ASCJ 420: Skateboarding and Action Sports in Business, Media and Culture
Spring 2016 - 21943R, 4 units

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Day/Time: Monday and Wednesday, 10:00-11:50 a.m.
Room: ASC 328

Course Description:

“{Skateboarding is} the fastest growing category within the Nike Brand currently estimated at $390 million in business by 2015”

- Nike Corporation

In a relatively brief time, Action Sports (and, in particular, skateboarding) has grown into a multibillion-dollar industry. With a participatory audience so vast that major international brands such as Nike and Adidas have developed marketing campaigns solely directed at these newer sports. Action Sports have moved from “fringe culture” to a mainstream corporate body in just over forty years. This class examines Action Sports as emergent sports culture. In particular, it studies the intersection of media, culture and business that have made Action Sports a powerful financial and political sports space.

Course Objectives:

Drawing on theories of culture, media and business communication, this course explores the explosive growth of Action Sports in the United States and internationally. Students will examine the ways in which Action Sports, as an emergent sports culture, has impacted issues of diversity, such as gender, race and ethnicity in popular sports. Many of the leaders in the field of Action Sports, (including corporate leaders, marketing directors, and influential athletes and artisans involved within the culture) will visit class to offer real world applications of class theory. Students will write critical papers examining the emergence and culture of Action Sports.

Specific Student Objectives:

1. Become conversant in theories of emergent sports and sports media.
2. Understand the nature of emergent sports and apply that understanding to the history and communication of Action Sports.
3. Write critically aware studies of Action Sports as a sports culture.
4. Display comprehension of how actions sports act as construct Identities for participants.


**Assignments:**

Class participation in this course is one of the keys to success. A percentage of your grade will be determined by your ability to add to class discussion, engage your fellow students and think critically about the subject matter. Assigned short presentations before each class will allow for rigorous discussion and set the tone for both guests and lectures.

Students are expected to write two opinion papers and prepare strategic plans for both their midterm and final. These papers discuss the various topics in class allowing you to use the lens of action sports to critically analyze the role of race, culture, diplomacy and gender. Each paper will be 8-12 pages and you will meet with me before pursuing your topics.

**Grade Breakdown:**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Analysis Paper 1</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Critical Analysis Paper 2</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
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**Reading List:**

*Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship: Transnational Mobilities in Action Sport Culture* by Holly Thorpe

*Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture and the Body* by Iain Borden

*“Disqualifying the Official: An Exploration of Social Resistance thru the Subculture of Skateboarding,” Journal of Sport and Behavior vol. 19 no 3 (1996)* by Becky Beal

**Class Schedule:**

**NOTE:** Readings must be completed before attending the weeks’ classes. Depending on the schedules of guest speakers – Guests and dates of readings may be subject to change.

**Week 1: Orientation and Course Description**

This week works to understand why the sports Giant Nike decided to enter the multimillion-dollar action sports market. What caused them to recognize how important the actions sports market is and its relevance outside of the regular sports market? Why the actions sports branding differs from mainstream sports and the difficulties of non-endemic breaking into the industry. How has Nike leveraged its acquisitions into creating a space within their new market?

**Weekly Readings:**

- Thorpe; pg. 1-15
- Borden; pg. 1-55
- Nike 2015 business overview
Presentation 1:
Students will present a case study which evaluates the three failed attempts by the Nike Inc. to enter into the skateboarding market. Identify the strategy eventually adopted which allowed their entrance into the market and identify the improvements in strategy.

Presentation 2:
Students will conduct market research to understand why Nike is leaving the snowboarding market in favor for continued investment into the skateboarding market.

**Week 2: Adidas: Re-appropriation and Reinvention**

Adidas has been a success story in the skateboarding action market with sales of xxx million in 2014. Cullen Protheyss will discuss his role as VP of Marketing for Action Sports.

**Weekly Readings:**
- Borden; pg. 137-171
- Digital media and the Transnational Imagery; pg. 35-82

**Guest Speaker(s):**
Cullen Protheyss, VP of Marketing Action Sports Adidas U.S.

**Presentation 3:**
Students will research and prepare a presentation on the following:

- The historic origins of the Adidas shell toe shoe for mainstream consumption.
- The role re-appropriation of the Adidas shell-toe shoe was re-appropriated by the skateboarding community because of its design
- Adidas’ ability to capitalize on an accidental footprint in the action sports market avoiding the trappings of early Nike endeavors.
- The Importance of Brand ambassadors-the role their strongest brand ambassador, Mark Gonzales plays within Adidas’ legacy in skateboarding.

**Week 3: Action Sports and Gender Equity**

This week will discuss the role of gender equity in three dimensions: The role of imagery in skateboarding, snowboarding and surfing.

**Weekly Readings:**
• Underexposed: A Woman’s skateboarding Documentary  
  o  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U017DzwNLz8
• The Future of Female skateboarding  
  o  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGLE_9n3p4s
• Thorpe; pg. 119-136
• Sporting communities in the Age of Web 2.0; pg. 77-104
• Letitica Bufani interview  
  o  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wjv7GW97gs

Presentation 4:
Students will research and prepare a presentation which displays:
• Positive and negative imagery of women and men in action sports pulled from various sources
• Discussions will center on the role companies play in displaying the female form as both participant and observer. How does this differ from the marketing of females in other sports?
  o  The uneven coverage of women in action sports
• Discussion will include discussion of increased female participation in action sports, but less celebration of their role within the sports themselves.

Guest Speaker(s):
Cindy Whitehead, founder of GRO, a non-profit dedicated to increasing female participation in action sports  
Amelia Brodka, director of the film ‘Underexposed’ - a documentary on female skateboarding

Presentation 5:
Students will research and present their hypothesis of why some countries do a better role of marketing their female athletes.
• Discussion will include examining the role of gender equity in other areas of their countries economy and discovering if there is a correlation between the increased presences in other areas, which may lead to spill over into other areas.

Week 4: Action Sports and Public Diplomacy

This class will function on how action sports use their sport as tools for cultural diplomacy. CubaSkate and Skatistan discussion will center on the role action sports have played in working in hostile environments where traditional diplomacy has had a difficult time. The class will also engage in the role gender equity and education play in these countries. Students will engage and evaluate the specific policies by both countries which make operating in these areas, difficult.

Weekly Readings:
• The Skatistan Documentary  
  o  https://itunes.apple.com/us/movie/skateistan/id581834482
• New York Times, Skateboarding relieves isolation
Skateboarding Makes Afghan girls feel Free

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/26/sports/othersports/26skate.html?_r=3&

- Skateboarding Makes Afghan girls feel Free
- Thorpe; pg. 162-177

Guest Speaker(s):
Miles Jackson, Founder of CubaSkate
Oliver Percovich, Founder of Skatistan

***Critical Analysis Paper 1 Due ***

Week 5: Action Sports and Advocacy

Because actions sports are an emerging market, this class will focus on the role Action---Sports play in advocacy for their constituencies. Students will develop a knowledge of the creation of Sport NGO’s and the role they play in emerging sports market both as advocates and educators to the general populace.

- Discussion will center on the role of IASC---in creating opportunities for their supporters.
- Their creation of the action sports holiday--- “Go Skateboarding Day”
- Creating the global awareness campaign for the Surfrider Foundation

Weekly Readings:
- Borden; pg. 58-119
- Mission statement and Current events http://www.surfrider.org/
  - http://www.surfrider.org/campaigns
- http://theiasc.org/go-skateboarding-day/

Guest Speaker(s):
Michal Marx, President of Spy Optics, Board of Directors of Surfrider Foundation
Thomas Barker-Executive Director of the International Association of Skateboarding Companies

Presentation 6:
Students will compare and contrast of how NGO’s in traditional sports create partnerships and navigate municipalities and gather funding for their projects versus the action---sports world. Identify and explain why some strategies work across both platforms and why some do not.

Week 6: Action Sports and Event Creation

This class compares and contrasts the scope and needs of the mainstream sports world and the goals of the emerging sports world. It will also focus on event creation and how to approach creating new spaces for sports brands. It will emphasis Joe Maloof’s creation of the Maloof Money Cup and how the Maloof Entertainment group worked with municipalities to host skateboarding events in NY, D.C. Orange County and Kimberly, South Africa

- How to create partnerships across markets
• Working with press and creating PR opportunities

Weekly Readings:
• Borden; pg. 174-260
• Thorpe; pg.226-241
• Maloof Money Cup at DC’s newest skatepark
  o http://www.maloofmoneycup.com/
• Maloof Money Cup at DC’s newest skatepark
  o http://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/maloof-money-cup-at-dcs-newestskatepark/2011/09/03/gIQAgKn0zJ_gallery.html
• Interview with the Maloof Family
  o http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1009/18/lkl.01.html

Guest Speaker(s):
Joe Maloof, former owner of the Sacramento Kings, Mark Lauer, owner of Rhythm Skateparks

Presentation 7:
Students will create their own mock action sports NGO for an emerging action sports market of their choice. Students will identify a municipality and present a plan of how to align their goals to be mutually beneficial with local government.

Week 7: Action Sports and the Entertainment Market

This class focuses on skateboarding’s largest ambassador, Tony Hawk and his VP of Operations, Miki Yukavich. Discussion will include Tony Hawk creating one of the best-selling videogames of all time and helping move the entire skateboarding genre forward. Tony hawk has created his own NGO to give back to the skateboarding community.
• Understanding the pros and cons of acting as an ambassador for the entire skateboarding culture.
• We will highlight his work with Activision and the vision to create a game that accurately portrayed the skateboarding lifestyle.
• We will discuss how his role has changed from being a competitive skateboarder to retiring and endowing the Tony Hawk Foundation and creating positive outreach outside of the skateboarding community.

Weekly Readings:
• Thorpe; pg. 109-154
• Time Magazine –Interview with Tony Hawk
  o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hLrt5wFlmo
• Tony Hawk interview in Juice magazine
  o http://juicemagazine.com/home/tony-hawk-2/

Guest Speaker(s):
Miki Yukavich, VP of the Tony Hawk Foundation
Alec Beck, Marketing Director Tony Hawk Foundation
Week 8: Midterm Review

***Midterm***

Week 9: Action Sports and the Mainstream Media Market

Rob Dyrdek is a leader in both the action—sports and entertainment market. His T.V. show Rob & Big is one of the biggest hits of MTV. His newest program Fantasy Factory, is one of the top shows on MTV and he is the founder of the skateboarding contest, the Street League.

Rodney Mullen is the godfather of street skateboarding and responsible for the majority of tricks created in skateboarding. His innovation and impact on millions have earned him a spot as a Lemelson fellow at the Smithsonian. His TedXUSC received more than 1.9 million views. Rodney’s focus on transferring skateboarding’s values and characteristics into a new pathway for corporate culture has taken the tech-world by storm.

- Class will discuss Rob’s role working with MTV and crafting one of the most popular shows on MTV.
- Rodney’s work with the Smithsonian and InnoSkate and his new fame in the techworld

Weekly Readings:
- Skateboarding’s Million Dollar Man-MPORA magazine
  - [http://mpora.com/articles/longform/the-robert-dyrdek-interview#M9LUzMLR68MM36Pr.97](http://mpora.com/articles/longform/the-robert-dyrdek-interview#M9LUzMLR68MM36Pr.97)
- Rob Dyrdek on Fox Sports 1
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0u5heQbJnk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0u5heQbJnk)
- Rob Dyrdek on Larry King Now
  - [http://www.hulu.com/watch/583842](http://www.hulu.com/watch/583842)
- Rodney Mullen in Wired Magazine
  - [http://www.wired.com/2015/01/rodney-mullen/](http://www.wired.com/2015/01/rodney-mullen/)
- Rodney Mullen TedTalk at USC
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEm-wjPkegE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEm-wjPkegE)
- Rodney Mullen greatest moments
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6mJc7yeKPg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6mJc7yeKPg)

Guest Speaker(s):
Rob Dyrdek, celebrity, skateboarder and founder of Street League Skateboarding
Rodney Mullen-The Godfather of street skating Co-Founder of World Industries Skateboards

Presentation 8:
Students will create mock treatment for an action sports show to present to the class. Students and guest speakers will evaluate the pitch and presentation on viability.
**Week 10: Action Sports and the Olympics**

This class will discuss the role of the Olympics in engaging the action sports community. The Winter Olympics have flourished thanks to the snowboarding community and their ability to bring new viewers to the Olympics. Discussions of adding more sports to the rooster abound including a heavy interest in skateboarding. Guest Anna Oliver will speak of her role as an Olympic athlete and her inability to enter into the Olympics due to the U.S. and global political landscape at the time of her Olympic bid. She will also discuss the current thinking of the Olympic committee on the involvement of action sports.

**Weekly Readings:**
- Terje Haakonsen-Why I still hate the Olympics
  - [http://whitelines.com/features/comment/terjehaakonsen-why-i-still-hate-the-olympics.html#1sSdtH2SA5wA8sd5.97](http://whitelines.com/features/comment/terjehaakonsen-why-i-still-hate-the-olympics.html#1sSdtH2SA5wA8sd5.97)
  - [http://theboardr.com/post/Skateboarding_Accepted_Into_the_2016_Olympics](http://theboardr.com/post/Skateboarding_Accepted_Into_the_2016_Olympics)
- The petition to keep skateboarding out of the Olympics

**Guest Speaker(s):**
Josh Friedberg- Executive Director of the Rob Dyrdek Foundation, Former Director of the International Association of Skateboarding Companies

**Presentation 9:**
Students will prepare a presentation which discusses:
- What is necessary to become an Olympic sport
- The role of the voting committee
- The role of sponsorships and the contribution

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**Week 11: Action Sports and their New Role of Sports Diplomacy**

Trina Bolton is a co-director of the women’s empowerment initiative in Sports Diplomacy for the United States. Discussion will center on the role of sports diplomacy and the U.S. initiatives in the future

- This class will gain insight into the ways that the U.S. government decides what image is important for the U.S. to project abroad.

**Weekly Readings:**
- Thorpe; pg. 243-280
- Skateboarding Diplomacy in Iran
- The Role of non-State Actors-Sports Diplomacy
  - [http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/role-non-state-actors-sports-diplomacy](http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/role-non-state-actors-sports-diplomacy)
- CPD Magazine-Skatistan Reflection
Guest Speaker(s):
Trina Bolton- Foreign Service Officer for Sports United, The U.S. State Department

Presentation 10:
Students will present an evaluation which builds upon their knowledge of action sports vs. traditional sports and compare and contrast why action sports could be more relevant than traditional sports when it comes to creating new dialogues with youth groups abroad. This will be evaluated by the guest speaker and classmates.

Week 12: The Sports Network Embrace of Action Sports and Creating Equity Amongst Actors

Brian Atlas is the partner in Rob Dyrdek Street league skateboarding’s contest on Fox Sports. Mimi Knopp is a multi-medalist in X-games skateboarding, and the Co-Founder for the Alliance for women in Action Sports and Hoopla Skateboards. She also lead the charge in the boycott of the X-games moments before they went live in order to call attention to the vast disparity between the prize money of the men and women’s category. This class centers on the relationship between the mainstream sports network and action sports and issues of inclusion and gender equity in the formation of contracts and marketing. Discussion will center on the needs of mainstream sports media and pay equity and creating a space to include actions sports fans of both sexes.

- The pros and cons of programming action sports and how they work to educate mainstream audience and build a larger fan base.
- How are women portrayed and are they given equal access to participate in these events.
- What is being done to create a marketplace of ideas for female fans.

Weekly readings:

- Street league skateboarding comes to Fox sports

- Variety Magazine article
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOu5heQbJnk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOu5heQbJnk)

Guest Speaker(s):
Brian Atlas, VP of Rob Dydrek’s Street League
Mimi Knoop, Female Pro Skater and Co-Founder of the Alliance and Hoopla Skateboards

Week 13: Action Sports and Popular Culture
Spike Jonze is one of Hollywood’s avant-garde film director and Oscar award winner, but he is also one of the creative forces behind the Girl/Chocolate skateboard brand.

- This class will discuss how these visual giants managed to break new ground in film and video, and also remains relevant in the action sports industry. Joe Guglielmino

Joe Guglielmino. is an award winning Surf and Skateboarding video Director for Globe Footwear
His work set the standard for the modern romanticism of surf films

Weekly Readings:
- HER- Everything you wanted to know about HER
- Vice Magazine article –New Virtual Reality Film
- Spike directs Kanye Again
  - [http://creativityonline.com/work/kanye-west-only-one/38737](http://creativityonline.com/work/kanye-west-only-one/38737)

Catching up with Joe G.
- [http://www.surfingmagazine.com/originals/opinion/catching-up-with-filmmaker-joeg/#g2ql9HdgEUYkIXU.97](http://www.surfingmagazine.com/originals/opinion/catching-up-with-filmmaker-joeg/#g2ql9HdgEUYkIXU.97)
- [https://vimeo.com/44253174](https://vimeo.com/44253174)
- Globe Surf-Strange Rumblings

**Guest Speaker(s):**
Spike Jonze, Joe G.

**Critical Analysis Paper 2 Due***

**Week 14: Actions Sports and the Role of Race and Ethnicity in Entrepreneurism**

Paul Rodriguez has parlayed his fame as one of the most celebrated skaters and as a athlete for Nike into the creation of his own brand, Primitive. Nano Norbrega, is a Brazilian Ex-pat who is the Brand Director for multi-million dollar skateboarding lifestyle company Dusters Skateboards. We will discuss the pros and cons of ownership versus simply being a celebrated athlete. In addition, we will discuss the role of minorities in action-sports versus traditional sports and how companies like Dusters are partnering with the Smithsonian

- Paul Rodriguez, the cornerstone of the Nike SB, left the largest endemic footwear company to go to Nike. We will also discuss how he has now moved on to create his own skateboarding brand in an attempt to control his own destiny.
- Nano will discuss how his brand Dusters, California keeps a Brazilian workplace culture while creating product for the masses.
- We will the historic difference between the U.S. and Brazilian narratives of skate culture and how skateboarding has created a new space for ownership and entrepreneurship for minorities.

**Weekly Readings:**
• After leaving the drug game behind Daren Harper found new life in skateboarding
• Paul Rodriguez
  o http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Rodriguez_%28skateboarder%29
  o USA Today article http://ftw.usatoday.com/2014/10/paul-rodriguez-skateboarding-videos
  o http://www.thrashermagazine.com/articles/magazine/interview-issue-2010-paul-rodriguez/

Guest Speaker(s):
Paul Rodriguez, owner of Primitive Skateboards,
Bastian Salabanzie-Pro Skater from the Democratic Republic of Congo
Nano Norbrega- Brazilian founder of Dusters California and Superior Skateboards

Presentation 11:
Students will prepare a presentation discussing the “Donald Sterling Incident” and provide context for the top-down approach to power in mainstream sports and how this effects minority communities
Students will compare and contrast whether greater diversity in action-sports and ability for ownership can continue to increase minority involvement and the role this will play for decreasing youth participation in traditional sports in the future.

Week 15: Intersectionality; Capturing the moment: The Impact Study of Actions Sports Photography /Videography and Culture

Atiba Jefferson is one of the leading action--sports photographers in the world. He helped launch the careers of P---Rod and as member of Transworld Skateboard Magazine, has captured all of skateboarding’s greats. He is also a founding member of the Skateboard Mag.
Mike O’Meally is Australia’s most celebrated skate photographer with over 20years of experience in the field. He is a staff photographer for Transworld Skateboarding Magazine.

• We will dissect the makings and needs of the core skateboarding community versus creating images which appeal to mainstream culture
• Class will discuss the nature of investing in print media during the age of Multi-media

Weekly Readings:
• Borden; Closure and Aperture Chapter 9– Final chapter
• http://www.atibaphoto.com/
• Who Shot Ya? Atiba Jefferson’s twenty cover in slam Basketball Magazine
  o http://www.slamonline.com/the-magazine/atiba-jefferson-photography/
• Atiba Jefferson interview for ESPN
Mike O’Meally 20 year Retrospective
http://skateboarding.transworld.net/photos/mike-omeally-20-years-of-skate-photography/

Week 16: Local as the Global

Bod Boyle is the president of the multinational corporation Dwindle Distribution. The company is based in El Segundo and operated internationally with net sales of 15 million dollars. Don Brown is the VP of SoleTechnology in Lake Forest, home of Es, Emerica and Etnies, the skateboarding’s first shoe

- This class will give students a broad understanding of managing production, distribution and then interworking of international trade.
- Students will gain insight into how his role is key to managing several brands, maintaining brand identity within the market and how not to cannibalize a customer base.
- Students will also gain insight into how to break into emerging markets in the BRIC countries.

Weekly Readings:
- How corporations are changing skateboarding
- Steve Rocco: The Man who souled the world
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-YOSTuhx0E

Guest Speaker(s):
Bod Boyle, U.K. President of Dwindle Distribution
Don Brown, U.K., V.P. of Sole Technology

***Final***

Class Policies and Resources:

Late Work: All late papers will be docked one letter grade for each class period they are late. Any time after the start of the class in which the papers are due will be considered late.

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-universitystandards-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-publicsafety/online-forms/contact-us](http://capsnet.usc.edu/dePARTMENT/department-publicsafety/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/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](mailto: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](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](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/](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.