

A Remembrance of our colleague Larry Bensky

Our colleague in the CSU East Bay Political Science Department and veteran activist journalist Larry Bensky passed away on May 19, 2024, at his home in Berkeley, California. Before and during the time he taught in our department, he was an internationally recognized journalist who worked at local radio station, KPFA. As noted in a Berkeleyside remembrance...."he served as Pacifica's national affairs correspondent from 1987 to 1998, covering many prominent national and international stories, including the Iran-Contra hearings in 1987 for which he won the prestigious George Polk Award. He also covered the 1990 elections in Nicaragua, and four Supreme Court hearings. He anchored Pacifica's coverage of the 9/11 Commission hearings, and co-anchored coverage of several presidential debates and nominating conventions. He was also one of the original co-hosts of Pacifica's flagship program, Democracy Now! in 1996."

Larry taught for several years in the Political Science Department beginning in 2002 until 2021. He also taught in the Communications Department at CSU East Bay teaching about media and politics and he also taught at other Bay Area colleges and universities. The courses in our department that Larry taught include:

- POSC 1202- Public Policy/California Politics
- POSC 1201- American Political Institutions
- POSC 3310- Political Parties and Campaigning
- POSC 3300- Voting & Public Opinion
- POSC 3111- The American Presidency.
- POSC 3115- US Congress
- POSC 102 - Public Policy/California Politics
- POSC 311 - The American Presidency

When Larry taught the course in American Presidency in 2008, his students conducted research on several state specific races and on election night his students reported their findings on KPFA's broadcast of the national election which was held at the Freight and Salvage venue in Berkeley, California. This was the election where Barack Obama was elected President.

While Larry was cordial with his students, he also demanded a lot from them whether it was a written assignment, a substantive research project, or an oral presentation. He was an avid news junkie as we like to say, he kept up with world events, lived and traveled to France and other parts of Europe and could discuss international subjects as well as the details of local politics in Berkeley, where he resided for many decades. He also had regular stints on the air at KPFA including both a regular Sunday political show, *Sunday Salon*, which aired for many years, retiring from the station in 2007, then he came out of retirement to host the Sunday morning classical music program, *Piano*. He continued teaching courses with our department until 2021.

Those in the Political Science Department at CSU Hayward now East Bay will fondly remember Larry's energy and enthusiasm for engaged politics, which he encouraged our students to

pursue, and his advocacy for media that did not rely on what others may have said or written, but instead to conduct independent research and investigate to learn the truth.

A memorial service will be held on June 13 at 4:00 p.m. at the St. John's Presbyterian Church, 2727 College Ave, Berkeley.

For more information about Larry Bensky's career please see the attached article and post from his former radio station.

<https://www.berkeleyside.org/2024/05/23/activist-journalist-larry-bensky-87-died-sunday-in-berkeley>

<https://kpfa.org/featured-episode/larry-bensky-may-1st-1937-may-19th-2024/>