



IDSN 550 Opportunity and Uncertainty

Units: 4.0

Summer 2023 | Tuesdays 5:15 - 7:20pm PT

Location: Online

Instructor: Sue Tan

Office: Virtual

Office Hours: By appointment

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IT Help: Digital Campus Online Technical Support

Contact Info: 1-833-740-1273, TechSupport@digitalcampus.2U.com

Course Description

Design, business, and technology utilize different processes and methodologies of creativity and innovation through which opportunities might be realized to address problems, whether micro or macro, tacit or explicit. This course is constructed to help students understand and utilize the theories, methods, and tools that support opportunity recognition and evaluation; plus problem identification and framing. More specifically, the course is designed to enhance students' ability to (1) identify opportunities worth pursuing or problems worthy of analysis; (2) analyze and frame those opportunities or problems, as based on specifiable motivations or root causes; and (3) develop multiple prospective solutions or an initial solution amenable to longer term adaptation/iteration. Deployed techniques will be drawn from entrepreneurship, innovation strategy, design-based and arts-based creative practices, critical thinking methods, ethnography, and systems theory.

Learning Objectives

Students in this course will develop skills in articulating perceived opportunities and in acquiring the information central to opportunity evaluation and advancement. Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the portfolio of research and strategy methods available to those seeking to initiate and evaluate the potential of new ideas.
- Identify and articulate problems factoring in individual, social, organizational, technical, design, market, and cultural perspectives.
- Create and implement a comprehensive research plan to ensure the acquisition of relevant data and insights.
- Build, experiment with, and iterate upon a prototype as based on aggregated data.

Prerequisite(s): IDSN 510 Integrative Practices Residential; IDSN 540 Processes and Perspectives

Course Notes

This course will be conducted online, using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods. Students are responsible for all additional assigned material, including video lectures, interviews, and reading materials offered by the instructors 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">• 2.6 GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 or 2.0 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7• Minimum 13" display• 250 GB SSD or larger• 16 GB memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intel Core i5 or Intel Core i7• Minimum 14" display• 250 GB SSD or larger• 16 GB memory
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">• Mac OS X 10.13 or higher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Windows 7, 10 operating system 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, Illustrator, and InDesign)• Adobe Acrobat Reader• Microsoft Office Suite• Sophos Endpoint Security (antivirus)• Browser: Most recent version of Firefox, Chrome, Safari, or Internet Explorer	
Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cable modem, DSL, T1/T3 or higher	

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).

Optional Readings and Supplementary Materials

The following books are not required reading, but were used as fundamental source content for this course. They are recommended for more in-depth knowledge and context on specific unit concepts:

Blue Ocean Strategy (W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne)

Business Model Generation (Alexander Osterwalder, Yves Pigneur)

Business Strategy: Managing Uncertainty, Opportunity, and Enterprise (J.-C. Spender)

Crossing the Chasm (Geoffrey Moore)

Disruptive Innovation (Clayton Christiansen)

Innovation as Usual: How to Help Your People Bring Great Ideas to Life (Paddy MillerThomas, Wedell-Wedellsborg)

On Competition (Michael Porter)

Sprint: How to Solve Big Problems and Test New Ideas in Just Five Days (Jake Knapp)

The Art of Innovation (Tom Kelley)

The Four Steps to the Epiphany (Steve Blank)

The Lean Startup (Eric Ries)

The Tao of Innovation (Teng-Kee Tan, Hsien-Yeang Seow, Sue Tan Toyofuku)

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Unit Quizzes

Embedded within 10 of the 15 units, students will complete a quiz (varied formats, including multiple choice, matching, and short answer), in which they will demonstrate their understanding of that week's materials. These quiz scores will make up 30 percent of their grade.

Reflection Writing Assignments

Throughout the course, there will be reflection writing assignments relating to the asynchronous material where you will respond in written format. The responses will be submitted in the LMS for peer review and consideration as well. They will be evaluated as part of the participation assessment for each unit of the course where a reflection is assigned.

Unit 3. Profile of an Entrepreneur or Innovator Who Has Changed the World

In order to collectively build a diverse collection of stories of global innovators and entrepreneurs, please add a profile of an individual that you believe has changed the world through their entrepreneurial actions and mindset. Please avoid the famous and widely known (i.e. Elon Musk, Steve Jobs, Richard Branson, Mark Zuckerberg). Seek to shed light on visionaries from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Please include photos of the person and any other visuals that help tell their story. All submissions will be shared amongst your class. In the LMS, upload a PDF version of your presentation that includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Name and image of entrepreneur or innovator
- Industry they impacted
- Organization or ventures they are/were a part of
- A brief description of their background story
- What makes them entrepreneurial and the remarkable way they navigated uncertainty?
- Bonus points for additional illustrative images

Unit 9. Lunchbox Redesign: Rapid Prototype Presentation

Rethink the form, function and usability of a lunchbox. Start by articulating what the key user pain-points and unmet needs are with current options in the market. Then do a quick brainstorm of new innovative ideas and solutions. Choose your best ideas and combine them into a concept that you will then create a physical rapid prototype to represent. This rapid prototype can be created from simple craft materials like paper, recycled goods, etc. Be ready to present your prototype to the class, including the key user pain points that your concept is trying to solve for. In the LMS, upload a PDF of your slide presentation that includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Catchy concept name
- Image of prototype and any key features
- Summary of the concept/idea
- Pain-points and needs you were trying to solve for
- Explanation of key features and user experience (where and how might this be best used?)

- Three sketches of unique brainstormed ideas before you settled on the final concept you prototyped

Unit 11. SWOT Analysis

Conduct a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) of your current company, business, or institution. If you do not have one, choose a current business you would like to analyze.

Unit 15: Design Strategy Team Project Presentations

A comprehensive overview of the project will take place synchronously in the first few weeks of class, at which time teams will be assigned and a rubric will be provided. In the last session of the semester, teams will present the culmination of collaborative work completed during the course. In your final presentation, consider the future implications and grand vision of your initiative, informed by asynchronous and synchronous material covered in the course.

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 (**with camera on**) in synchronous sessions
- Significant collaboration with classmates and teammates

Course grades may be affected for students who do not contribute to the course through active participation. Students should notify the instructor in advance if they are unable to attend class. Those unable to attend will be required to review the online recording for the session missed, and submit thoughtful feedback to the Instructor.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation	150	15%
Quizzes	300	30%
Assignments	200	20%
Strategic Design Project (Team)	350	35%
Total	1000	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
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

Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments 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 week of the Capstone. Late assignments will be subject to the late submission policy indicated below. **All assignments 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 after the deadline	100% deduction

Keep copies of all your files and emails until the end of the semester.

Grading Timeline

Instructors will provide feedback and grading on all deliverables in a timely manner, usually within 48-72 hours following an on-time submission.

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 re-evaluation, 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 re-evaluation 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.)

Attendance

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.

Classroom Norms & Expectations

In order to maintain a productive, positive, and healthy learning environment, here are some expectations of classroom behavior:

- Listen attentively, without interruption
- Respect each other's diverse views, life experiences, and beliefs, and challenge respectfully
- Do not use inflammatory or offensive language, demean, devalue, generalize or put-down others
- Be aware of your tone, body language, facial expressions and their impact on the class dynamic
- Ask for clarification if you are confused, don't be afraid to ask for help
- Allow everyone a chance to talk, be aware of dominating or monopolizing discussions
- Take responsibility for the quality of the discussion, don't remain silent and empower yourself to speak up and share your questions and thoughts
- Discriminatory, abusive, or aggressive behavior and language will not be tolerated

Zoom Etiquette

Please be considerate of your fellow classmates by muting if you have background noise and also keeping your camera on to ensure and signal active listening and participation. If you are unable to keep your camera on during the synchronous Zoom session, please contact your instructor in advance to explain why, otherwise participation points will be impacted negatively.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage. Plagiarism includes the submission of code written by, or otherwise obtained from someone else or computer programs and tools such as ChatGPT.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure about what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

In this class, you are expected to submit work that demonstrates your individual mastery of the course concepts. Unless specifically designated as a ‘group project,’ all assignments are expected to be completed individually.

If found responsible for an academic violation, students may be assigned university outcomes, such as suspension or expulsion from the university, and grade penalties, such as an “F” grade on the assignment, exam, and/or in the course.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Course Evaluations

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students’ experience in the class. The process and intent of the end-of-semester evaluation will be provided in advance of completing evaluations.

Contact Hours

This 4-unit course requires 1,500 minutes of instructional time per semester. This equals 125 minutes (2.05 hours) of instructional time each week. Instructional time may be further broken down into 62.5 minutes (1.02 hours) of asynchronous time and 62.5 minutes (1.02 hours) of synchronous time. In addition, it is expected that students will work, on average, an additional 250 minutes (4.10 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.

Course Schedule

Week	Unit	Topic	Assignments
Module 1: Strategy and Innovation			
1	1	Intro to Strategic Work, Language, and Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Strategy Basics • Understanding Strategy at a High Level • What is Strategy Video 	Quiz: Intro to Strategy Reflection: What is Strategy?
2	2 & 3	Defining Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakthrough Innovation • Basic Research • Disruptive Innovation • Sustaining Innovation • Review of Innovation Concepts Understanding Entrepreneurship and Intrapreneurship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Entrepreneurship • Understanding Intrapreneurship • Inspirational Videos 	Quiz: Innovation Matching Profile of Entrepreneur: Presentation of an Innovator who Changed the World
3	4	Recognizing and Shaping Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing and Shaping Opportunities • Profit Patterns • Fundamental Business Assumption • Kickoff of Strategy Design Project (Team) 	Quiz: Video Knowledge Reflection 1: Profit Patterns Reflection 2: Fundamental Business Assumption
4	5	Finding and Framing Problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Finding and Framing Problems • Frame Creation Methodology Case Study • Introduction: Reframing Problems by Thomas Wedell • Reframing and Asking • Power Dynamics 	Quiz: Frame Creation and Design Matching Reflection: What Needs to be Reframed?
Module 2: Human-Centered Design			

5	6	Customer Ethnography and Capturing Inputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching in the Wild • Research Methods and Tools • Observations • Ethnographic Design Research 	Quiz: Ethnographic Terminology
6	7	Customer Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Customer Development Methodology • Step 1: Customer Discovery • Step 2: Customer Validation • Step 3: Customer Creation • Step 4: Company Building • Review of Customer Development 	Quiz: Customer Development Reflection: Getting Out of the Building?
7	8 & 9	Design Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Design Thinking • The Ten Tools • Design Thinking Classic Case Study • Strategy Design Project (Progress Report) Design Thinking (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Sprint • Creative Confidence • Equity in Design 	Rapid Prototyping Assignment and Presentation: Reimagine the Lunchbox
8	10	Scenario Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Scenario Planning • The Approach and the Application • Tips and Limitations • Use of Scenarios 	Reflection 1: 2040 and You Reflection 2: What Comes After the Digital Age?
Module 3: Strategic Tools and Analysis			
9	11	Traditional Tools for Strategic Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Strategic Tools • Porter's 5-Force Analysis • Advanced Strategic Tools 	Quiz: Strategic Consulting Tools Assignment: SWOT Analysis
10	12	Rapid Development Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Rapid Development Processes • Lean Startup • Agile 	Quiz: Rapid Dev Processes
11	13	Business Model Generation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Business Model Canvas • Business Model Environment Analysis • Additional Business Models • From Idea to Business (animated series) 	Quiz: Business Models
12	14 & 15	Stress Testing and Scaling Your Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Stress Testing Your Ideas • Stress Testing Your Strategy 	Quiz: Stress Testing and Scaling

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaling Your Innovation • Culture Shifts <p>Competing with Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nature of Competition • Techniques for Building Competitiveness • Achieving Customer Focus • Competing with Purpose 	<p>Reflection (14): Fundamental Business Assumption</p> <p>Reflection (15): Jobs To Be Done</p> <p>Presentation: Strategic Design Project (Team)</p>
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Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university’s mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity’s website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

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

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

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

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

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

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

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

