hicks, T.</td>
<td>Why journalists take the risk to report from dangerous places.</td>
<td><a href="http://niemanreports.org/articles/why-journalists-take-the-risk-to-report-from-dangerous-places">Nieman Reports</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israely, J.</td>
<td>A foreign correspondent must be both hunter and gatherer.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.niemanlab.org/2011/06/jeff-israely-a-foreign-correspondent-must-be-both-hunter-and-gatherer">Nieman Lab</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larsen, S.</td>
<td>Should local voices bring us foreign news?</td>
<td><a href="http://niemanreports.org/articles/should-local-voices-bring-us-foreign-news">Nieman Reports</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Donovan, C.</td>
<td>Where in the world is BuzzFeed? Building foreign news around themes rather than geography.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.niemanlab.org/2013/12/where-in-the-world-is-buzzfeed-building-foreign-news-around-themes-rather-than-geography">Nieman Lab</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sambrook, R.</td>
<td>Are foreign correspondents redundant?</td>
<td><a href="http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Are%20Foreign%20Correspondents%20Redundant%20The%20changing%20face%20of%20international%20news.pdf">Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism</a> read Executive Summary &amp; first chapter only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuckerman, E.</td>
<td>Listening to global voices.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ted.com/talks/ethan_zuckerman">TED Talks</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Week #10: October 24**  
**DATA JOURNALISM**  
**Guests: Chris Keller [KPCC] & Ben Poston [Los Angeles Times]**  
**Reading / Listening Due**

**FOUNDATIONS:** **Read all.**

  doi:10.1080/21670811.2014.976400


**EXAMPLES:** **Come to class familiar with at least one of these examples.**


- KPCC Officer Involved: [http://projects.scp.org/officer-involved/](http://projects.scp.org/officer-involved/)

- ProPublica’s “Free the Files” [https://www.propublica.org/series/free-the-files](https://www.propublica.org/series/free-the-files)

**RECOMMENDED:**


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### Week #11: October 31

**PLACES & SPACES OF THE NETWORKED PRESS: Local Presses, Geotagged News, Drones, Mobile Journalism**

**Reading / Listening Due**

**FOUNDATIONS:** Read all.


**APPLICATIONS:** Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.

Browse #dronejournalism tag on Twitter


### RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:


Week #12: November 7
VIRTUAL REALITY JOURNALISM
Guest: Prof Robert Hernandez [USC]

Reading / Listening Due

**FOUNDATIONS: Read all.**


**APPLICATIONS: Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.**


**FOUNDATIONS: Read all.**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.


**RECOMMENDED/BACKGROUND:**


Week #14: November 21

MAKING SENSE OF NEW ACTORS: AN ADVERSARIAL, INVESTIGATIVE NETWORKED PRESS (WIKILEAKS, SNOWDEN, GREENWALD)

Reading / Listening Due

FOUNDATIONS: Read all.


APPLICATIONS: Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.

Podcast: “Reporter Had to Decide if Snowden Leaks were ‘The Real Thing’” (Fresh Air, 47m17s): http://www.npr.org/2013/09/11/221359323/reporter-had-to-decide-if-snowden-leaks-were-the-real-thing


Week #15: November 28

COURSE WRAP-UP & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

NO FINAL EXAM.
FINAL PAPERS DUE: December 9