

**ACAD 499: The Community Playbook for
Brands & Businesses**

Units: 2.0

Spring 2021

Tuesdays @ 3:00-4:50PM Pacific Time

Location: Virtual Zoom

Instructor: Tina Sharkey

Office: Virtual

Office Hours: By appointment

Contact Info: tsharkey@usc.edu

Allow up to 24 hours for replies to emails and messages.

Classroom Assistant: Azin Behbahani

Office Hours: By appointment

Contact Info: abehbaha@usc.edu

IT Help: <https://iovine-young.usc.edu/ait/index.html>

Hours of Service: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Contact Info: iyhelp@usc.edu, 213-821-6917

Catalogue Description

7 factors to architect a community that promotes a loyal following and scaling a business:

The Community Playbook for Brands and Businesses

Course Description

In this course taught by Tina Sharkey, students will learn the playbook for how to architect authentic communities and why it is fundamental to building a loyal following and scaling a business. They will hear from leaders and innovators from companies like Nextdoor, Slack, Twitter, Jib Jab, Hi Ho, Sundance, BlogHer, Cowen, Peloton, Mighty Networks, Roblox, Greenhouse, eBay, and many more. Students will learn why Community is the new omnichannel and the impact it has on building cost-effective, loyal and differentiated brands and businesses. They will learn how to identify, nurture and scale purposeful, loyal relationships with customers, glean insights and practical skills on how to co-create your product, content, and brand narrative, and spotlight and engage your customers and employees. This class will prepare students for roles in startups and scaled enterprises alike. They will be able to apply the insights and lessons for roles in brand marketing, growth and product management, social and community management, entrepreneurship, and much more.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

Identify what specific, measurable skills a student will obtain and be able to demonstrate by the end of the course. Learning objectives should be both taught and assessed in your course. They are aligned with your assignments, assessments and learning materials.

By the completion of this course, all students will be able to:

- Understand and be able to apply the Community Playbook
- Practice building effective teams and collaboration skills through playing to each other's strengths
- Understand how to translate community and social integration into business acquisition retention
- Explore and brainstorm innovative ways to create communities both IRL and in a remote setting
- Present project concepts verbally, textually, and visually to diverse audiences
- Understand how to unlock a brand's narrative and architect a word of mouth narrative
- Integrate purpose, meaning, and origin stories into the soul of a brand
- Identity, engage, and unlock your community's co-creation potential

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All materials, articles, and videos, including those needed to be purchased, will be posted in advance of the start and accessible to students enrolled on Blackboard.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Midterm - Project 1: 30%

The midterm project will consist of completing a SWOT and Community Playbook analysis of a chosen business within a group of fellow students. The team will create a presentation where they present recommendations on how this company can continue to create community and advance the business.

Final - Project 2: 45%

In the final project, teams will apply the “The Playbook” to a new company of their conceiving. Using the skills developed all semester, they will build out their brand narrative and community playbook of their own and present on how they will effectively manifest the experience.

Quizzes: 15%

There will be a few pop quizzes based upon prior material presented in class and pre-class assignments (videos and readings). These are opportunities to demonstrate mastery of course concepts.

Participation: 10%

Students are expected to ask questions, comment, respond and engage during class discussions and lectures.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Quizzes	30	15%
Participation	20	10%
Midterm project	60	30%
Final project	90	45%
TOTAL	200	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Academy 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 non-critical 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 $\frac{1}{3}$ of a grade (e.g., an A will be lowered to A-, and A- will be lowered to a B+, etc.). In addition, being tardy to class will count as one-third of an absence. Three tardies will equal a full course absence.

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.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities
Week 1	Introduction/Core Concepts Kickoff
Week 2	Community is Serious Business
Week 3	Authenticity, Shared Values and Intentions: To Defend or Defriend?
Week 4	Neuroscience and Receptional Design
Week 5	Nurture Your Tribe and Ambassadors
Week 6	Midterm Presentation
Week 7	Enable Network Effects
Week 8	Collaboration and Co-Creation
Week 9	Spotlights, IRL/IVRL
Week 10	No Class: University Wellness Day
Week 11	Final Initial Pitch and Feedback
Week 12	Loyalty Love Loop
Week 13	Speaker TBD + Open Office Hours
Week 14	Speaker TBD + Open Office Hours
Week 15	Final Presentation
FINAL	Final Paper Due

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” 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.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.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

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)

<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/>

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

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services provides immediate therapy services for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (e.g., sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking). (wording from the site)

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

USC Policy Reporting to Title IX (213) 740-5086

<https://policy.usc.edu/reporting-to-title-ix-student-misconduct/>

The university encourages individuals to report prohibited conduct to the *Title IX Office*. Individuals can report to the university *Title IX Coordinator* in the *Office of Equity and Diversity*.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421

studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

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 Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

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

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, 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

Non-emergency assistance or information.