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USC Annenberg launches M.A. degree program in Arts Journalism

Nine-month M.A. in Specialized Journalism (The Arts) advances training for working journalists and aspiring reporters with a background in the arts

LOS ANGELES, May 4, 2008 – In response to the critical need to enhance coverage of the arts in communities across the country, the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California is launching an innovative new graduate degree program focusing on arts journalism. The program is open to journalists, recent graduates holding bachelor degrees in journalism or one of the arts, and experienced arts practitioners.

Offered by USC Annenberg in full and active partnership with USC's five arts schools, the new nine-month M.A. program connects the fields of arts practice and arts journalism. Applications are accepted through July 1, 2008.

“The arts are a vital part of American life – they are really part of our soul – and they deserve the best news coverage, commentary and criticism that journalism can provide,” says **Michael Parks**, director of USC Annenberg's School of Journalism. “This program will bring together journalists wanting to cover the arts, and artists wanting to comment on changes in their fields of work. We believe they will learn from each other and develop the intellectual and skill sets needed for cultural journalism.”

The program begins August 11, 2008, with a two-week summer intensive course on journalism and society. In the fall and spring semesters, students enroll in writing and reporting classes at USC Annenberg and elective courses at any of USC's five arts schools: the **School of Architecture, School of Cinematic Arts, Roski School of Fine Arts, School of Theatre and Thornton School of Music**. The program culminates in a master's professional project.

Students also participate in workshops, seminars and performances offered through USC Annenberg's two highly regarded fellowship programs, the Getty Arts Journalism Fellowship, and the NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Theater and Musical Theater. Through attendance at events and interaction with the professional journalists who participate in them, master's students gain firsthand knowledge of developments in the field of arts journalism.

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Classes will cover digital media in cultural criticism, preparing students for an environment of fragmented media and always-on reporting. Through additional sessions in the entrepreneurial skills of strategic planning and individual branding, program graduates will have experience positioning themselves to compete in a crowded media marketplace. Students will also take full advantage of the arts and culture of Los Angeles to foster a broad, continuing dialogue that challenges them to think about the role of journalism in terms of its service to society.

“USC Annenberg offers this new degree out of a conviction that quality arts and culture journalism today requires subject matter expertise, advanced reporting skills and knowledge of how new communication technologies are changing the ways that people learn, think and behave,” says **Sasha Anawalt**, journalism professor and program director. “The M.A. in Specialized Journalism offers students a chance to move forward on all three fronts by putting the resources of a university and Los Angeles at their disposal.”

Journalism professor and Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* music critic **Tim Page** leads the faculty for the arts journalism program. Page has also written widely on film and literature for the *Post* and many other publications, including *The New York Times*, where he was music and culture reporter until 1987.

Located in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, the USC Annenberg School for Communication (annenberg.usc.edu) is among the nation's leading institutions devoted to the study of arts journalism and criticism. Its programs include the USC Annenberg/Getty Arts Journalism Program the NEA Arts Journalism Institute for Theater and Musical Theater and the Knight Digital Media Center. In addition to its programs for working journalists, USC Annenberg enrolls of more than 1,900 graduate and undergraduate students earning bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in journalism, communication, public diplomacy and public relations.

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