

# CERRITOS

JOURNALISM PROGRAM ONLINE

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## The Image of the Journalist in Film

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The image many of us have about news reporters often comes from the movies. With this project the student will view a dozen popular movies and analyze what images predominate. After writing summaries of each movie, the student will do additional research from books on the image of the journalist in film and write a minimum five-page essay on the image of the journalist in film.

Seven of the 12 films are required viewing for Journalism 100. The student will have a choice of five additional films. After viewing each film the student should write a one-to-two-page summary of the movie, with particular focus on both the general plot of the movie as well as the image of the journalist in the movie.

The student must turn in one summary each week during weeks three through 14 throughout the semester. Insufficient summaries may need additional work before the project is completed.

A draft of the essay will be due during Week 15 and a final compiled project will be due Week 17.

Many of the films are available for rent through popular video stores, online services such as [Netflix.com](#), or for checkout at public libraries. Required films are available on reserve in the Cerritos College LAP area. Many other films are available for overnight checkout from the instructor. The student may also substitute a film with three episodes of any television program that includes a journalist as a main character.

Required films:  
 Absence of Malice  
 All the President's Men  
 Broadcast News  
 Citizen Kane  
 The Front Page  
 Network  
 The Paper

A partial list of other available films includes:  
 -30-  
 The Big Carnival (aka: Ace in the Hole) Blessed Event  
 Brenda Starr  
 Deadline USA  
 His Girl Friday  
 I Love Trouble  
 It Happened Tomorrow  
 Live from Baghdad  
 Nancy Drew: Reporter  
 News at Eleven  
 Perfect  
 Shattered Glass  
 Superman II  
 Switching Channels  
 Teacher's Pet  
 The Insider  
 The Pelican Brief  
 The Year of Living Dangerously  
 Under Fire  
 Up Close and Personal  
 Veronica Guerin  
 Winchell



### -30- (1959)

Gritty newspaper drama with some strong similarities to "The Paper" stars Jack Webb as the managing editor of a big city daily who experiences personal and professional obstacles during the course of a day. While grappling with his wife about adopting a child, Webb covers stories about a missing girl and disappearing pilots



### **Absence of Malice (1981)**

Powerful drama questions the power of the contemporary press. A businessman unknowingly becomes the subject of a criminal investigation thanks to a story written by a feisty reporter.



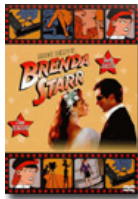
### **Blessed Event (1932)**

Fast-paced newspaper comedy stars Lee Tracy as a Gotham gossip columnist whose womanizing ways get him in trouble with a chorus girl.



### **The Big carnival (1951) aka: Ace in the Hole**

Kirk Douglas ably portrays the cynical, down-on-his-luck reporter for a small New Mexico paper. When he learns that a man (Richard Benedict) has become trapped in a cave-in, the reporter sees his chance to make it big again, and manages to delay the rescue so as to more fully capitalize on the human drama involved. Academy Award nomination for Best Story and Screenplay. Originally released theatrically .



### **Brenda Starr (1986)**

The world-famous comic strip is turned into a stylish comic adventure with Brooke Shields as the ace reporter. With her newspaper about to go bankrupt, Brenda needs a big scoop, so she sails down the Amazon in search of a scientist who has invented a revolutionary new fuel.



### **Broadcast News (1987)**

A savage look at TV journalism with a hectic love triangle. William Hurt is the not-too-bright but photogenic news anchor who interests driven producer Holly Hunter and angers veteran correspondent Albert Brooks.



### **Citizen Kane (1941)**

Director/co-writer/star Orson Welles' landmark debut film, a sweeping chronicle of the rise and fall of fictitious newspaper tycoon Charles Foster Kane (often considered a thinly disguised William Randolph Hearst) and the mystery surrounding his dying word, is recognized as one of the greatest and most innovative movies of all time.



### **Deadline USA (1952)**

An abundance of subplots are expertly woven together by screenwriter/director Richard Brooks in Deadline - USA. Humphrey Bogart stars as crusading editor Ed Hutcherson, whose newspaper is on the verge of closing thanks to the machinations of the mercenary daughter of Mrs. Garrison, the paper's owner. Though he and his staff will all be out of work within a few days, Hutcherson intends to go out with a bang, exposing the criminal activities of "untouchable" gang boss Rienzi. Despite numerous disappointments and setbacks, Hutcherson achieves a pyrrhic victory as the film draws to a close. Throughout the story, the many pressures brought to bear upon a big-city newspaper--political, commercial, etc.--are realistically detailed, as is the relationship between Hutcherson and his ex-wife Nora.



### **The Front Page (1974)**

Editor Walter Burns pulls every underhanded game in the book to prevent reporter Hildy Johnson from leaving his Chicago paper to get married, and in so doing the two journalists uncover a cesspool of political corruption, centered around the planned execution of anarchist Earl Williams.

Sadly, the 1930's version and the 1940's remake "His Girl Friday" are easier to find than this one. This one is, in my opinion, the best. The 1980s remake "Switching Channels" is good as a modern day comparison.



### **His Girl Friday (1940)**

The second screen version of the Ben Hecht/Charles MacArthur play The Front Page, His Girl Friday changed hard-driving newspaper reporter Hildy Johnson from a man to a woman, transforming the story into a scintillating battle of the sexes. Rosalind Russell plays Hildy, about to forsake journalism for marriage. Cary Grant plays Walter Burns, Hildy's editor and ex-husband, who feigns happiness about her impending marriage as a ploy to win her back. The ace up Walter's sleeve is a late-breaking news story concerning the impending execution of anarchist Earl Williams, a blatant example of political chicanery that Hildy

can't pass up.



### **I Love Trouble (1994)**

Rookie reporter Julia Roberts and veteran newspaperman Nick Nolte find themselves competing to crack the mystery surrounding a train accident while trying to avoid falling in love in this crackling good mix of action, romance and comedy.



### **The Insider (1999)**

This riveting true-life story centers on Jeffrey Wigand, a scientist with a major tobacco company who reveals potentially damaging, top-secret industry information to "60 Minutes" producer Lowell Bergman and reporter Mike Wallace, only to have his career and life threatened.



### **It Happened Tomorrow (1944)**

Novice reporter Dick Powell is able to get a jump on his competitors when a mysterious colleague gives him copies of the next days' newspapers, but is the future carved in stone when one headline warns of his imminent death?



### **Live From Baghdad (2002)**

Gripping true inside story of CNN's coverage of the 1990 Gulf War, focusing on the efforts of producers Robert Wiener and Ingrid Formanek to scoop the big three networks on news about the conflict. In an attempt to break the big stories, Wiener forms a relationship with Naji Al-Hadithi.



### **Nancy Drew: Reporter (1939)**

Bonita Granville returns as Carolyn Keene's teenager sleuth, and her winning of a journalism contest leads her down a trail of trouble as she tries to crack the case she's covering for the paper.



### Network (1976)

Scathing satire of the business of television mixes emotional drama with a far-out peek at future programming. Peter Finch won an Oscar as prophet-like figure Howard Beale.

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### News at Eleven (1986)

A stacked-card study of journalistic ethics-or rather, the lack of same. Martin Sheen stars as the well-respected senior anchorperson at a fictional San Diego TV station. Honcho news-director Peter Riegert insists that the news is becoming a tune-out, and demands more sensationalism in the coverage. When a junior high school teacher is accused of statutory rape, Riegert orders Sheen to exploit the story to the hilt. This results in a near-tragedy involving the high school girl who's accused the teacher. The conscience-stricken Sheen exacts a clever "hoist on his own petard" revenge for the unrepentant Riegert.

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### The Paper (1984)

Energized, entertaining look at the newspaper world from Ron Howard centering on a day in the life of the fictional New York Sun tabloid. Metro editor Michael Keaton's struggle to uncover the truth behind a murder story while fighting deadlines puts him at odds with managing editor Glenn Close and pregnant wife Marisa Tomei.

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### The Pelican Brief (1993)

Riveting thriller based on John Grisham's best-seller stars Julia Roberts as a New Orleans law student who writes a paper exposing the conspiracy surrounding the deaths of two Supreme Court justices and Denzel Washington as the investigative reporter who helps her dodge the assassins and special agents on her trail.

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### Perfect (1985)

Enter the world of exercise and health, where men and women strain and sweat to reach "perfection." John Travolta stars as the reporter looking for the "inside story" on the fitness craze, while falling for aerobics instructor Jamie Lee Curtis.

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### Shattered Glass (2003)

The true story of journalist Stephen Glass, the twenty-something whiz kid who quickly rose from a minor writing post in Washington, to a feature writer in such publications as Rolling Stone and the New Republic. By the mid-90s, Glass' articles had turned him into one of the most sought-after young journalists in Washington--until a bizarre chain of events suddenly stopped his career dead in its tracks.



### Superman II (1981)

The Man of Steel is back, Metropolis is in trouble as three super-villains threaten destruction, and Lois Lane marries Clark Kent, only to find him a super-husband

Sure, there are other Superman movies, but this one probably does more to show the journalist side than the others.



### Switching Channels (1988)

The 1920s-era play The Front Page was about a Chicago reporter who wants to retire and get married but is tricked by his editor into doing one last story -- which proves to be complicated. Switching Channels is a 1988 remake of His Girl Friday, with Kathleen Turner in the starring role, which has now morphed into that of a cable television network news anchor, Christy Colleran. She wants to marry a rich and handsome sporting goods manufacturer, Blaine Bingham and move out of town. But her ex-husband, John L. Sullivan IV, who is also her producer and boss, gives her one final assignment to try to keep her around. Her reporting leads her into an investigation of a jail escape that follows a botched-up execution.



### Teacher's Pet (1958)

Newspaper editor Clark Gable poses as a student and learns about writing and love from college journalism professor Doris Day in this spry romantic comedy.



### Under Fire (1983)

Three American journalists in war-ravaged Nicaragua in 1979, struggling to maintain their objectivity amidst political upheaval.



### Up Close and Personal (1996)

Loosely based on the life of late TV news anchorwoman Jessica Savitch, this romantic drama stars Michelle Pfeiffer as an ambitious journalist who, with skill, determination and help from boss and lover Robert Redford, becomes a star TV reporter in Miami and Philadelphia.



### Veronica Guerin (2003)

Cate Blanchett stars in this Joel Schumacher-directed crime drama about the true story of Veronica Guerin, an accomplished journalist whose investigations into Dublin's drug underworld ultimately led her to make the ultimate sacrifice in the quest for the truth. .



### Winchell (1998)

For decades he was the most influential media figure in America, and a word from him could make or break an actor or a politician. Stanley Tucci is sensational as newspaper/radio columnist Walter Winchell, whose staccato delivery and drive to "scoop" the competition made him as big a news story as the celebrities whose lives he investigated.



### The Year of Living Dangerously (1983)

Adventure, romance and intrigue in a drama of a reporter and an embassy aide in Indonesia during the 1950s revolution.

Key books available from the instructor that will be used for research include:

- "Outcasts: The Image of Journalists in Contemporary Film" by Howard Good (1989 Scarecrow Press, Inc.)
- "Girl Reporter: Gender, Journalism and the Movies" by Howard Good (1998 Scarecrow Press, Inc.)
- "Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film" by Joe Saltzman (2002 Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture)

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