The Media and Entertainment industry is currently experiencing its greatest rate of radical change since Edison invented the Kinetoscope. One of the biggest such areas of change is the use of Big Data and social media for New Metrics and Measurement. Traditionally, audiences for content were broken up into four simple quadrants – male, female, young and old – but now it’s possible to develop much more nuanced audience models based on fan behaviors and motivations. Rather than the “blunt instrument” of who is accessing the content, content producers and advertisers can now gain a better understanding of why people are accessing that content and customize their plans accordingly. Further, that same insight regarding audience motivations can also result in much more personalized – and thus much improved – experiences for the audiences themselves, especially when coupled with new Over the Top (OTT) delivery mechanisms like Disney Movies Anywhere from Disney, HBO GO from HBO, or FOX NOW from FOX.

Still, for all the hype that Big Data is getting, with great power comes great responsibility. From both a practical and ethical standpoint, professionals in this field must constantly ask themselves not just what can be measured, but what should be measured – and what is to be done with those new measurements and metrics.

This course aims to introduce students to the latest thinking being done at the Annenberg Innovation Lab and beyond about how to better understand audiences and their motivations, what metrics can be used to measure their engagement, and how to leverage that engagement in ways that prove valuable to content creators, marketers and audiences. Students will be exposed to new conceptual models and frameworks being developed at the Innovation Lab, new Big Data tools being developed by the lab’s sponsors and affiliates, a series of case studies of real-world problems and projects being tackled by sponsors of the Innovation Lab, and, by bringing these three areas together, develop the skills required in cutting-edge marketing and content development careers.
This course will:

- Expose students to real-world challenges facing industry leaders (e.g., Disney, Warner Bros, FOX, DirecTV, etc.)
- Introduce students to a new model in leveraging engagement with audiences
- Encourage students to test out multiple new metrics and measurement platforms
- Expose industry leaders to next-generation thinking from USC students
- Introduce AIL sponsors and USC students, providing an opportunity for both sides to do early-level matchmaking for future jobs

CLASS STRUCTURE

Every class begins with a discussion of the assigned readings. The first few classes will lay the basic groundwork of the conceptual models, tools, and business scenarios the students will be expected to use. This may include visits and presentations from lab partners that specialize in those areas.

In the fourth week, the class will transition into a series of “rounds” of case study challenges, readings and student presentations.

In the first class of each round, sponsors will visit the class and present a problem related to the New Metrics and Measurement as described above. Students will be assigned any additional readings that pertain directly to that week’s challenge. Students will then adjourn to individually concoct concept solutions to these problems.

The second class in each round begins with a discussion of the readings, followed by each student pitching their concept solutions to one another for peer review and feedback. The instructors, with input from the students’ peer reviews, will select the best of these pitches for presentations to the sponsor. Each chosen pitch will be given a team, led by the pitch’s creator and supported by a mix of students whose pitches were not accepted.

The third and final class in each round begins with another discussion of any assigned readings, followed by that round’s sponsor returning for the student teams’ presentations of their proposed solutions to that round’s sponsor challenge. These presentations will be given to the sponsors, the instructors and their peers for final judging and feedback.

By the midterm, students will have completed multiple rounds and created multiple solutions. A Pitch Portfolio of these pitches and polished solutions will be submitted to the instructors as the students’ midterm projects. The instructors and the students will then choose the best pitch for each sponsor.

After Spring Break, students will be divided into teams. Each student team will work with one sponsor to build out the best pitch for that sponsor, drilling deeply into a specific property. They will utilize the measurement tools introduced throughout class to assess the current engagement of said property’s audience in order to provide recommendations as to what the audience likes and how they like to be engaged. Included in this strategy will be
recommendations and a polished paper prototype of a digital content strategy and/or use an existing platform to test their experimental digital content projects. On the final day of the class, these final prototypes will be presented to a panel of judges consisting of representatives from each of the visiting sponsors and the instructors.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS AND IP OWNERSHIP

Note that as part of the class, each student will work with media & entertainment industry sponsors of the Lab, who will be sharing confidential information. As such, students will be required to sign confidentiality agreements at the beginning of the course. Additionally, all ideas (intellectual property, or IP) generated during the course of this class will be freely shared with sponsors, the Lab, and potentially the public through students sharing at the Lab’s Evening of Innovation event, and could have the possibility for further development should students, the Lab, and/or the Lab sponsors choose to do so.

BOOKS


Ivan Askwith. Television 2.0: Reconceptualizing TV as an Engagement Medium (Thesis for MIT Comparative Media Studies, 2007)

Additional readings pertaining to each sponsor’s challenge will be assigned when appropriate.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

- Participation in class discussions 15%
- Blackboard postings 10%
- Fan Engagement Analysis 15%
- Mid-term project: Pitch Portfolio 30%
- Final Sponsor group project 30%

100%

Participation and Class Discussion
Please make regular contributions to class discussion, including posting comments on a designated discussion forum on a weekly basis as they reflect to readings, class discussion and information obtained outside the classroom. These postings will be taken into
consideration for subsequent class discussion.

**Blackboard Postings**
Students should share short reflections or questions on the materials read for each week's session, which can be used as a springboard for class discussions. We particularly encourage students to identify additional social media monitoring tools as well as examples of digital content that creatively and successfully engages fans. Ideally, these should be posted by 10 a.m. on the day the class is being held.

**Fan Engagement Analysis**
The first assignment is to conduct a textual analysis of the media property utilizing the Leveraging Engagement framework as the foundation of the analysis. Students will identify the audience for a media property and identify the ways the fan communities are engaging with said property, their peers in the community and additional sources that further explore the content and cultural ramifications of fan participation.

**Mid-Term Project: Pitch Portfolio**
See “Class Structure” above.

**Final Sponsor Group Project**
See “Class Structure” above.

**Academic Conduct**
Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage http://sarc.usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

**Support Systems**
A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs
http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/COURSE CONTINUITY IN A CRISIS**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Note: precise order and list of visiting sponsors is subject to change depending on visitor availability. Dates are tentative, depending on what day the class is presented (the following are all Thursdays).

**Week 1: The New Metrics and Measurement, Part I (Jan. 15)**

*Instructor Lecture*: Orientation and introductions. Discuss the differences between audiences and fans; present the Leveraging Engagement Framework; level-set on Metrics tools and Platforms to use.

*In-Class Work*: Reading assignment.

*Reading Assignment*:

  
  - [Ivan Askwith. Television 2.0: Reconceptualizing TV as an Engagement Medium](https://www.mit.edu/~askwith/television2.0/Television2.0_Thesis.pdf) (Thesis for MIT Comparative Media Studies, 2007)

*Project Assignment*: Fan Engagement Analysis, due Feb 5.

**Week 2: The New Metrics and Measurement, Part II (Jan. 22)**

*Reading Review*: Discuss the reading assignment.

*Visitor Lecture*: Visiting sponsors present tools and platforms to use. Discussion on what can be measured and how.

*Reading Assignment*:

- Bernstein Research, *Will Facebook Do Search Better Than Google?*


Week 3: The New Metrics and Measurement, Part III (Jan. 29)

Reading Review: Discuss the reading assignment.

Visitor Lecture: Discuss the value of the fan. How might media companies better understand what motivates fans to engage with their content and determine the most effective strategies to market, develop, distribute and offer content to fans? How might they do so not only in a cost-efficient manner, but also in a way that respects what fans enjoy and how they like to participate in it? Guest speaker(s) from Fullscreen and/or Havas.

Reading Assignment:

- Nissenbaum, Helen, et al. *Adnostic: Privacy Preserving Targeted Advertising*

Week 4: Sponsor Challenges (Feb. 5)

Deadline: Fan Engagement Analysis.

Reading Review: Discuss the reading assignment.

Visitor Lecture: Round 1 Challenge. Sponsor 1 presents their content and their challenge. Students pose questions to visiting sponsor.

Reading Assignment:


Project Assignment: Prepare Round 1 proposals for peer review.

Week 5: Sponsor Challenges (Feb. 12)

Deadline: Round 1 proposal sketch.

Reading Review: Discuss the reading assignment.

Peer Review: Round 1 Peer Review. Student teams present their Sponsor 1 proposal sketches to instructors and other students for peer review and feedback.

Visitor Lecture: Round 2 Challenge. Sponsor 2 presents their content and their challenge. Students pose questions to visiting sponsor.
Reading Assignment:

Project Assignment: Prepare Round 1 proposals for client review in teams, and Round 2 proposals for peer review individually.

Week 6: Sponsor Challenges (Feb. 19)

Deadlines: Round 1 polished proposals and Round 2 proposal sketches.

Client Review: Round 1 Pitch. Student teams present ideas to Sponsor 1 representatives for review, judging and feedback.

Peer Review: Round 2 Peer Review. Student teams present their Sponsor 2 challenge proposal sketches to instructors and other students for peer review and feedback.

Visitor Lecture: Round 3 Challenge. Sponsor 3 will present their content and their challenge. Students pose questions to visiting sponsor.

Reading Assignment:
- Publication from USC Annenberg’s Black Twitter Project http://www.annenberglab.com/projects/dsail-black-twitter-project

Project Assignment: Prepare Round 2 proposals for client review in teams and Round 3 proposal sketches for in-class peer review individually.

Week 7: Sponsor Challenges (Feb. 26)

Deadlines: Round 2 proposals and Round 3 proposal sketches.

Client Review: Round 2 Pitch. Student teams present ideas to Sponsor 2 representatives for review, judging and feedback.

Peer Review: Round 3 Peer Review. Student teams present their Sponsor 3 challenge proposal sketches to instructors and other students for peer review and feedback.

Visitor Lecture: Round 4 Challenge. Sponsor 4 will present their content and their challenge. Students pose questions to visiting sponsor.

Reading Assignment: No reading assignment.

Project Assignment: Prepare Round 3 proposals for client review and Round 4 proposal sketches for in-class peer review.

Week 8: Sponsor Challenges (Mar. 5)

Deadlines: Round 3 proposals and Round 4 proposal sketches.
Client Review: **Round 3 Pitch.** Student teams present ideas to Sponsor 3 sponsor representatives for review, judging and feedback.

**Peer Review: Round 4 Peer Review.** Student teams present their Sponsor 4 challenge proposal sketches to instructors and other students for peer review and feedback.

**Reading Assignment:** No reading assignment.

**Project Assignment:** Prepare Round 4 proposals for client review. **Midterm Project:** Collect all 4 proposals into a proposal portfolio, accompanied by a short essay on what you learned from each one.

**Week 9 (Mar. 12)**

**Deadlines:** Round 4 proposals. **Midterm Projects (proposal portfolios and essays) due.**

**Client Review: Round 4 Pitch.** Student teams present ideas to Sponsor 4 representatives for review, judging and feedback.

**Reading Assignment:** No reading assignment.

**Project Assignment:** None.

**SPRING BREAK (Mar. 19)**

*Instructors and sponsors review Midterm portfolio submissions and, based on their qualities, select which teams will work on which sponsor challenges for the final projects.*

**Week 10 (Mar. 26)**

**Deadlines:** None.

**Discussion.** Instructors return student midterm collections. Students engage in discussions about lessons learned.

**Assignment of Teams, Group Discussions.** The Instructors reveal which teams will be working on which sponsor challenges. Students disperse into groups to begin discussing their projects. Visitors from sponsor strategic partners will be available in class for consultation on next steps.

**Week 11: Final Project Peer Reviews (Apr. 2)**

**Peer Review 1:** Student teams present their final project ideas to each other for peer review and feedback.

**Week 12: Final Project Work; Evening of Innovation Presentations (Apr. 9)**

*In-Class Work.* Work on final presentation.
Week 13: Final Project Work; Evening of Innovation Presentations (Apr. 16)

*Peer Review 2 with Tech Demo:* Student teams present their refined final project ideas to each other for peer review and feedback. **All projects should have working code.**

Week 14: Final Project Work; Evening of Innovation Presentations (Apr. 23)

Polish final presentations.

Week 15: Final Presentations (Apr. 30)

*Judgment.* Student teams present their final projects to a panel of Judges made up of sponsors. Winning teams will have their work publicly showcased at the Annenberg Innovation Lab’s 2015 Evening of Innovation, including the opportunity to demonstrate their projects to additional lab sponsors and industry professionals.