

USC Iovine and Young Academy

*Arts, Technology and the Business
of Innovation*

IDSN 560: Narrative & Storytelling

Units: 4.0

Office: Online

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

The ability to share one's creative vision, thoughts or products in a manner that is resonant to those within a potential audience is critical in an array of situations. The resonant story is one that communicates to listeners, readers, or viewers in a manner that reflects a nuanced understanding of how one thinks, feels, reacts and behaves. It is through depth of insight and effective communication that innovations diffuse and art is championed, services are rendered, products are purchased or adopted, and content is consumed. This course explores the various visual, written, and spoken ways in which stories can be envisioned, assembled and shared – both historically and in contemporary contexts-- across audiences and for different purposes, using existing or creating new multimedia methods and tools. Accompanying this exploration is instruction in communication theory and the narrative structures and content most effective at evoking a powerful and meaningful audience response.

Learning Objectives

Students in this course will learn how to build and communicate ideas, concepts and solutions using universal storytelling techniques. Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the foundational and generalizable components of stories, including semiotic syntax, user viewpoints and cultural perspectives.
- Differentiate between story types, form, context, and content.
- Create independent narratives for effective use in an array of personal and organizational settings (e.g., design agency, engineering firm, startup venture).

Recommended Preparation

IDSN-510 Integrative Practices Residential; IDSN-540 Processes & Perspectives

Course Notes

This course will be conducted online, using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Students must provide their own laptop. The laptop specifications take into consideration that students will be creating, streaming, and downloading audio and video; communicating using video conferencing applications; and creating and storing large multimedia files.

	Apple	Windows PC
Laptop (Minimum Standards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2.6 GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 or 2.0 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 ● Minimum 13-inch display ● 250 GB hard drive or larger ● 8 GB memory; 16 GB memory recommended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intel Core i5 or Intel Core i7 ● Minimum 14-inch display ● 250 GB hard drive or larger ● 8 GB memory; 16 GB memory recommended
Warranty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manufacturer warranty or extended warranty coverage (AppleCare) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manufacturer warranty or extended warranty coverage
Operating System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Max OSX or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Windows 7, 8, 10, or higher
Peripherals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HD webcam, speakers, and microphone (most newer laptops have built-in webcam, speakers, and microphone) ● Headset ● Digital camera (cameras on newer smartphones are acceptable) ● External drive for cloud account for backup and storage 	
Software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Illustrator, and Acrobat) ● Microsoft Office Suite ● Sophos Endpoint Security (antivirus) ● Browser: Most recent version of Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, or Safari 	
Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cable modem, DSL, T1/T3 or higher 	

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Required reading will be drawn from textbooks, articles, papers, cases, and online publications (e.g., articles, op-ed essays) available through a host of available outlets; in all instances, the material will be delivered via computer. Students will also be required to view online videos; complete web-based, interactive exercises; and respond to peer and faculty comments (within an online discussion forum or group discussion). Lectures, readings, and viewings will be supplemented with current articles and audio/video content.

Academy Student Attendance Policy

The Academy maintains rigorous academic standards for its students, and on-time attendance at all class meetings is expected. Each student will be allowed two excused absences over the course of the semester for which no explanation is required. Students are admonished to not waste excused absences on noncritical issues, and to use them carefully for illness or other issues that may arise unexpectedly. Except in the case of prolonged illness or other serious issue (see below), no additional absences will be

excused. Each unexcused absence will result in the lowering of the final grade by one third of a grade (e.g., an A will be lowered to A-, an A- will be lowered to B+).

Students remain responsible for any missed work from excused or unexcused absences. Immediately following an absence, students should contact the instructor to obtain missed assignments or lecture notes and to confirm new deadlines or due dates. Extensions or other accommodations are at the discretion of the instructor.

Automatically excused absences normally may not be used for quiz, exam, or presentation days. Using an excused absence for a quiz, exam, or presentation, such as in the case of sudden illness or other emergency, is at the discretion of the instructor.

In the case of prolonged illness, family emergencies, or other unforeseen serious issues, the student should contact the instructor to arrange for accommodation. Accommodation may also be made for essential professional or career-related events or opportunities. All accommodations remain at the discretion of the instructor, and appropriate documentation may be required.

Grading Breakdown

Assignments*	Points	Weight
Participation	100	10%
1.1 – Pick A Spread, Any Spread	0	0%
1.2 – The Medium Is The Message, Part 01	50	5%
1.3 – The Medium Is The Message, Part 02	50	5%
1.4 – The Medium Is The Message, Part 03	100	10%
2.1 – Pecha Kucha, Part 01	50	5%
2.2 – Pecha Kucha, Part 02	100	10%
3.1 – Goals And Strategies (team)	100	10%
3.2 – Objectives And Tactics (team)	100	10%
3.3 – Professional Storytelling Strategy Deck (team)	100	10%
4.1 – Signals, Emerging Issues, Trends	50	5%
4.2 – Scenarios	100	10%
4.3 – Diegetic Object	100	10%
TOTAL	1000	100%

Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments and labs must be delivered, per instructor guidelines to be distributed, by **noon Pacific Time** on the date that deliverable is listed as due in the Course Schedule. No exceptions. (Early submissions are, of course, encouraged!). All assignments, no matter how late, must be completed in order to pass this class.

Late Submissions

Assignments will be accepted after the deadline with the following grade penalties. Do not ask for extensions; the below are the extensions.

- Submission in the 24 hours after the deadline: 10% deduction
- Submission between 24 and 48 hours after the deadline: 20% deduction
- Submission between 48 hours and 3 days after the deadline: 50% deduction
- Submission more than 3 days will receive NO credit

Keep copies of all your files and e-mails until the end of the semester.

Correcting a Grading Error or Disputing a Grade

If you don't inform the instructor of missing or incorrect grades within two weeks of those grades being posted, the grades will be assumed correct. Do not wait until the semester's end to check or appeal any grades. If you feel a grade merits reevaluation, you are encouraged, within one week of the instructor providing a grade and initial feedback, to send the instructor a memo in which you request reconsideration. The memo should include a thoughtful and professional explanation of your concerns. Be aware that the reevaluation process can result in three types of grade adjustments: positive, none, or negative. (Note: Complaints on the date of a graded assignment's return to you will not be addressed; it is essential to wait one full day prior to raising a concern.)

Additional Policies

Class notes policy: Notes or recordings made by students based on a university class or lecture may only be made for purposes of individual or group study, or for other noncommercial purposes that reasonably arise from the student's membership in the class or attendance at the university. This restriction also applies to any information distributed, disseminated, or in any way displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via e-mail or otherwise on the Internet, or via any other medium. Actions in violation of this policy constitute a violation of the Student Conduct Code and may subject an individual or entity to university discipline and/or legal proceedings. Again, it is a violation of USC's Academic Integrity Policies to share course materials with others without permission from the instructor.

No recording and copyright notice: No student may record any lecture, class discussion, or meeting with the instructor without his/her prior express written permission. The word "record" or the act of recording includes but is not limited to any and all means by which sound or visual images can be stored, duplicated, or retransmitted whether by an electro-mechanical, analog, digital, wire, electronic, or other device or any other means of signal encoding. The instructor reserves all rights, including copyright, to

his/her lectures, course syllabi, and related materials, including summaries, slides (e.g., Keynote, PowerPoint), prior exams, answer keys, and all supplementary course materials available to the students enrolled in the class whether posted to the LMS or otherwise. They may not be reproduced, distributed, copied, or disseminated in any media or in any form, including but not limited to all course note-sharing websites. Exceptions are made for students who have made prior arrangements with The USC Office of Disability Services and Programs and the instructor.

Participation: Students are expected to actively participate in this course. In an online forum, participation includes:

- Careful reading and viewing of assigned materials by the date due
- Regular, substantive contributions to discussions
- Active engagement with online content
- On-time attendance and full attention in synchronous sessions
- Significant collaboration with classmates and teammates

Course grades for students who do not contribute to the course through active participation may be affected. Students should notify the instructor in advance if they are unable to attend class.

Contact Hours

This 4-unit course requires 3,000 minutes of instructional time per semester.

During fall and spring, this equals 200 minutes (3.333 hours) of instructional time each week. Instructional time may be further broken down into 100 minutes (1.667 hours) of asynchronous time and 100 minutes (1.667 hours) of synchronous time. In addition, it is expected that students will work, on average, an additional 300 minutes (5 hours) per week outside of class—on readings/viewings, homework assignments, field experiences, and individual or team projects. Synchronous class sessions will be offered as regularly scheduled evening or weekend classes, once each week.

During the summer, this equals 250 minutes (4.167 hours) of instructional time each week, which can be further broken down into 125 minutes (2.083 hours) of asynchronous time and 125 minutes (2.083 hours) of synchronous time. It is expected that students will work, on average, an additional 375 minutes (6.25 hours) per week outside of class in the summer.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

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 Part B, Section 11](#), “Behavior Violating University Standards.” Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on [scientific misconduct](#).

Discrimination, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the [Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Office](#)

and/or to the [Department of Public Safety](#). This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX coordinator, who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The [sexual assault resource center](#) web page fully describes reporting options. [Relationship and Sexual Violence Services](#) provides 24/7 confidential support.

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](#), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. [The Office of Disability Services and Programs](#) 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](#) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

The below provides a brief overview of each assignment throughout the course across 4 primary modules: The Medium is the Message, Performance, Professional Storytelling, and Thinking Long-Term. Additional assignment details will be provided separately.

Participation

Throughout the semester, students will be expected to contribute to class in a variety of ways. They will be asked to: Provide substantive and thoughtful feedback to questions posted, by peers and instructors, in specified online forums. Provide written and verbal responses during live, synchronous sessions. Complete, after the delivery of each Team assignment, individual Peer Feedback Reports.

1.1 – Pick A Spread, Any Spread. Obtain or borrow a physical copy of *The Medium is the Message* by Marshall McLuhan. Familiarize yourself with the text, and select a spread (two consecutive pages) based on intuition, content, or other methods. Upload a scan of the spread you choose (PDF)

1.2 – The Medium Is The Message, Part 01. Recreate the spread you selected, using one of the following media discussed in the asynchronous content: Film, VR, Gaming, Comics/The Graphic Novel, Social Media. The recreation should not be a literal reproduction, but instead a reinterpretation of the spread based on your own perception of its meaning as well as the unique strengths of the medium you select. Upload your document (PDF or MOV/GIF).

1.3 – The Medium Is The Message, Part 02. Recreate the spread you selected again, this time using one of the following media discussed in the asynchronous content: Poetry, Short Story, Essay, Environmental Graphics, Photography. The recreation should not be a literal reproduction, but instead a reinterpretation of the spread based on your own perception of its meaning as well as the unique strengths of the medium you select. Upload your document (PDF).

1.4 – The Medium Is The Message, Part 03. Create a 3-slide pitch for a site-specific installation, exhibition, or platform that recreates your spread by combining at least three of the following mediums into one experience: Film, VR, Gaming, Comics/The Graphic Novel, Social Media, Poetry, Short Story, Essay, Environmental Graphics, Photography. Be prepared to share the pitch in the Live Session. Upload your document (PDF).

2.1 – Pecha Kucha, Part 01. Create an initial draft of your Pecha Kucha talk. As this initial upload is intended to serve as a draft, your deliverable can be as detailed in regards to final design as you find necessary to communicate the narrative of your talk. The talk must utilize 20 slides, and can be about anything of genuine interest to you (it does not have to be serious!). Upload the draft of your slides (PDF).

2.2 – Pecha Kucha, Part 02. Finalize your Pecha Kucha talk and slides including all finalized images and graphic design/slide layout treatment that you intend on using. Take time to practice your talk, and be prepared to deliver your Pecha Kucha in the Live Session. Upload your slides (PDF).

3.1 – Goals And Strategies. Work in teams to select a product, service, or business that you will focus on throughout the “Professional Storytelling” chapter of the course. Create a Goal (overall vision for the purpose of the campaign) and define a Strategy (specification of the specific stakeholders/personas you hope to reach) for the product, service, or business you selected, using the methodology covered in Unit 9. Be prepared to share in the Live Session. Upload your document (PDF).

3.2 – Objectives And Tactics. Work in teams to set Objectives (accountability/success metrics) and explore Tactics (specific marketing activities/campaign output) for a new marketing campaign for the product, service, or business you selected, using the methodology covered in Unit 10. Be prepared to share your progress in the Live Session. Upload your document (PDF).

3.3 – Professional Storytelling Strategy Deck. Finalize your project by creating one cohesive Professional Storytelling Strategy Deck (10 slides maximum) that serves as a “pitch” of your concepts and strategy to the product, service, or business you selected. Be prepared to share in the Live Session. Upload your document (PDF).

4.1 – Signals, Emerging Issues, Trends. Collect 2 signals, 2 emerging issues, and 2 trends relevant to the future of storytelling. Include an image and brief description for each. Be prepared to share in the Live Session. Upload your document (PDF).

4.2 – Scenarios. Write 4 scenarios on the future of storytelling using the alternative futures/archetypes of the future framework (Growth, Constraint/Discipline, Collapse, Transformation). Each scenario should be a maximum of 300 words. You can write in any style or perspective you would like. Scenarios must be written only (no visual aids or supplements are allowed in this assignment). Be prepared to share in the Live Session. Upload your document (PDF).

4.3 – Diegetic Object. Create a diegetic object to accompany one of your scenarios from exercise 4.2. This object can be any visual artifact that helps bring your scenario to life, for example: a physical object, a digital product, a drawing, an advertisement, a logo, a film, etc. Build a two-slide presentation to submit and share in the Live Session, where slide 01 is your diegetic object and slide 02 is a summary of your selected scenario.. Upload a copy of your (PDF) document to the LMS.

Course Schedule

UNIT	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS	GUESTS
MODULE 1: THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE			
Unit 1	Narrative And Storytelling: Welcome! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Introduction • Professor Introduction • What Makes A Good Story? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 1.1 	
Unit 2	History, Examples, Use-Cases, And Value Of The Medium (Part 01): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film, Virtual Reality, Gaming, Comics And The Graphic Novel, Social Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 1.2 	
Unit 3	History, Examples, Use-Cases, And Value Of The Medium (Part 02): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry, Short Story, The Essay, Environmental Graphics, Photography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 1.3 	
Unit 4	Perspectives On Storytelling Across Industries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytelling In Film • Storytelling In Art/Illustration • Storytelling In Writing • Understanding The Audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 1.4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jeff Watson</i> • <i>Allison "HUEMAN" Torneros</i>
MODULE 2: PERFORMANCE			
Unit 5	Introduction To Public Speaking And The Pecha Kucha: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview Of Forms Of Public Speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous 	

Unit 6	Best Practices And Common Mistakes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Practices For Public Speaking • Designing Good Slides • Common Mistakes In Public Speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 2.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Petrula Vrontikis</i>
Unit 7	Listening As A Practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Is Listening? Perspectives From The Field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 2.2 	
MODULE 3: PROFESSIONAL STORYTELLING			
Unit 8	Career Pathways And Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction To Career Pathways In Storytelling • Industry Experts About Their Career Path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Marlon Fuentes</i> • <i>David Harris</i> • <i>Jaemin Yi</i>
Unit 9	Creating Goals And Defining Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Case Study Part 01 • Deep Dive: Creating Goals • Deep Dive: Defining A Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 3.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shane Chase</i> • <i>Alisa Olinova</i> • <i>Rachel Sumekh</i>
Unit 10	Setting Objectives And Exploring Tactics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Case Study Part 02 • Deep Dive: Setting Objectives • Deep Dive: Exploring Tactics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 3.2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shane Chase</i> • <i>Alisa Olinova</i> • <i>Rachel Sumekh</i>
Unit 11	Creating Goals And Defining Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Case Study Part 03 • Deep Dive: Measuring Success • Additional Case Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 3.3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shane Chase</i> • <i>Alisa Olinova</i> • <i>Rachel Sumekh</i>
MODULE 4: THINKING LONG-TERM			
Unit 12	Introduction To Strategic Foresight: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction To Strategic Foresight • What Does A Futurist Do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 4.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jake Dunagan</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signals, Trends, Emerging Issues 		
Unit 13	Strategic Foresight Methodologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative Futures • 3 Horizons • Futures Triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jake Dunagan</i>
Unit 14	Projects & Perspectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing The Future • Perspectives On Design's Role In Strategic Foresight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 4.2 	
Unit 15	Diegetic Objects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Artifacts Of The Future • Final Review And Course Conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous • Assignment 4.3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jake Dunagan</i>