



**PR 432 Concepting: Advertising Strategy  
and Creative Development  
4 Units**

**Fall 2022 – Thursdays – 6-9:20 p.m.**

**Section:** 21248R

**Location:** ANN 406

**Instructor:** Zack Jerome

**Office:** ANN lobby or online

**Office Hours:** Thursdays before class and after class and by appointment

**Content Info:** zbj Jerome@usc.edu

**I. Course Description**

This class is for the student who is interested in learning the interplay of strategy and creative in the development and execution of idea-led advertising and campaigns. The objective of the course is to provide an overview of the creative process as it applies to big ideas that move a business. This is a class centered on critical thinking—distilling a business problem and solving it strategically and creatively through communication.

Students will create and present a creative brief showcasing a provocative brand idea. In addition, they will learn how to interact with all the members of an advertising team. The nuances of creatively planning for a variety of mediums, including print, digital, OOH, social and film will be examined.

**II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment**

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Evaluate and analyze factors impacting advertising strategies
- Differentiate the impact between different strategic directions and creatives outcomes
- Produce an advertising strategy and creative brief

**III. Description and Assessment of Assignments**

Assignments are designed to give students the opportunity to practice, refine and demonstrate their strategic and creative skills learned in class. The development of a creative brief with an understanding of its role in the creative process will be explored in depth. Students will be required to develop creative briefs and later, a brand idea presentation akin to a new business pitch for an established brand.

Students will work both independently and in teams.

**IV. Grading**

**a. Breakdown of Grade**

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Class Participation	10	10%
Ten Weekly assignments	30	30%

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Midterm	30	30%
Final Project	30	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**b. Grading Scale**

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

**c. Grading Standards**

Students learn attributes and elements of industry-grade – in professional terms – advertising concepts. We’ll discuss the tools used at every stage of advertising concepting starting with interrogating a client marketing brief, developing a creative brief based on qualitative and quantitative insights and creating advertising creative concepts based on a strong, persuasive strategy. While precise guidelines for what constitutes great advertising strategy is largely subjective, the grade for each assignment is given in large part for how well students apply taught elements into each phase of the strategic process. There will be initial presentations for feedback only on their creative brief (midterm) and brand idea presentation (final). The assignments are graded on the second presentation after the student has had the chance to revise the work. The grade for each assignment is also affected by the way students refine their assignments through feedback.

***Public Relations/Advertising***

**“A” projects** have content near professional quality; one or no mistakes; clearly proofread and edited material. All required elements of each assignment are included. Excellent organization and flow with original thinking. Showed strategic creativity and understanding of the target audience. Brand storytelling, messaging and execution show insights and production skill. High end of scale: publishable today as is.

**“B” projects** have very good content. One or more required elements missing or poorly executed. Shows potential as a good content for the brand/organization. High end of scale will have at least one extraordinary element for the assignment. Some creativity shown and production shows at least a capable level. If writing is involved, have two to five spelling, grammar mistakes. Publishable with medium editing.

**“C” projects**, if writing included, have more than five errors (spelling, grammar, AP style). Poorly edited and/or proofread. Hackneyed elements such as trite headline or uninteresting messaging. Little or no brand storytelling. Passive rather than active verbs become the norm. Little or no creativity shown. Publishable with major editing.

**“D” projects** have more than 10 errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely redone. Lacks

creativity and needs major redesign. Poorly organized/designed with little or no understanding of strategy or target audience. Needs to work with writing coach and/or Digital Lounge.

**“F” projects** are not rewritable, late or not turned in. Must be completely started over.

#### **d. Grading Timeline**

Assignments turned in one week late have grade reduced by one letter. Assignments are not accepted two weeks late.

#### **V. Assignment Submission Policy**

Assignments will be presented in class and turned in via email to instructor prior to class on Thursdays.

#### **VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

##### **Textbook:**

A Technique for Producing Ideas by James Webb Young

Publisher: Important Books

ISBN: 9781477428696

The Art of War by Sun Tzu

Publisher: Canterbury Classics

ISBN: 978-62686-060-5

#### **VII. Laptop Policy**

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s [Information Technology Services](#) website.

#### **VIII. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/22/22 – 12/2/22)**

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20223/calendar/>

**Friday, September 9:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, September 9:** Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

**Friday, September 9:** Last day to change enrollment option to audit for Session 001

**Friday, September 9:** Last day to change a Pass/No Pass to a letter grade for Session 001

**Friday, September 9:** Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall

**Tuesday, September 13:** Last day to add or drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund or change to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001

**Friday, October 7:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript for Session 001. Mark of “W” will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, November 11:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

#### **IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

***Important note to students:*** *Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

#### **WEEK ONE: August 25**

Cover the course overview, expectations, grading, reading list. I'll give an overview about myself and career.

We will introduce you to the world of conceptually driven thinking and the "big idea." We'll cover the role of insights in strategic conceiving and an introduction to the five main ingredients of brand planning:

- The Problem, The Insight, The Solution, The Sell, The Measurement

**Assignment:** Find an advertising campaign that builds from a "big idea." Write one page describing what makes this campaign a big idea—something that goes beyond simply advertising a product. Students will be graded on the successful selection of a campaign and defense of what attributes convey a big idea.

Due 9/1.

### **WEEK TWO: September 1**

Review assignments as a group and discuss which campaigns were effective uses of a big idea.

A deep dive into brand vs product and the role of each in long term strategic positioning. We'll have an introduction to brand voice, learn ways to uncover and organize brand/product assets and discuss the building blocks of a successful brand.

**Assignment:** Find an advertising campaign centered on a company's brand instead of their product. Write one page discussing the ways the campaign attempts to win consumers hearts and minds with their values or culture. Students will be graded based on the convincing analysis of a brand-led campaign.

Due 9/8.

### **WEEK THREE: September 8**

Review brand campaign assignments and discuss the effectiveness of each.

Understanding the consumer and target audiences. Discuss human insights, the many places they're found and how they can lead to great strategy. Discuss the difference between qualitative and quantitative research. The value of our own experience vs the value of "talking to people."

Workshop around qualitative research to learn basic principles of consumer interrogation. Students will pair up to practice interviewing people.

**Assignment:** Write six qualitative research questions aimed at learning how consumers feel about a product or category (students will select from a provided list of products). Students will be graded on successfully creating questions that clearly lead to consumer insights.

Due 9/15.

### **WEEK FOUR: September 15**

Review qualitative research questions and workshop how they could be improved (or built upon).

Deep dive into cultural and competitive context. The role of each as inspiration and source of insight. Discuss the growth in social and how that impacts the need for brands to be culturally sensitive. How brands can use cultural events to further their market position.

Storytelling and the role of a good enemy.

Team workshop – find current cultural phenomenon and discuss the impact on people’s attention and attitudes.

**Assignment:** Find an advertising campaign that chooses a cultural or categorical enemy to create and draft one page on how effectively this “enemy” is leveraged. Students will be graded on the successful identification of a relevant campaign and unpacking the decision-making behind it.

Due 9/22.

### **WEEK FIVE: September 22**

Review of assignments.

Introduction to the creative brief. Discuss the inputs and factors that make a brief strategically and creatively viable. We’ll explore the “bad ad test” of pressure-testing a creative brief.

Workshop—Break into groups to interrogate a client marketing brief against the inputs needed to write a great creative brief (clear business problem, clear audience, clear goals, clear measurement).

Guest lecturer: **Samantha Garry Rosenberg, SVP Marketing, Disney**

**Assignment:** Choose one of the provided marketing briefs and use the principles learned in class to write a first draft of an original creative brief. The final version of this creative brief will be the midterm. Students will be graded on completing a first draft that meets the requirements of a basic creative brief.

Due 9/2.

### **WEEK SIX: September 29**

Review and prepare for midterm. Students present work and instructor provides feedback.

What do creatives need from a creative brief? Collaborating with creatives in the concepting process. How much involvement is the right amount? How can strategy make creativity stronger?

Guest lecturer: **Britton Taylor, AdWeek strategist of the year, former Wieden + Kennedy planner behind Old Spice and KFC’s iconic work**

**Assignment:** Students revise creative briefs based on the feedback and individual work sessions in class. The midterm will be the result successfully incorporating feedback from class and the output of a thorough and provocative creative brief.

Due 10/6.

### **WEEK SEVEN: October 6**

Midterm due via email before 6:30pm (start of class).

Exploration of the brand idea. Introduction to how brand ideas (often in new business pitches) can revitalize brands. Exploring the art of combining the rational and the emotional. Mapping out the functional product attributes and a company's values.

We'll also explore places to inform the brand idea including the company archives, culture at large and consumer behavior.

**Assignment:** Choose a brand from the list provided. In preparation for the final presentation, students will draft one-page about their chosen brand including a short audit on its category, assessment of its product strengths/weaknesses and any emotional benefits/barriers presented.

Students will be graded on successfully auditing and detailing the pertinent inputs for their brand in preparation for beginning their final exam assignment.

### **WEEK EIGHT: October 13**

Fall Recess: No Class

### **WEEK NINE: October 20**

Review assignments and break out into individual workshops to receive guidance and direction for starting their final assignment—the presentation of a new brand idea for their chosen brand.

**Guest lecturer: Darcie Burrell, Group Creative Director, Wieden+Kennedy.**

Class discusses different agencies, different cultures. How does agency culture drive great strategy and ultimately great creative ideas?

**Assignment:** Find a brand that's lost cultural relevance over time and write one page describing what it used to do well and where it may have lost its way. Then, students will make suggestions for what the brand could begin doing to find itself again.

Students will be graded on thoughtfully selecting a fading brand and hypothesizing the factors that contributed to its decline and those that could make future positive brand impacts.

Due 10/27.

### **WEEK TEN: October 27**

Review brand relevance assignments as a class. Workshop around what individual findings and suggestions for improvement.

**Guest lecturer: Kamauri Yeh, Vice President, Global Women's Creative Director at Nike**

Study the interpretation and interrogation of data (as presented by clients). Seeing problems as opportunities. Learning to identify problems that can and cannot be solved through communication.

**Assignment:** Read BBH's [Charts That Don't Change](#). Find or imagine a scenario where a graph or data set could be interpreted a different way. Write one page outlining how "dull data" could be made interesting or interpreted creatively for their scenario. Students will be graded on comprehension of the article and a clear attempt to find alternate meanings for dull data.

Due 11/3.

**WEEK ELEVEN: November 3**

Review assignments.

Exploration of the creative process

- How strategy translates to campaigns.
- How a strategist can continue to help the creative process after the brief is presented.
- How to help sell work with insights and facts.

Learn what it means when “your brief is showing” and why it often is a bad thing for creativity.

**Assignment:** Pick an advertising campaign in the world and write one page on trying to reverse engineer the creative brief and the marketing brief to speculate why the campaign was needed and what insight might have driven the brief. Students will be graded on critical thinking leading to plausible hypotheses on how and why a campaign was made.

Due 11/10.

**WEEK TWELVE: November 10**

Review assignments and group demonstration on reverse engineering a finished campaign.

**Guest lecturer: David Terry, former Head of Strategy, Wieden + Kennedy**

Explore how “chaos” and critical thinking are a powerful combination. Discuss the act of leaving space for creativity by not overreaching with strategy.

**Assignment:** Pick a quote or passage from *Sun Tzu’s Art of War* and write one page on how it applies to selling an idea to either a creative team or a client. Students will be graded on their ability to apply some of Sun Tzu’s foundational strategic thinking and applying it to the art of selling ideas.

Due 11/17.

**WEEK THIRTEEN: November 17**

Review Sun Tzu assignments and group discussion around some of the most useful Sun Tzu strategies as they apply to advertising.

Workshop outlines for final brand idea presentation with instructor.

**Assignment:** Students will use their outlines from class to create a rough draft of their final brand idea presentation over two week to being preparing for the final document.

Due 12/1.

**WEEK FOURTEEN: November 24**

Thanksgiving Recess: No Class

### **WEEK FIFTEEN: December 1**

The teams meet individually with instructor to review their presentations prior to the actual final the following week. This will include workshopping, strategic feedback and suggestions to sharpen their strategies. Additionally, we will work on the balance between words on the page and what points can be saved for voice over.

### **FINAL EXAM: December 8, 7-9 p.m.**

Students make final presentations

## **X. Policies and Procedures**

### **Additional Policies**

We communicate with student through their USC email address. Students must check that email on a regular basis.

### **Communication**

I am available by cell. Students can also email me. I am available to connect with students and help with homework on weekends, by appointment. I respond to all messages within a couple of hours.

### **Internships**

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism or public relations class.

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

### **a. 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://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 (<http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>).

#### *USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity*

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

“Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an ‘F’ on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators.”

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 or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

### **b. Support Systems**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://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](http://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 and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://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*  
<https://eeotix.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. 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. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*  
[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776*  
[osas.usc.edu](http://osas.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/note takers/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*

[uscsa.usc.edu](http://uscsa.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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenbergscholarships.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergscholarships-and-awards>

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.

*Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund*

<https://annenbergscholarships.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergscholarships-and-awards>

Awards are distributed to students experiencing unforeseen circumstances and emergencies impacting their ability to pay tuition or cover everyday living expenses. These awards are not intended to cover full-tuition expenses, but rather serve as bridge funding to guarantee students' continued enrollment at USC until other resources, such as scholarships or loans, become available. Students are encouraged to provide as much information in their application, as well as contact their academic advisor directly with questions about additional resources available to them.

## **XI. About Your Instructor**

### **Zack Jerome**

I'm a career advertising strategist that's worked for some the best agencies in the world including TBWA/Chiat/Day, Saatchi & Saatchi and most recently eight years at Wieden + Kennedy on clients including Coca-Cola, P&G, Verizon, Dodge/Chrysler, Toyota, Pepsi and Activision.

The level of success these agencies and clients demand—the kind that translates to Cannes Lions, One Show Pencils and IPA Effies—directly depends on how strategy and creative come together to move a

business in the most creative ways possible. I'm passionate about teaching this coming together of ideas and minds.

Currently, I lead brand strategy at Apple for Services, including App Store, Arcade, Apple Card, Pay, Wallet, Maps, iCloud, TV, Books and News.