

Award Winning Journalists Selected For 2017-2018 Spencer Education Journalism Fellowships

Columbia Journalism School unveiled the next cohort of Spencer Fellows who will be pursuing ambitious projects examining education for black boys, the funding behind the education technology world, school reform and segregation in Florida, and school turnarounds in Brazil. The fellows undergo a competitive process and are selected by [distinguished board of journalists and education scholars](#).

“It’s exciting to welcome such an accomplished group of journalists from all over the U.S. as well as South America to work on groundbreaking education journalism,” said Prof. LynNell Hancock, Spencer Fellowship Director and expert in education and family policy. “Their work will be part of a growing list of books and stories from past Spencer Fellows that have had lasting impact.”

This year’s four Spencer Fellows are:

- **Antonio Gois**, an education reporter for *O Globo* newspaper in Brazil, and columnist at cable channel, “Futura.” Antonio will be using his Spencer year to write a book about school turnarounds.
- **Audrey Watters**, author and independent scholar on [education technology](#), will investigate the technological future of education, looking into the social networks of education technology's proponents, tracing the relationships among investors, entrepreneurs, politicians, and professors active in education technology companies.
- **Cara Fitzpatrick**, *Tampa Bay Times* education reporter, plans to follow up on her previous Pulitzer Prize winning work “Failure Factories,” exploring whether the school system can fix the problems in the schools without addressing the external and racial factors produced by their decisions.

- **Nick Chiles**, author of *Justice While Black*, and former *New York Newsday* and *Newark Star-Ledger* reporter. Chiles will spend his fellowship working on a book about the latest research on educating black boys and the impact of Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative.

Each fellow receives a \$75,000 stipend plus research expenses to support their academic year studying with other scholars throughout the Columbia campuses and working on projects under the guidance of full-time professors at the journalism school.

The Spencer Fellowship in Education Journalism was established at Columbia Journalism School in 2007 with funding from the Spencer Foundation. The purpose is to enrich long-form journalism with meaningful education research.

Seven of the last 28 fellows have published books, two are under contract to write books, and three have proposals in the works. Others have produced radio documentaries that aired on public radio stations through the United States, including Linda Lutton's hour-long WBEZ-radio series, "The View From Room 205," an examination of poverty and schools in Chicago. Additionally, fellows have also published their work in *The New York Times Magazine*, the *Atlantic*, *Scientific American*, *American Prospect*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Seattle Times*, *Education Week*, *Slate*, and the *Milwaukee Journal*, among others. To learn more about the Spencer Fellowship visit: www.spencerfellows.org and <https://journalism.columbia.edu/spencer-education-fellowship>.

Full Bios of the 2017-2018 Spencer Fellows to Follow:

Nick Chiles is an author and an award-winning education journalist, whose career began three decades ago in newspapers, including *New York Newsday*, the *Star-Ledger* of New Jersey and the *Dallas Morning News*. He has won many major journalism awards, including a 1992 Pulitzer Prize as part of a *Newsday* team covering a fatal subway crash, two National Education Reporting Awards from the Education Writers Association, and two National Association of Black Journalists awards for his series on

“Saving Black Boys” in *Ebony* magazine. Nick most recently won the 2016 Green Eyeshade Award from the Society of Professional Journalists for a *HechingerReport.com* story on testing third-graders in Mississippi.

Chiles is the author and co-author of 14 books, including three New York Times bestsellers. His book *Justice While Black*, co-written with Robbin Shipp was an NAACP Image Awards finalist. He served as editor of *Odyssey Couleur*, and of *AtlantaBlackStar.com*, a news site focused on the global African diaspora.

Cara Fitzpatrick is an education reporter at the *Tampa Bay Times*. In 2016, she and Times reporters Lisa Gartner and Michael LaForgia won the Pulitzer Prize for Local Reporting for [Failure Factories](#), a five-part investigation that traced the rapid decline of five elementary schools after the Pinellas County School Board abandoned integration efforts. The series also was honored with the George Polk Award for Education Reporting, the Worth Bingham Prize for Investigative Journalism, the Investigative Reporters and Editors Medal, and the Fred M. Hechinger Grand Prize for Distinguished Education Reporting, among other awards.

Fitzpatrick has been a reporter for about 14 years for newspapers including the *Palm Beach Post* and *Sun Sentinel* in Florida. Most of her career she has focused on education.

Audrey Watters is a writer and independent scholar who focuses on education technology, its products, its politics, and its pedagogical implications. Her work has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Edutopia*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *The School Library Journal*, and elsewhere across the Web. She is best known for her work on her own website *Hack Education* (<http://hackededucation.com>).

Watters is the author of several books, including *The Monsters of Education Technology*, *The Revenge of the Monsters of Education Technology*, *The Curse of the Monsters of Education Technology*, and *Claim Your Domain*. And, she has worked in the education field for nearly 20 years as an instructor and program manager for an ed-tech non-profit.

Antonio Gois has been an education reporter in Brazil since 1996. He currently writes a weekly column about education for *O Globo* newspaper, one of Brazil's largest, and is also an education columnist at the cable channel "Futura." He appears on CBN-Rio radio station weekly as a commentator on education issues.

Gois has twice won Brazil's highest journalism honor, the Esso Journalism Prize, one for a story about good schools in poor areas, and another for a series of articles about schools in violent areas in Brazil. Antonio is founder and the first president of [Jeduca](#), the Brazilian Association of Education Journalists. In 2010-2011, Gois was a fellow at the Knight-Wallace program at University of Michigan, where he studied school evaluation.

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About Columbia Journalism School

For more than a century, the journalism school has prepared journalists in programs that stress academic rigor, ethics, journalistic inquiry and professional practice. Founded with a gift from Joseph Pulitzer, the school opened its doors in 1912 and offers Masters of Science, Masters of Arts, and Doctor of Philosophy. The school also administers many of the leading journalism awards, including the Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Awards, the Maria Cabot Prizes, the John Chancellor Award, The John B. Oakes Award for Distinguished Environmental Journalism, Dart Awards for Excellence in Coverage of Trauma, Paul Tobenkin Memorial Award, and the Mike Berger Award. www.journalism.columbia.edu

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