

American Political Journalism – Fall 2017
University of Notre Dame Washington Program

Carlos Lozada

Wednesday, 6:30-9 p.m.

1301 K Street NW (7th floor conference room)

lozadac@washpost.com, office: 202-334-6358

Twitter: @CarlosLozadaWP

Readings:

Weekly assigned readings will be sent by instructor via e-mail. In addition, students are expected to read/watch/listen to as many news media sources as possible, including The Washington Post, New York Times, NPR, Politico, BuzzFeed, Vox and any other that offer insight on events of the day.

Media criticism: Students should read Jack Shafer (Politico), Erik Wemple (Washington Post), Brian Stelter (CNN) and Michael Calderone (Huffington Post). And follow all of them on Twitter.

Books: Each student will be assigned one book on journalism and/or politics, to be decided by each student on consultation with the instructor.

Films: At least two movies will be assigned. Past classes have seen All the President's Men, Zero Dark Thirty, Shattered Glass, Good Night and Good Luck, Spotlight and The Insider. The instructor will lend a DVD of the film; students can gather to watch, share the DVD or watch through other media.

Newsletters: Subscribe to Washington Post's Daily 202 and Politico Playbook.

Objectives: This class will explore the relationships among politics, news media and government. We will focus on particular news events in which the role of the media became an integral part of the story, and consider case studies of journalistic decision-making that had a significant political impact. **This is not a class on how to cover politics as a journalist.** The goal is to understand the decisions, debates and dilemmas behind the news and to become more informed and skeptical consumers of political news. Some of the sessions listed below might change based on breaking news and guest speakers' schedules. (This is especially likely in the fall of an election year.)

Grades: Students in this class will read, write and talk – a lot. Grades will be based on three essay assignments (50% of grade); class participation (25% of grade); and a final exam (25% of grade). Two of the essay assignments will draw on class readings; the other will focus on a book each student will read throughout the semester. This is a seminar class: Students are expected to participate actively and thoughtfully in the discussion. If your final grade is on the border between two grades, your participation will be considered as the deciding factor. (You can't participate if you're not here: Unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade.)

Office hours: by appointment

CLASS SESSIONS

August 29: What is news? What is politics?

Intros, orientation and discussion. Newsroom tour.

September 5: Gotcha Journalism – The Downfall of General Stanley McChrystal

Readings: “The Runaway General” (Rolling Stone, June 20, 2010); “How Obama took Command” (Politico, June 24, 2010); “McChrystal Allies Say Article Broke Ground Rules” (WP, June 26, 2010); “The 36 Hours that Shook Washington” (NYT, June 27, 2010); “Pentagon Inquiry Into Article Clears McChrystal and Aides” (NYT, April 18, 2010); “Missing Michael Hastings” (BuzzFeed, June 19, 2013); “My Tribute to Michael Hastings” (Chris Hayes, MSNBC, June 20, 2013).

September 12: Tick Tock Journalism – The Killing of Osama bin Laden

Paper #1 due in class

Readings: “The Hunt” (WP, May 6, 2011); “Behind the Hunt for Bin Laden” (NYT, May 3, 2011); “Getting Bin Laden” (New Yorker, Aug. 8, 2011); Freelance journalist scores coup with account of Bin Laden raid” (WP, Aug. 3, 2011); “The New Yorker Under the Microscope” (WWD, Aug. 8, 2011); “The Last Days of Osama bin Laden” (TIME, May 2012); “The Killing of Osama bin Laden” (London Review of Books, May 2015). Movie: “Zero Dark Thirty” (2012).

September 19: Rumor Journalism – Buzzfeed and the Trump memo

Readings TBD

September 26: Campaign Journalism – Politics as Biography

“How Gary Hart’s downfall forever changed American politics” (NYT, Sept. 18, 2014); “Mitt Romney’s prep school classmates recall pranks, but also troubling incidents” (WP, May 10, 2012); “Becoming Obama” (Vanity Fair, June 2012); “Donald Trump, remade by reality TV” (WP, Jan. 27, 2016); “Hillary Clinton’s breakout moment at Wellesley College” (WP, Aug. 14, 2016); “No Vacancies for Blacks: How Donald Trump Got His Start, and Was First Accused of Bias” (NYT, Aug. 27, 2016); “The self-referential presidency of Barack Obama” (WP, Dec. 18, 2016)

October 3: No class meeting – Newseum visit

October 10: White House Journalism – How to Cover Donald Trump (1)

Readings TBD

Guest Speaker TBD

October 17: Investigative Journalism – “Spotlight” and the Boston Globe

Readings: Pulitzer Prize-winning package from Boston Globe coverage of Catholic Church abuse scandal. Movie: “Spotlight” (2015).

Guest Speaker: Marty Baron, Washington Post

October 24: Intelligence/National Security Journalism – How to Cover Trump (2)

Readings TBD

Guest Speaker TBD

October 31: Fraudulent Journalism – Cooke, Glass, Blair, Daisey, Erdeley

Paper #2 due in class

Readings: "Jimmy's World" (WP, Sept. 28, 1980); Ombudsman report on "Jimmy's World" (WP, April 19, 1981); "Correcting the Record" (NYT, May 11, 2003); "Retraction" (This American Life, March 16, 2012); "A Rape on Campus" (Rolling Stone, Nov. 19, 2014); "Rolling Stone and UVA: The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism Report" (April 5, 2015). Movie: "Shattered Glass" (2003).

November 7: Watergate Journalism – The Washington Post, Nixon and Deep Throat

Readings: Watergate summary (WP); "I'm the Guy They Called Deep Throat" (Vanity Fair, July 2005); "FBI's #2 was Deep Throat" (WP, June 1, 2005); "How Mark Felt Became Deep Throat" (WP, June 2, 2005); "A 33-year old pledge was kept at a price" (WP, June 2, 2005); "40 Years After Watergate, Nixon Was Far Worse Than We Thought" (Woodward and Bernstein, WP, June 10, 2012). Movie: "All the President's Men" (1976).

November 14: Book Club

Paper #3 due

Readings TBD

November 21: Literary Journalism – Why Is This Good?

Readings: "The Falling Man" (Esquire, September 2003); "Opening Night" (New Yorker, Feb. 2009); "The Lonely Quiet" (Washington Post, June 8, 2013); "Digging JFK Grave Was His Honor" (New York Herald Tribune, November 1963); "The Case for Reparations" (Atlantic, May 21, 2014).

November 28: Final Exam – in class

December 5: Dinner at Lozada-McBride home with American Political Journalism alums