

# USC Iovine and Young Academy

*Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation*

## **IDSN 585: Capstone**

**Units:** 3.0

**Office:** Online

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

### **Course Description**

IDSN 585, the USC Iovine and Young Academy capstone course, is a self-directed semester of study and practice, where students have the opportunity to create a meaningful design, business, and technological solution to a challenge problem that they define. Students choose to work individually or in teams to develop an in-depth multidisciplinary project, culminating in a working prototype or finished product, service, or process by the end of the semester. Projects will be reviewed and approved by Capstone faculty before the semester begins. The concept developed must have desirability, feasibility, and viability. This project should draw upon, demonstrate, and enhance the understanding, methods, skills, and tools learned throughout the student's experience in the program. The project will require research, exploration, experimentation, ideation, testing, and iteration of the concept. Students will need to work rigorously within the timeline and schedule that is required to achieve the stated goals. They will need to be in consistent collaboration and communication with fellow team members and will need to produce and present professional-quality deliverables on time. The course meets formally once a week in a synchronous live session (days and times to be announced). The class will be supported by in-class formative and summative critiques designed in conjunction with members of the class, mentoring faculty and industry experts. A general framework of major milestones, objectives and key results will be adapted to individual projects. Students will be required to present their final project solutions to a team of faculty and industry experts by the end of the semester.

### **Learning Objectives**

Students in this course will demonstrate progressive aptitude in deploying the concepts, techniques, tools, and approaches of their prior scholarly work in the program. Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Apply their accumulated knowledge and understanding from the scope of all classes completed successfully in the program.
- Develop proficiency through practice, in challenges of increasing scope and complexity.
- Apply various primary and secondary research methods to unlock opportunities and insights toward the project concept.
- Identify markets and competition related to the project concept.
- Generate unique ideas and iterate upon a variety of tested solutions.
- Fabricate products, plan and launch services, articulate processes with depth.
- Prepare a business model and financial pro forma to inform business decisions.
- Build and communicate effectively within multidisciplinary, multi-perspective teams.
- Communicate and present ideas concisely using any and all effective modalities to potential stakeholders, Capstone faculty, and industry experts.

## Prerequisites

All required coursework for the USC Iovine and Young Academy online graduate program.

## Course Notes

Students are responsible for all asynchronous material, including video lectures, interviews, and reading publication materials assigned by the Capstone faculty throughout the course.

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

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Required content and readings may be assigned by faculty and 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).

### **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(s) 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**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Participation	150	15%
Executive Summary Presentation	50	5%
Project Pivot or Persevere Presentation I	200	20%
Project Pivot or Persevere Presentation II	200	20%
Weekly Check-Ins (x 10)	100	10%
Final Project Presentation	250	25%
Project Process and Effort (Handoff Document and Peer Survey)	50	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Assignment Submission Policy**

All assignments and labs must be delivered by the date and time (**Pacific Time**) that deliverable is listed as due per instructor guidelines. The instructor(s) will provide due dates for all assignments and

deliverables during the first live session of the Capstone. Late assignments will be subject to the late submission policy indicated below.

**\*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 emails 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 relation 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 and Critiques:** Students are expected to actively participate in this course. The purpose of a critique is to provide constructive feedback to each other in a safe environment that helps to push the boundaries of critical thinking and creative problem solving. 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.

### **Contact Hours**

This 3-unit course requires 2,250 minutes of instructional time per semester.

During fall and spring, this equals 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of instructional time each week. Instructional time may be further broken down into 60 minutes (1 hour) of asynchronous time and 90 minutes (1.5 hours) of synchronous time. In addition, it is expected that students will work, on average, an additional 250 minutes (4.16 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 187.5 minutes (3.125 hours) of instructional time each week, which can be further broken down into 77.5 minutes (1.29 hours) of asynchronous time and 110 minutes (1.83 hours) of synchronous time. It is expected that students will work, on average, an additional 300 (5 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.

### Course Schedule

Unit	Title and Topics	Deliverables	Tasks
0	Pre-Semester Setup	Project Proposals Due	Individuals/teams deliver Capstone Project proposals.
0	Pre-Semester Setup	Project Proposal Reviews	Faculty review of proposals for approval/rejection or request of clarifying details.
1	Class Overview		Introductions, syllabus, expectations, project launch
2	Presentations	Executive Summary Presentation	Introduce Projects and Goals
3	Projects and Teams	Weekly Check-In 1	Team Meetings
4	Projects and Teams	Weekly Check-In 2	Team Meetings
5	Projects and Teams	Weekly Check-In 3	Team Meetings

6	Presentations	Project Pivot or Persevere Presentation I	Project Progress, Milestones, and Next Steps
7	Projects and Teams	Weekly Check-In 4	Team Meetings
8	Projects and Teams	Weekly Check-In 5	Team Meetings
9	Projects and Teams	Weekly Check-In 6	Team Meetings
10	Presentations	Project Pivot or Persevere Presentation II	Project Progress, Milestones, and Next Steps
11	Projects and Teams	Weekly Check-In 7	Team Meetings
12	Projects and Teams	Weekly Check-In 8	Team Meetings
13	Projects and Teams	Weekly Check-In 9	Team Meetings
14	Projects and Teams	Weekly Check-In 10	Team Meetings
15	Presentations	Final Project Presentation Handoff Document (team) Project Peer Survey (individual)	Presentation of project findings and results; followed by a Q&A session.

## Assignments

Below are brief overviews of each assignment. If not specified, assignments will be submitted within the 2U Learning Management System (LMS). If you experience any technical difficulties submitting assignments, they can be e-mailed directly to your instructor. Additional assignment details will be provided separately.

### Capstone Project Proposals (individual or team)

Each student will provide individually, or as part of a team, an initial project proposal in which one or more ideas for further pursuit are proposed (with accompanying rationale) to Capstone faculty for review. Proposals must be in written form – PDF or Word format and submitted prior to the first live session. Faculty will set deadlines before the start of the semester.. Make sure to include your name, and all other team members, at the top of your proposal. In your proposal, address the questions below as they apply to your project:

- What is the project name (or working title)?
- What are its goals and why is it important?
- Whose problem is this and how do you know?
- What is the pain and what is the gain?
- What is the scale of the problem?
- What is the potential for innovation and/or meaningful impact?
- What does the design component require (how is it desirable)?

- What does the technology component require (how is it feasible)?
- What does the business component require (how is the project viable)?
- Can this project be completed in the time allotted for the class?

### Executive Summary Presentation

Each approved team will present an introductory overview of the project in which one or more ideas for further pursuit are proposed (with accompanying rationale) to peers and faculty. You may utilize any mediums/media you see fit to best explain your idea, but visuals are required (like a deck or video, etcetera), and address each of the following:

- Goal of the project (subject area you are focusing on, symptom or pain points you are addressing, opportunity identified)
- Current or Possible solution(s). It is not expected to show refined solutions, but it is important to show possibilities to excite and attract teammates.
- Resources/knowledge do you have available (technical, conceptual, human, financial)
- What do you not know about the project area? What activities will the team undertake this semester to fill in the gaps (i.e. research methods, development tactics, etc.)?
- Notes about important roles/duties for the project in the following four areas:
  - Leadership, Design, Business, and Technology

### Project Pivot or Persevere Presentation I

Discussion of defined problem statement, proposed solution, core features, and research relating to your project. Make sure you are addressing the target audience (not instructors) and that you are engaging the needs and interests of your potential customers. Ensure that each proposed feature addresses a need, pain point, or desire of the target audience. Include project recommendations and next steps based on results from all research and testing to date.

- A detailed rubric for this presentation will be provided by the Capstone faculty.

### Project Pivot or Persevere Presentation II

Discussion of defined problem statement, proposed solution, core features, and research relating to your project. Make sure you are addressing the target audience (not instructors) and that you are engaging the needs and interests of your potential customers. Ensure that each proposed feature addresses a need, pain point, or desire of the target audience. Include project recommendations and next steps based on results from all research and testing to date.

- A detailed rubric for this presentation will be provided by the Capstone faculty.

### Weekly Check-Ins

Progress update. Teams must submit weekly check-ins for the weeks noted in the course schedule so as to provide regular updates of progress, challenges, and requests for feedback and help from the Capstone faculty. A format for the weekly check-ins will be provided.



- A detailed rubric for this presentation will be provided by the Capstone faculty.
- Weekly check-ins will be counted toward the process and effort assessment.

### Final Project Presentation

Presentation and public launch of the project. In your final presentation, also consider the future implications and grand vision of your initiative, informed by the team's work throughout the Capstone course and program overall.

- A detailed rubric for this presentation will be provided by the Capstone faculty.
- Teams may identify mentors or industry experts for faculty to invite to this session.

### Project Process and Effort (Handoff Document and Peer Assessment Survey)

An assessment of the process and progress of each individual's effort throughout the semester as represented by the overall attendance, participation, and deliverables. Required deliverables for this assignment include a project handoff document (team), and the peer assessment survey (individual).

#### **Handoff Document Cover Sheet (team):**

The Project Handoff document is a statement of intent on behalf of the team that will be archived by the program. This deliverable will also help instructors to complete the Project Process and Effort assessment for each individual team member. The deliverable is a collaborative effort from the team and adhere to the following format in a one-page summary:

- Project name, date, and list of team member names
- Abstract: A one-to-four sentence summary description
- Summary of semester work: Describe briefly where the project started, the progress and outcome of the semester's work, and general thoughts on next steps.
- Reserve the project: Yes/No. If yes, please describe the intent and parameters (i.e. members A, B, and C plan on launching a business and seek funding, member D has decided not to continue on with the project/team, etcetera).
- Include a link to the full project archive: Every team will have kept all deliverables on a shared team drive over the course of the semester. A link pointing to the Due Diligence folder of that drive is required, in which all documents and deliverables should reside for overall assessment.

#### **Project Peer Assessment Survey (individual):**

A peer assessment survey will be administered by the Capstone faculty at the end of the semester to help determine the overall effort, process, progress, and contributions of each individual team member for their final project. A link to the survey will be provided.