CMGT 551
Communicating Entertainment Media Identities
Annenberg School of Communications

Instructor: Gracelyn Brown
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Office hours: By appointment

Check your email linked to Blackboard regularly. The instructors rely on Blackboard’s e-mail to inform students about class agenda and logistical details.

Course Description:

Marketing and branding are the foundational elements required to create and maintain a successful entertainment brand. The easy availability of many different types of entertainment has created a cluttered marketplace where differentiation is critical to capturing an audience and reaching revenue goals. As technology has enabled on-demand viewing, the available audience has fragmented, making targeted strategic marketing processes and plans essential. This course explores the unique challenges of marketing and branding entertainment vehicles as well as the differences between the traditional marketing mix and the one required to create and maintain entertainment brands.

Career Relevance: In the last few years the pace of change in the entertainment field has been frantic and it will only increase. Speed to market is a critical factor in creating and monetizing future entertainment forms and maintaining the revenue goals of current ones. However analyzing what forms the consumer is interested in, researching the most appropriate marketing methods and creating brands the consumer will embrace are the keys to successfully bringing a product to market. These analytic skills benefit students with marketing knowledge to apply in their future endeavors, no matter what field in the entertainment arena they choose. This course is designed to teach students the marketing principals that drive the business and the branding process and how consumer behavior is impacting both.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to identify and articulate all the elements of a brand platform as well as apply them to entertainment vehicles, specifically television networks, cable networks, websites, social media, magazines, newspapers, radio networks, sports teams, video games, music, movies.
2. Students will have the ability to read, manipulate and interpret data to determine target audiences for entertainment vehicles. Specifically, they will understand how to read Nielsen television/cable ratings as well as reports from proprietary services such as Kantar Media.
3. Students will be able to create a brand management plan that identifies the challenges facing an entertainment brand and propose a brand extension to address the challenges.
4. Practical skills including collaboration and presenting or “pitching” their ideas are also emphasized in the course.

**Required Course Materials:**


[Choice: If you are familiar with the Publication Manual, you do not need The Easy Way.]


Other weekly readings are posted on Blackboard under Lesson Materials.

**Other Documents on Blackboard**

In addition to the weekly readings, you’ll find the course syllabus under Syllabus and project specifications under Assignments. In addition, the power point presentation for each week will be posted to Lecture Power Points 24 hours after the class is held. Refer to Blackboard regularly for such materials.

**Course Format:**

This course is designed to be interactive and will include a combination of lecture, class discussion, working exercises and student presentations. Grades will be based on a combination of individual assignments, team assignments and class participation.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation:**

There are a total of 1,000 possible points. The points are assigned to four components
of the grade including:

Blog Posting/ Class Discussion – 250 points or 25% of the grade
Brand Review – 50 points or 5% of the grade
Initial Brand Presentation – 300 points or 30% of the grade
Final Brand Presentation – 400 points or 40% of the grade

Course Grading Scale

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>950 - 1000</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>700 - 724</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>599 or less</td>
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Points will be posted weekly on the USC Blackboard so students can monitor their progress.

**Assignments**

**Blog Posting/Class Discussion:**

Each week students will post a blog about a pre-selected question concerning that week’s lecture. Blog questions are listed in the syllabus according to the assigned week and are to be posted in the “Blogs” section on the Blackboard. In order to accurately address the blog question, students will need to complete the assigned readings. The blog must be at least 25 words, but no more than 100 words. The blogs are designed to initiate class discussion and to focus on key learnings. In addition, all students are required to contribute to the discussion in class. Blogs must be posted no later than Tuesday at 6:30 PM, 48 hours in advance of the class.

Students will be graded on the accuracy in answering the blog question as well as high quality contributions to the class discussions.

High quality course blogs;

- Demonstrate a knowledge of the reading
- Offer topical examples of concepts in the reading
- Are analytical
- Are constructive
Low quality blogs;
- Simply summarize the reading
- Do not tie concepts of the reading to topical examples
- Are not well prepared
- Take the discussion on a tangent with personal observations
- Are negative and disrespectful

Blog posting and Class Discussion – 25% of the grade or 25 total points per week for a total of 250 points total. Students receive 10 points for posting a blog 48 hours in advance of class and 15 points for contributing to the in-class discussion. If you are not in class you cannot contribute to the in-class discussion and earn 15 points.

**Brand Review Presentation:**

Individual students will create a brand review presentation on an entertainment brand of their choosing. The review will include the brand’s mission statement, vision statement, positioning statement and brand attributes. Each week, two to three presentations will be made to the class and will be at least five minutes in length, but no more than ten minutes. Time limits will be strictly observed. Students will be provided an outline to follow, which is posted under “Assignments” on Blackboard and will sign up for a presentation week during the first week of class. The brand review presentations will begin week two and continue through week fifteen with two to three brand reviews presented in each class.

Brand Review Presentation – 5% of the grade or 50 points per presentation

**Initial Brand Presentation:**

Three students will form a team and choose an entertainment brand to analyze. The first part of the analysis will include identification of the following brand elements; brand promise, brand vision, brand platform, target audience, key competition and brand attributes. An outline will be provided for the first three to four pages of the analysis as a guide for students, which is posted under “Assignments” on Blackboard. The assignment also includes a written report of eight to ten pages outlining the strategic challenges facing the brand. The team must incorporate course readings to analyze the brand and include at least five citations from the assigned readings using APA style. Teams are self-selecting and the team alone will arbitrate any disagreements arising from individual participation within the team. That said, team members are required to spread the writing duties evenly and will be asked to indicate which portions of the paper they wrote. In addition to the guidelines listed below, specific criteria for the evaluation of formatting, writing quality and comprehension are
posted under “Assignments” on the blackboard. Read this document before beginning to write the paper with team members. The topic must be approved ahead of time, but no later than week four. This assignment is designed to demonstrate that students understand branding concepts as they apply to entertainment marketing and will provide the basis for the final project. The class during week six is dedicated to advisement with a 20-minute advisement time available for each team. The first four pages of the paper and an outline for the “Initial Brand” portion of the paper are due 60 minutes before the beginning of class in week five by e-mail to gracelyb@usc.edu. The last names of team members and “Initial Brand Presentation-4 pgs” should be in the subject line. To insure that it is received, team members should be copied on the e-mail. All members of the team will present a summary of their paper to the class in a presentation not to exceed ten minutes during week seven. Time limits will be strictly observed. The complete initial brand presentation paper of eight to ten pages is due 60 minutes before the beginning of class in week seven by e-mail to gracelyb@usc.edu. The last names of team members and “Initial Brand Presentation” should be in the subject line. To insure that it is received, team members should be copied on the e-mail. All documents must be in Microsoft Word, double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font. No late papers will be accepted. Presentations to the class will be made during week seven with the presenting order determined by drawing numbers.

High quality initial brand presentations;

- Use an entertainment brand as a subject, i.e. television network, cable network, website, magazine, newspaper, radio network, sports team, video game, music, movie
- Accurately state and apply branding concepts
- Include at least three strategic challenges facing the brand
- Demonstrate a logical writing plan and a professional approach to delineating concepts and challenges
- Cite at least five sources from the assigned academic readings
- Are grammatically correct
- Use APA style
- Contain only one to two spelling errors

Low quality initial brand presentations;

- Use a brand other than an entertainment brand as a subject, i.e. retail outlet, household product, apparel, computer product
- Do not accurately state and apply branding concepts
- Include only one strategic challenge facing the brand
- Use a conversational writing style and state opinions rather than applying branding concepts
- Do not cite at least five sources from the assigned academics readings
Building on the initial presentation, each team is required to propose a brand extension for the entertainment brand selected for the initial brand presentation. The proposal for the brand extension should include; an analysis of the opportunity in the marketplace, the target audience, the brand platform of the brand extension and a physical expression of the brand (graphic design, video, power point). In addition to the guidelines listed below, specific criteria for the evaluation of formatting, writing quality and comprehension are posted under “Assignments” on the blackboard. Read this document before beginning to write the paper with team members. The topic must be approved ahead of time, but no later than week nine. There will also be a ten-minute advisement time available for each team at the end of the class during week nine. Students can bring in their topic to discuss and be approved or arrange this by e-mail prior to the advisement, but no later than the advisement during week nine. The class during week 13 is also dedicated to advisement with a 20-minute advisement time available for each team. A final paper delineating the concepts is required and should be no less than 28 pages in length and must include the eight to ten pages written for the initial presentation. The team must incorporate course readings to analyze the brand extension and include at least ten citations from the assigned readings using APA style. Team members are required to spread the writing duties evenly and will be asked to indicate which portions of the paper they wrote. The first fourteen pages (8 to 10 pages from the original paper plus 4 more pages) of the paper and an outline for the “Final Brand” portion of the paper are due 60 minutes before the beginning of class in week 12 by e-mail to gracelyb@usc.edu. The last names of team members and “Final Brand Presentation-14 pgs.” should be in the subject line. To insure that it is received, team members should be copied on the e-mail. All members of the team will present a summary of their paper to the class in a presentation not to exceed ten minutes in week 16. Time limits will be strictly observed. The final brand presentation paper of 28 pages, including the pages written for the initial brand presentation, is due 60 minutes before the beginning of class in week 16 by e-mail to gracelyb@usc.edu. The last names of team members and “Final Brand Presentation” should be in the subject line. To insure that it is received, team members should be copied on the e-mail. All documents must be in Microsoft Word, double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font. No late papers will be accepted. Presentations to the class will be made during week 16 with the presenting order determined by drawing numbers.
High quality final brand presentations;
\begin{itemize}
  \item Use an entertainment brand as a subject, i.e. television network, cable network, website, social media, magazine, newspaper, radio network, sports team, video game, music, film
  \item Accurately state and apply brand extension concepts
  \item Target a specific audience
  \item Include at least three strategic challenges facing the proposed brand extension
  \item Demonstrate a logical writing plan and a professional approach to delineating concepts and challenges
  \item Cite at least ten sources from the assigned academic readings
  \item Are grammatically correct
  \item Use APA style
  \item Contain only one to two spelling errors
\end{itemize}

Low quality final brand presentations;
\begin{itemize}
  \item Use a brand other than an entertainment brand as a subject, i.e. retail outlet, household product, apparel, computer product
  \item Do not accurately state and apply brand extension concepts
  \item Do not target a specific audience but instead target a generic audience such as men or women.
  \item Include only one strategic challenge facing the proposed brand extension
  \item Use a conversational writing style and state opinions rather than applying branding concepts
  \item Do not cite at least ten sources from the assigned academic readings
  \item Contain three or more grammatical errors
  \item Do not use APA style
  \item Contain five or more spelling errors
\end{itemize}

Final Brand Presentation – 40% of the grade or 400 points

The assignments are designed to build on each another and require that students demonstrate understanding of the material and can apply them to entertainment vehicles. The grading of the blog postings and brand review assignments will be less stringent than the brand presentation assignments. Students who follow the guidelines provided for each assignment will receive the most points.
**Class Attendance, Punctuality, Participation and Attention in Class:**

The material covered in each class is designed to build students’ knowledge base. Missing class will impair students’ ability to understand subsequent classes and apply the principles they are learning. However, many students are professionals and have commitments that may cause them to miss a class. Each student is allowed one absence without penalty. Thereafter, the first unexcused absence will reduce a student’s total grade by 2%, the second an additional 3% and the third an additional 5% (totaling 10% for three unexcused absences). Being absent from more than three classes means it’s possible that a student may fail the course.

Thursday, February 19th, week 6 and Thursday, April 9th, week 13, are scheduled as an advisement week. During that session, there will not be any lecture or instruction taught in the classroom setting. This time is allotted for students to meet with me in the classroom to review Final Brand Presentations. The deadline for making an appointment is no later than end of class on Thursday, February 12th, week 5 and Thursday April 2nd, week 12. Twenty minutes is allotted for each appointment and time limits are strictly observed. Please be present outside the classroom door 5 minutes prior to the meeting. During this session, an in-person meeting or other form of communication (approved by the instructor) constitutes attendance.

Students are required to come to class on time and stay through the entire class. If students are more than ten minutes late or leave before the end of class, they will incur half the penalty for absences, as will leaving early.

Collaboration is an important part of the marketing and branding process, so class participation in discussions is critical for students to incorporate the learnings. Students will get the most out of the course by coming to class prepared with observations from the readings and questions about how the principles apply to their own experience of brands and media usage.

**Personal Use of Laptops During Class**

As a class, we will be using laptops to search branded websites and brands on the Internet. However, using the laptop for Facebook or YouTube will distract students from the lesson. Tempting as it might be, students are asked to refrain from using laptops for any purpose other than taking notes and incorporating learnings. That said, excessive distracting use of the computer during guest speaker sessions will be penalized up to 50 points. An example of distracted excessive use is if the student cannot answer questions posed by the guest speaker or instructor. This policy also applies to smartphones.
Certain instructors at USC’s Marshall School of Business have banned the use of laptops in their classes. Annenberg has not imposed a blanket ban and operates on the basis of mutual respect. In return students are asked to extend the courtesy of paying attention in class. Choosing not to engage in class is a demonstration of disrespect and will be reflected in low scores for participation.

**Academic Integrity**

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University’s Academic Integrity code as detailed in the SCampus Guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violation or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student’s expulsion of the Communication major or minor.

The School and the University is committed to the general principles of academic honesty that include and incorporate the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one's own. By taking this course, students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. All submitted work for this course may be subject to an originality review as performed by TurnItIn technologies (http://www.turnitin.com) to find textual similarities with other Internet content or previously submitted student work. Students of this course retain the copyright of their own original work, and TurnItIn is not permitted to use student-submitted work for any other purpose than (a) performing an originality review of the work, and (b) including that work in the database against which it checks other student-submitted work.

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 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.

Students with Disabilities

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure this letter is delivered to the professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 8:30-5:00. The office is in the Student Union 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.

Week 1 – Course Overview/Branded Entertainment (Thursday, January 15th)
Course introduction, review of readings, discussion of assignments and project planning. Introduction to marketing and branding concepts.

Assignments due:
Sign up for a Brand Review date.

Week 2- The Foundational Elements of Branding and Marketing for the Entertainment Marketplace (Thursday, January 22nd)
The unique processes of entertainment marketing strategies and the elements of a brand platform.

Blog topic: What is the intent of branding and why is it important in today’s media marketplace?
Readings due:

Book


Articles/Readings


**Week 3- The Dynamics of the Entertainment Marketplace (Thursday, January 29th)**

Overview of the market forces impacting the entertainment marketplace and their affect on marketing strategies and branding effort.

Blog topic: What is a value chain and how does brand equity contribute to it?

Readings due:

Book


Articles/Readings


**Week 4 – The Brand Empire (Thursday, February 5th)**

Corporate conglomerates shape the entertainment marketplace. An analysis of the Disney brand empire.

Blog topic: Why are brand empires important in today’s media environment?

**Readings due:**

**Articles/Readings**


Please review these websites to study the Disney brand architecture;
http://thewaltdisneycompany.com
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Walt_Disney_Company

**Assignment due:**

Approval for Initial Brand Presentation topic.

**Week 5 – Entertainment Brand Building from the ground up (Thursday, February 12th)**

How the branding process and programming strategies converge to create entertainment brands.
Blog topic: What is the benefit to consumers of a brand extension?

Readings due:

Articles/Readings


Assignments due:
First four pages of the Initial Brand Presentation paper and outline emailed to gracelyb@usc.edu 60 minutes before the beginning of class.
Make an appointment for advisement to be held Thursday, February 20th.

**Week 6 – Advisement (Thursday, February 19th)**

**Week 7 - Initial Brand Presentations (Thursday, February 26th)**
Presentation of Initial Brand analysis and class discussion of each team’s work.
Assignments due:
Initial Brand Presentations delivered to class.
Initial Brand Presentation paper emailed to gracelyb@usc.edu 60 minutes before the beginning of class.

**Week 8– Building Brands through Collaboration and Competitive Positioning (Thursday, March 5th)**
Processes for competitive analysis, auditing entertainment brands and collaborative planning.

Blog topic: What is a competitive frame of reference?

**Readings due:**

**Articles/Readings**


Assignment due:
Make an appointment for 10-minute advisement to be held Thursday, March 13th.

Speaker: TBA

**Week 9 - Reaching the Target Audience (Thursday, March 12th)**
Evaluating and analyzing audience demographics and crafting both traditional media
plans and emerging niche audience media models.

Blog topic: Which demographic group is most important to advertisers?

Readings due:

Book


Articles/Readings


Hour set aside for advisement

Assignment due:
Approval for Final Brand Presentation topic.

**Week 10 – Spring Break holiday (Thursday, March 19th)**
**Week 11- Brand rules for interactive media (Thursday, March 26th)**

Emerging dynamics shaping brand development in the interactive media world including social media, Internet delivered channels, apps and social games.

Blog topic: What are the factors that drive interactive media?

**Readings due:**

**Articles/Readings**


**Week 12 – The numbers game (Thursday, April 2nd)**

Historical perspective of audience dynamics and analysis of current and emerging data collection, reading and interpretation methods.

Blog topic: What is being sold in audience manufacture and why it is a critical element in the advertising marketplace?

**Readings due:**

**Book**


**Articles/Readings**


Assignments due:
First fourteen pages of the Final Brand Presentation paper emailed to gracelyb@usc.edu 60 minutes before the beginning of class.
Make an appointment for advisement to be held Thursday, April 10th.

**Week 13 – Advisement (Thursday, April 9th)**

**Week 14 – Money Talks: Revenue models and return on investment (Thursday, April 16th)**
Business strategies, building a revenue model and analyzing traditional and developing models.

Blog topic: What is a value proposition and why is it important?

**Readings due:**

**Articles/Readings**


**Week 15 - Skill sets for a changing media marketplace (Thursday, April 23rd)**

Essential skills for professionals to succeed in the digital age including data interpretation and manipulation, strategic thinking, team building and project management.

Blog topic: What are the harmful effects of a lack of emotional intelligence?

**Readings due:**

*Articles/Readings*


**Week 16– Presentations due (Thursday, April 30th)**

Presentation of Final Brand and Brand Extension analysis and class discussion of each team’s work.

**Assignments due:**

Final Brand Presentations delivered to class.

Final Brand Presentation paper for all groups emailed to gracelyb@usc.edu 60 minutes before the beginning of class.