

CMGT 544  
Creating Organizational Identity  
(aka Communicating Branding)

4.0 Units



**Fall 2020 - Tuesday - 6.30-9.20 PM**

**Section: 21760**

**Location: ANN 101 and Online**

**Instructor: Simon Uwins**

**Office: Online**

**Office Hours: Tuesday 5.00 PM, and by appointment**

**Contact Info: [simon.uwins@mac.com](mailto:simon.uwins@mac.com)**

## **I. Course Description**

Brands are more important than ever. In an environment of hyper-competition, diminishing consumer attention, and uncertainty, strong brands deliver better performance and higher valuations.

Not surprisingly, branding has evolved from little more than designing a logo into its own complex discipline - a discipline founded on the principles and practices of communication. While other fields, such as management, focus more on outcomes such as price and equity, this course examines the complex processes underlying branding, to give better insights into how to create and shape brands.

You will learn about such complexities:

- How branding is a company-wide endeavor rather than just a marketing activity.
- How brands are increasingly defined by customer experience rather than advertising.
- How customers and employees need to be engaged rather than just informed.
- How brands need to evolve yet stay consistent.
- Why, when and how to focus on an important outcome: loyalty.

You will become familiar with a set of vocabulary, concepts and frameworks, and with relying on them to assess brands and develop strategies. And you will gain a perspective on how the discipline of branding is changing in today's connected world.

You will read and discuss much, learning to summarize and synthesize materials, and to tell the stories they reveal. You will become more comfortable with both professional and academic perspectives. And since branding is a collaborative process, you will frequently work in teams, learning to share insights and expertise to create better outcomes.

## **II. Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Assess and analyze the state of a brand, in terms of its origin, its philosophy, and its position in the competitive space.
- Develop strategies to create or shape brands in today's connected world.
- Apply key branding concepts to real branding situations.
- Evaluate materials from popular, professional, and academic sources related to branding, and tell the underlying stories that together they reveal.

## **III. Course Notes**

This course is based on the Flipped classroom model, with a weekly hybrid on-ground/online class\* centered around discussion and group exercise rather than lectures. Students will need to complete the pre-learning each week on Blackboard (Weekly Class) and be prepared to participate in class.

Students are strongly encouraged to attend the weekly live class, as it's the best way to engage with the course. However, there will be no penalty for missing a live class. Students will be able to keep up with the class by completing the pre-learning, reviewing class recordings, and completing the specified assignment for the week on Blackboard.

*\*Please note class will be online only when we start, due to the current conditions.*

#### IV. Required Readings

Sharp, B. (2010) *How Brands Grow: What marketers don't know*. Oxford University Press.  
The revised and expanded eBook version (2014) is recommended, available exclusively on iBooks.  
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/how-brands-grow/id923917285?mt=11>

Solis, B. (2013) *What's the Future of Business: Changing the Way Businesses Create Experiences*.  
Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.  
<http://www.amazon.com/Whats-Future-Business-Businesses-Experiences/dp/111845653X/>

Stengel, J. (2011). *Grow: How ideals power growth and profit at the world's greatest companies*. New York, NY: Crown Business.  
<http://www.amazon.com/Grow-Ideals-Growth-Greatest-Companies/dp/0307720357/>

Moon, Y. (2010). *Different: Escaping the competitive herd*. New York, NY: Crown Business.  
<http://www.amazon.com/Different-Escaping-Competitive-Youngme-Moon/dp/030746086X/>

Sachs, J. (2012). *Winning the story wars: Why those who tell (and live) the best stories will rule the future*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.  
<http://www.amazon.com/Winning-Story-Wars-Stories-Future/dp/1422143562/>

Additional readings and videos will be specified in the relevant week's file on Blackboard.

For your major course project, you should be prepared to spend some funds to acquire materials.

#### V. Class Assignments

##### Brief Branding Presentation

The brief branding presentation is to be done by the student individually.

The presentation's purpose is for you to create a class discussion around a real branding situation. The presentation can be about a brand, or about a branding-related idea, problem or argument.

Up to 3 students will present each week, during the beginning of class. Each oral presentation lasts no more than 5 minutes. The time limit will be strictly imposed.

The instructor will coordinate and assign a specific week for you.

For details, please review the document "CMGT 544 Brief Brand Presentation Specifications," on Blackboard, under the link "Syllabus" in the folder "Brief Brand Presentations."

##### Participation in Class Discussion

Each student is expected to contribute to the learning in this class. In most class sessions, you must speak, ask questions, and argue respectfully. You must also collaborate in teams.

To do so, you must prepare well:

- Complete the pre-learning each week on Blackboard.
- Read, view or listen to other relevant and interesting content.

- Reflect on your key takeaways

Students unable to attend a class will need to review the class recording and complete the specified assignment for the week on Blackboard, to ensure learning.

Judgment of participation is based on the instructors' aggregate impressions gained throughout the semester. If you participate frequently and enthusiastically in class, and complete the weekly Blackboard pre-learning, you will earn the full score. You will not earn the full score by merely attending classes. Simply attending classes and only occasionally participating will result in a mediocre score.

If you are unable to attend a live class, completing the weekly Blackboard pre-learning, reviewing the class recordings, and completing the specified assignment will earn the full score. You will not earn the full score if you simply review the class recordings.

If you are absent, disengaged or disrespectful, you will earn zero.

### Short Writing Assignment

The short writing assignment is to be completed by each student individually.

The assignment will enable you to evaluate a case study of organizational identity, and to learn how to tell a coherent story from a disparate set of academic and popular sources.

The assignment involves:

- reading comprehensively and in detail 5 popular press articles, plus 2 academic journal articles (all articles have been selected);
- writing a 3-page synthesis of these articles;
- submitting the writing (by Monday February 3, 5:30 pm, via email);
- receiving and attending to instructors' comments;
- revising the writing and resubmitting (by Monday March 23, 5:30 pm, via email).

For details, please review the document "CMGT 544 Short Writing Assignment Specifications" on Blackboard, under the link "Syllabus" in the folder "Short Writing Assignment."

### Major Project

The course's major project is a team effort. The team will consist of 3 members, and over the semester, study a specific consumer- or retail-oriented brand.

You will examine the brand's history, assess its position in the current environment, and develop potential strategies for the future. In the study, you will utilize relevant branding concepts to explain its past moments of success and failure. You will also apply branding concepts to evaluate its current state and environment, diagnosing weaknesses and generating possibilities.

Your study will be detailed in two papers:

- Evaluation of Brand History, 10-12 pages.
- Current State of Brand and Future Strategies, 8-10 pages.

The report and creative highlights will be presented to the class at the end of the semester.

For details, please review the document "CMGT 544 Major Project Specifications" under the link "Syllabus" in the folder "Major Project Specifications."

Assignment Submission Policy

You will receive details about each assignment separately. **All assignments need to be completed and handed in on time to avoid a grade reduction. If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must either provide written documentation that will allow you to be excused or discuss your situation with me in a timely manner. Do no wait until the end of the semester to sort things out.**

In order to pass this course, you will need to complete ALL of the assignments. Failure to complete one or more of them will result in an F in the class.

**VI. Grading**

**a. Breakdown of Grade**

Assignment	% of Grade
Brief Branding Presentation	2%
Participation in Class Discussion	8%
Short Writing Assignment	20%
Major Project	70%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**b. Grading Scale**

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned to each. Your percentage scores from the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade per the scale shown below:

- A 95.0% or higher
- A- 90.0%-94.9%
- B+ 87.0%-89.9%
- B 83.0%-86.9%
- B- 80.0%-82.9%
- C+ 77.0%-79.9%
- C 73.0%-76.9%
- C- 70.0%-72.9% (C- or lower is a failing grade)
- D 60.0%-69.9%
- F 59.9% or lower

**c. Grading Standards**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

- A/A- outstanding, thoughtful and enthusiastic work
- B+/B above average work, demonstrating good insight into assignment
- B-/C+ needs improvement on ideas, argument and follow through
- C and below fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material

## VII. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

The schedule below is a summary of the main topics, core readings, and assignment due dates. Detailed content and instructions for each week will be specified in the relevant weekly file on Blackboard.

**Important note to students:** Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, events, and/or guest speaker availability, where relevant. Students should consult the Registration Calendar for dates regarding add/drop deadlines, fees, grading options, etc.

	Key Topics/Activities	Core Readings	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 Date: 8/25	Introduction  What is Branding?	Course Syllabus  White Paper: <i>The New Brand Culture Model</i>	
Week 2 Date: 9/1	What is a Strong Brand?	Book: <i>How Brands Grow</i> , chapter 12	
Week 3 Date: 9/8	From Brand Marketing to Customer Experience	Book: <i>What's the Future of Business</i>	
Week 4 Date: 9/15	Finding Customer Insights	Guest Speaker	Short Writing Assignment (9/14, 5.30pm) Major Project: Team Members (9/14, 5.30pm)
Week 5 Date: 9/22	From Company Mission to Shared Purpose	Book: <i>Grow</i>	Major Project: Brand Description and Source Materials (9/21, 5.30pm)
Week 6 Date: 9/29	Major Project: team meetings		
Week 7 Date: 10/6	Creating Value for Customers	Book: <i>Different</i>	
Week 8 Date: 10/13	Living the Brand	Video: Guest Speaker	Major Project: Evaluation of Brand History (10/12, 5.30pm)
Week 9 Date: 10/20	From Advertising to Engaging	Book: <i>Story Wars</i>	
Week 10 Date: 10/27	Major Project: team meetings		Short Writing Assignment: Revised (10/26, 5.30pm)
Week 11 Date: 11/3	The Rise of Brand Storytelling	Video: assorted	
Week 12 Date: 11/10	Building an Engagement Strategy	Documentary: <i>The Story of Content</i>	Major Project: Current State of Brand and Future Strategies (11/9, 5.30pm)

Week 13 Date: 11/17	From Customer Acquisition to Brand Advocacy		
Week 14 Date: 11/24	Major Project: Presentations  Why Brands Fail?	Video: Guest Speaker	Major Project: Pre-Presentation Summary (11/23, 5.30pm)
Week 15 Date: 12/1	Major Project: Presentations  Consolidation of Learning		Major Project: Pre-Presentation Summary (11/30, 5.30pm)
Week 16 Date: 12/8	No class meeting		Major Project: Revised Papers (12/9, 5.30pm)  Major Project: Peer Evaluation (12/11, 5.30pm)

## VIII. Policies and Procedures

### Attendance

Graduate school is in many ways preparation or refinement for successful professional lives. Professional success depends on a range of skills and behaviors, but one foundational behavior is showing up, on time, prepared, and alert.

So, complete the week's pre-learning on Blackboard. Come to class, on time. When you are here, be here. If you are unable to attend class, complete the week's pre-learning, review the class recording, and complete the specified assignment on Blackboard.

Being absent (i.e., not attending class, or not completing the specified assignment on Blackboard if unable to attend) will accumulate penalties. You are allowed one absence without penalty. Thereafter, each unexcused absence costs 2% of the total grade. Being absent from more than three classes opens the possibility for more stringent penalties (e.g., the highest grade to be earned is a C).

### Class Etiquette

Please enable your webcam, if you can, to say hello, especially at the start of class and when in breakout rooms. Seeing faces helps create familiarity.

Please mute your microphone when you're not speaking.

Be respectful of each other. We're all in this together. While you may at times disagree, exposure to other people's opinions is all part of the learning experience.

Keep in mind that you are taking a college class. Something that would be inappropriate in a traditional classroom is also inappropriate in an online or hybrid classroom.

### **Communication**

Office hours are available Tuesday 5.00-6.30pm on Zoom, please book an appointment via email (simon.uwins@mac.com).

If you cannot attend these hours, please email to set up an alternative meeting time.

All emails will be replied within 48 hours.

### **Synchronous session recording notice**

Live class sessions will be recorded and made available to students through Blackboard (including transcriptions). Please remember that USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. As a student, you are responsible for the appropriate use and handling of these recordings under existing SCampus policies regarding class notes (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>). These rules will be strictly enforced, and violations will be met with the appropriate disciplinary sanction.

### **Going back to Campus**

Although we are starting the semester with online instruction only, conditions may improve. In such case, courses listed as hybrid will give opportunity to students to attend class in person. This will happen only by following the strictest health guidelines and safety protocols. These are listed in the **Trojans Return** page. Please take the time to read this ahead so that you are prepared in case it is possible to return to in-person instruction.

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

#### **Academic Integrity Policy:**

The School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

#### **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" [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](https://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course, without approval of the instructor.

#### 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. See the university's site on **Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness**.

#### **Support Systems:**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)



Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call* [studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*  
[equity.usc.edu](https://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](https://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*  
[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*  
[dsp.usc.edu](https://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710*  
[campussupport.usc.edu](https://campussupport.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*  
[diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](https://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

