Course Description & Objectives

This course provides an accelerated skill-based, community collaboration between students and external partners. The goal is for students in small teams (around 3) to rapid prototype a concept from conception through the alpha testing stage in a single semester. Team projects are made up of interdisciplinary teams and explore the three key research-design themes of the lab, which include Refining Social Media Analytics, Experimenting with Participatory Cultures, and Re-Thinking Urban Living. The pedagogical orientation throughout is on new media literacies and “learning by doing.” Specific themes that will be referenced throughout are user experience design, reputation systems and business positioning.

Funds

Each team of 3-4 will receive $2,500 in funding to develop their project. This funding will be available to teams until the end of the semester and must be spent on approved purchases, such as server space, software and hiring additional talent.

Mentors

Each team will have to pitch their idea to an industry mentor in week 3, who will offer advice to the team’s development. She or he will be open to feedback via email and occasional meetings.

Schedule

Educational researchers are calling for more time and space for people to learn through tinkering and making rather than simply absorbing information from books and lectures. Our emphasis on creative practices in education is linked to a constructionist approach that effective learning comes out of building things that have either personal or social meaning and offer a means for creators to contextualize their knowledge. The course offers an immersive experience as a 3-hour class meeting Friday each week. This will give time for experiences to
unfold and learning to come out of conversations through experience instead of always setting
the stage each week.

We will complete the course before the annual Evening of Innovation (end of April 2015) where
each student team will pitch their project. Projects will be evaluated on idea's potential,
analytic diversity of the team, and alignment with the lab's research areas. Pitches are voted
on by judges and participants of the Evening of Innovation and $5,000 of prize money will be
distributed.

**Required Text and Materials**

There is no required text for this course. Selected readings from books and journals will be
delivered in PDF format on USC's Blackboard system. Students should expect around 25 to 50
pages of reading each week.

**Laptop Policy**

You are encouraged to bring your laptop with you and use it in class for taking notes, looking up
information, finding relevant websites, and contributing to the collaborative wiki.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Week 1: Introduction and Team Identity**

We will go over the course, policies and teams. Next, we will talk with students about what
needs and expectations they have of the course. Teams will write a contract for working with
each other that outlines how and where they can communicate with each other.

Ideation around the project, to create a team identity and project scope. What are the different
routes to and definitions of success? Together we'll consider the routes to funding in the Los
Angeles area, including bootstrapping, incubation, and angel investment. Teams will construct a
mission statement for the project, target goals, and a list of possible budget items.

**Activity:**
Ideation around the project, to create a team mantra and project scope, answering "What are
the different routes to and definitions of success?"

**Reading:**

- Anthony Taun, Richard Harrington and Tsun-Yan Hsieh – Heart, Smarts, Guts and Luck
  p. 133 – 159
- Take the Entrepreneurial Aptitude Test referenced in the book

**Week 2: Pitching and How to Find Talent**
Teams will create a pitch for their project, receive feedback from fellow students and practice their elevator pitches.

**Activity:** Teams will have time to brainstorm an elevator pitch and then groups will each practice this pitch presenting to each other and Erin and Andrew who will act as different people they will eventually meet and pitch. Starting this week, teams will sign up for one on one meetings the last part of class. Those not meeting with Instructors will have time to work on their projects.

**Reading:**

**Assignment:** Practice and refine your elevator pitch.

**Week 3: Meet with Mentors, practice your Pitch**

**Assignment:** Reading: Mike Cohn – *User Stories Applied* [selections].

**Week 4: User Stories**
User stories are a way to develop features and involve various stakeholders in user experience design. We also will check in with teams to discuss particular needs, such as additional support / materials they will need.

**Activity:**
Teams will brainstorm different user roles, categorize them into groups and lay out stories on their experience. Teams will sign up for one on one meetings the last part of class. Those not meeting with Instructors will have time to work on their projects.

**Reading:**
- User stories applied - [user_stories-smaller.pdf](user_stories-smaller.pdf)
- [5 Focus Group Questions to Feed Your Content Marketing](5_focus_group_questions_to_feed_your_content_marketing)

**Assignment:** Interview at minimum 3 people who represent your user roles and ask them questions to determine if your product is a must have rather than a nice to have. Refine your user stories for primary and secondary users based on these interviews.

**Week 5: Wireframing and Site Maps**
Product requirements documents that are agile are an important step in development, where various aspects of the product are codified and written down. We will review key characteristics of user experiences and discuss wireframes and paper prototypes as two graphical forms that serve as touchstones in user experience design.
Activity:
Each student will share a product or service that they consider excellent UX and be able to identify why it is good UX.

Assignment: If you haven't done so already, interview at minimum 3 people who represent your user roles and ask them questions to determine if your product is a must have rather than a nice to have. Finalize your report on what you learned from your Focus Group.

Week 6: Funding

Together we'll consider the routes to funding in the Los Angeles area, including bootstrapping, incubation, and angel investment, and discuss the importance of social media (not just concept videos but also utilizing social media, creating email distribution lists, and contacting media) as part of the campaign. Assignment: $3k Budgets are due for approval.

Activity:
We'll review Kickstarter in Review and welcome guest speakers, Connu (Annenberg Innovation Lab's last year's CRUNCH winner and Start Up in Residence) and GiggleChips share their Kickstarter campaign success and talk about what it takes to do one for each of your projects.

Then, we will share focus group reports and discuss what are the key features of each of the teams that should be highlighted in our product. Then, each team will brainstorm their funding campaign strategy. No one-on-one meetings this week during class.

Reading:
- Top 10 Crowdfunding Sites for Fundraising
- Free Crowdfunding Bible

Assignment: Outline funding campaign and begin work on your concept video

Week 7: Putting together a Powerful Presentation (Feb. 26)

We will discuss what each team should have for the Evening of Innovation including review strong concept videos and discuss the key elements that should be in any pitch deck and term sheet, as well as what the judging criteria will be for the competition.

Activity: Blog post reflections to date will be shared by different teams. Teams will sign up for one on one meetings the last part of class. Those not meeting with Instructors will have time to work on their projects.

Reading:
- Pitch Deck Samples
Assignment: Teams schedule appointments throughout March and April with mentor and Blackstone LaunchPad. Begin to work on your presentation deck... be ready to pitch at Evening of Innovation (End of April)

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.