



CMGT 554: Copywriting and Creativity
4 Units

Fall 2023 – Monday – 6:30pm - 9:20pm
Location: ANN 101

Instructor: Eric Markgraf
Contact Info: Markgraf@usc.edu

Course Description

The world is full of dreams and ideas, but far too often they die on a piece of paper, or scribbled on a napkin between sips of morning coffee or locked deep in one’s mind waiting to be realized. In short, unless you can take those ideas and simply communicate them to the masses or your target, no one will actually care or have time to listen.

The art of creativity not only lies in the idea itself, but most importantly how that idea becomes a movement. This class will try and prepare you for the blunt real world of marketing and advertising. A world where unless you have a simple end game and truly understand the goal of your client, company or product, there can never be a beginning. Good ideas will be wasted because the lost art of proper creative briefs, and understanding strategy, and goals and ROI, has fallen away to “quick and burn” idea generation factories where buckshot is continually blasted to see what might or might not stick, leaving brands soulless and never standing for anything. I’ve had the fortunate opportunity to help build brands like NIKE, FOX Sports, Land Rover, and Sky Television over many years, and no marketing idea executed for those brands was ever done without a clear understanding of the end game and how it would help the company in the long run.

You will learn how to bring your ideas to life and shape them into world class ads by learning to write concise convincing copy, that not only sells the product, but creates an emotional connection to the brand. The better you understand the how and why, the better you will be at adding value to your future career in advertising and marketing.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrated leadership and teamwork in small groups
- Execute creative briefs
- Construct advertising concepts and ideas that break through the noise
- Develop advertising copy that cuts to the point and simplifies an overall idea
- Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the importance of diversity of thought and backgrounds in the creative process
- Translate strategy into creative messages that convince, advocate, and sell
- Evaluate creative and assess what is good and what does not work
- Demonstrate effective presentation skills that convey creative ideas

Policies and Procedures

a. Additional Policies

While it is expected that students will make every effort to attend every classes, it is recognized that personal circumstances will arise which preclude class attendance. In such circumstances, the student is responsible for obtaining the materials presented in missed classes and for making up coursework.

I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) To help accomplish this, if you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official

records, please let me know. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. If anything is said in class to make you feel uncomfortable, please reach out to me, even anonymously.

b. Communication

Please contact the instructor outside of class and if you cannot come to office hours to arrange a meeting time by email. You can send a second email if I have not replied within 24 hours. Please allow more time on weekends.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

How To Write An Inspired Creative Brief by Howard Ibach

How To Write Better Copy by Steve Harrison

The Advertising Concept Book by Pete Barry

Breakthrough The Noise by Tim Staples

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Final Project Campaign: 50% of grade

Your final project will be you and your teammate's creation of an advertising campaign for a specific product or service. What ever product or service you choose will then be used as part of a cause marketing campaign. You will choose a product or service that can be easily used in a campaign that creates awareness for a certain cause and at the same time creates a positive halo for your product or service. You can choose any cause or NGO, i.e Vaccine Awareness, Sex Trafficking, Malaria Prevention, LBGTQ Causes, Climate Change, AIDS Awareness, Energy Efficiency, Water Conservation, Ocean Conservation, etc, etc. You will be required to create a marketing strategy document, a creative strategy, 3 print ads, two television commercials, 2 radio commercials, 1 out of home idea and your choice of an on-line form of communication/or event marketing idea.

Oral presentation of final project: 10 % of grade

The oral presentation will need to reflect the creative theories you have studied in class, the great creative thinkers you have read and the discussions we have had. Your oral presentation will pitch the idea of your cause marketing campaign to the "CEO" of your product or service. You need to explain why the partnership works and why this cause marketing campaign and partnership is better than just a straight product campaign. You should show examples of the work in order to sell the idea in. How you set up your final oral presentation itself with a concept and an innovative, and delivery of your advertising campaign will determine this portion of your grade.

Active Participation in Class: 10% of grade

Assignment 1: Individual Written Paper: 5% of grade

You will be asked to pick a print ad and then write the creative brief you think was used to create the ad.

Assignment 2: Individual Oral Presentation: 5% of grade

You will be asked to pick your favorite television commercial and present it to the class and tell us why it is your favorite, what the message is, and why it is emotionally connected with you.

Assignment 3: Individual Written Paper: 10% of grade

You will be asked to write a creative brief based on today's market conditions and create a print ad based on that brief for ONE of these companies or products. Wonder Bread, Motorola Cell Phones, Carnival Cruises, WeWork, Equinox Gyms

Assignment 4: A :30 recorded radio spot created with your class partner: 10% of grade

You will be asked to write and record a teaser spot to announce your NGO/NPO

Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Final Project	50
Final Oral Presentation	10
Participation	10
Individual Assignments	30
TOTAL	100%

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

Grading Standards

Letter Grade	Description
A	Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.
B	Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.
C	Satisfactory/Fair; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.
D	Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.

F	Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.
----------	---

Grading Timeline

For effective learning, students should receive timely feedback on assignments and exams. Therefore, every attempt will be made to grade assignments/exams and post grades within two weeks. Scores for all assignments and exams are regularly updated on Blackboard. You are responsible for notifying the Instructor **within one (1) week** of a score posting if you think a score is missing or inaccurate. Moreover, you only have this period of time to contest a score on an assignment/exam. If you fail to inquire/notify us of any discrepancy, missing score, or contest a score within one week of the date the score is posted, no further changes will be made.

Assignment Submission Policy

- A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.
- B. Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001

(15 weeks: 8/21/2023 – 12/1/2023; Final Exam Period: 12/6-13/2023)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20231/calendar/>

Last day to add: Friday, September 8th, 2023

Last day to drop without a mark of "W" and receive a refund: Friday, September 8th, 2023

Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Friday, September 8th, 2023 [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Last day to add/drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or change to Audit: Tuesday, September 12th, 2023

Last day to withdraw without a "W" on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade: Friday, October 6th, 2023 [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 for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

Last day to drop with a mark of "W": Friday, November 10th, 2023

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.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings/Homework	Homework Due at Class
Week 1 Date: 8/21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions 2. Explanation of the class 3. Review of curriculum 4. Review of current award winning ads and the meaning behind them 5. Lecture on the writing of a creative brief 		
Week 2 Date: 8/28	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion of Homework 2. Introduce your creative partner 3. Discussion of the modern day advertising agency and how the creative process works 	<p>Read How to Write An Inspired Creative Brief by Howard Ibach</p> <p>Read chapters 1, 2, and 6 in The Advertising Concept Book</p>	<p>Pick a print ad and write the creative brief you think the ad came from</p> <p>Pick a creative partner for the semester's project</p>
Week 3 Dates: 9/4			(Labor Day: Monday, September 4)
Week 4 Date: 9/11	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of what you learned the week before 2. Discuss brand building 3. Oral presentations of favorite commercial 4. Introductions of your product/service 5. Discuss details of Final Project Requirements 		<p>Pick a favorite television commercial and be prepared to show it in class and discuss</p> <p>Work with your creative partner and pick your product/service</p>
Week 5 Dates: 9/18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss copy writing and the art of grabbing attention 2. Put all homework ads on the wall and have a discussion about them and shared learnings. 	<p>Read How to Write Better Copy by Steve Harrison</p> <p>Read chapters 3 and 11 about "Print" and "Copy" in The Advertising Concept Book</p>	<p>Write a creative brief and produce a print ad based on current market conditions for ONE of these products or companies: Wonder Bread, Motorola Cell Phones, Carnival Cruises, WeWork, Equinox Gyms. Make enough copies for everyone in class and for the wall.</p>

Week 6 Date: 9/25	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of out of home pictures homework 2. Lecture on writing strategy brief 3. In class assignment 		Take a picture of an outdoor board, or bus shelter ad, or wall ad, or any out of home ad that you feel did not work in the medium it was set in and be prepared to discuss why
Week 7 Date: 10/2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss Readings 2. Listen to some great radio ads 3. Guest Lecture 4. Breakout activities based on tonight's guest lecture 	Read the part on "Radio" in The Advertising Concept Book	Draft brand creative brief
Week 8 Date: 10/9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss Readings 2. Play and discuss radio spot homework 3. Final project check-ins 	<p>Read Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, in The Advertising Concept Book</p> <p>Read Break Through the Noise by Tim Staples</p>	Write and record a :30 teaser radio spot to announce your brand
Week 9 Date: 10/16	Guest Lecture	Read chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, of The Advertising Concept Book	
Week 10 Date: 10/23	Design, type and copy		
Week 11 Date: 10/30	Event Marketing and On-line		
Week 12 Date: 11/6	Preparing final project and presentations with partner in class		
Week 13 Dates: 11/13	Preparing final project and presentations with partner in class		
Week 14 Date: 11/20			Final Presentations
Week 15 Date: 11/27			Final Presentations
STUDY DAYS Dates: 12/2-12/5			
FINAL EXAM PERIOD Dates: 12/6-12/13	Final Project Due		Date: For the date and time of the final for this class, please consult the Fall 2023 Final Schedule

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

[The USC Student Handbook](https://policy.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/USC_StudentCode_August2022.pdf) (https://policy.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/USC_StudentCode_August2022.pdf)

Academic Integrity

USC's Unifying Value of integrity is a foundational principle that inspires the community to match its values to its actions. Academic integrity is ultimately the sole guarantor of the legitimacy of one's education, and therefore, is vitally important not just for oneself, but for the entire USC community. The value of all USC degrees is negatively impacted by violations of academic integrity. In the classroom, general principles of academic integrity include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles.

Academic Integrity violations (academic dishonesty) include, but are not limited to:

Plagiarism and Cheating

- The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student's own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.
- Re-using any portion of one's own work (essay, term paper, project, or other assignment) previously submitted without citation of such and without permission of the instructor(s) involved.
- Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers, including drafts. Also, all students involved in collaborative work (as permitted by the instructor) are expected to proofread the work and are responsible for all particulars of the final draft.
- Acquisition of academic work, such as term papers, solutions, or other assignments, from any source and the subsequent presentation of those materials as the student's own work, or providing academic work, such as term papers, solutions, or assignments that another student submits as their own work.

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.

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.

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.

b. Support Systems

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

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

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

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, 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. 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

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

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

uscса.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

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.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenbergsuccessfund.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergscholarshipsandawards>

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.