



20243 ACAD 182 Case Studies in Innovation – Swain & Dadourian - Syllabus

Units: 4

Fall 2024 – Mondays and Wednesdays – 10-11:50 am

Location: IYH 212/213

Instructors: Chris Swain and Thomas Dadourian

Office: HSH 111 or via Zoom

Office Hours: By Appointment

Contact Info:

Chris Swain – cswain@usc.edu, 310 403 0798

Thomas Dadourian – thomas@dadourian.com, 323 947 7420

Instructors will reply to emails within 48 hours.

IT Help: <https://uscedu.sharepoint.com/sites/IYASStudent/SitePages/IT-Resources.aspx>

Hours of Service: 8:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Contact Info: iyahelp@usc.edu

Course Description

ACAD 182: Case Studies and Innovation builds on the principles established in ACAD 181: Disruptive Innovation, with a focus on advanced data-driven decision-making within the context of both B2B and B2C business environments. This course serves as a practical accelerator, guiding students through the process of identifying, validating, and scaling business opportunities using real-world data and proven methodologies.

Students will explore key aspects of innovation, including market opportunity analysis, consumer-based brand equity, and data-driven messaging and positioning. Through hands-on exercises, students will build and analyze marketing funnels, learn to craft effective advertising campaigns and apply best practices in both B2C and B2B validation techniques. The course culminates in students developing and validating business concepts using rigorous data-backed methods, ensuring they are equipped to make informed, strategic decisions in dynamic market conditions.

This course leverages the Challenge-Based Learning framework, offering students practical exposure to the complexities of innovation and business validation, preparing them for leadership roles in an increasingly data-driven world.

Learning Objectives

1. **Enhance Proficiency in Data-Driven Leadership:** Build upon previously developed skills in purpose-driven leadership and communication, advancing to an intermediate level of proficiency in data-driven decision-making within innovation contexts.
2. **Innovation Capacity:** Further develop personal capacity for innovation, focusing on the identification and validation of market opportunities, product ideation, and market positioning.

3. **Master Data-Driven Business Techniques:** Gain intermediate proficiency in data literacy, with hands-on experience in data-driven decision-making techniques, including the creation and analysis of marketing funnels and advertising campaigns.
4. **Develop Validation Skills:** Acquire skills to validate business ideas and products using best practices in B2B and B2C methodologies, ensuring a solid foundation for scaling and marketing innovative solutions.
5. **Apply the Challenge-Based Learning Framework:** Deepen understanding and application of IYA’s Challenge-Based Learning framework, with a specific focus on discerning and prompting in real-world business scenarios.

Prerequisite(s): *ACAD 181 Disruptive Innovation*

Course Notes

- This is a hands-on, intensive course that requires participation during class and teamwork outside of class. Active participation in-class discussions and digital messaging is required.
- Grading type: Letter.
- Lecture slides and any supplemental course content will be posted to Brightspace for use by all students. Course announcements will be posted to Brightspace.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Students use personal laptops in each class session. 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 digital tools; and creating and storing large files.

HOW TO PURCHASE SOFTWARE AT THE DISCOUNTED ACADEMY RATE

The following software are available for purchase online at the Iovine and Young Academy discounted rate:

Software	IYA Short-Term License at USC Bookstore
Adobe Creative Cloud	\$75 2024–2025 annual license (active through July 2025)
Apple Logic Pro	\$35 semester licenses
SolidWorks	\$35 semester license
Apple Final Cut Pro	\$35 semester license

To purchase:

- Visit: <https://commerce.cashnet.com/IOVINE>
- Select the software license(s) you would like to purchase by clicking “View Details” or the software title, and make your purchase.
- You will receive an order confirmation receipt at the email address you provided.
- You will be notified by email when the software license has been activated.

If you have any questions about this process, please do not hesitate to contact Academy IT Support at iyahelp@usc.edu.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- Assigned readings will be provided by instructors via links in the course slides posted to Brightspace. Students can always look to the latest slide presentation for assignment specs.

Optional Readings and Supplementary Materials

1. Linchpin by Seth Godin
2. The Innovator's Dilemma by Clayton Christensen
3. Winning by Jack and Suzy Welch
4. The Hard Thing About Hard Things by Ben Horowitz
5. Zero to One by Peter Theil
6. Game Thinking by Amy Jo Kim
7. Traversing the Traction Gap by Bruce Cleveland
8. Traction by Gino Wickman
9. Strategic Brand Management by Kevin Lane Keller
10. Visual Story by Bruce Block
11. Scaling Up by Verne Harnish

Description and Assessment of Assignments

- *Read and Reflect Assignments* – you will read articles and white papers (and watch videos) provided by the instructor. You will summarize key points from the piece and write takeaways relevant to your personal practice. These submissions will be used in in-class discussions.
- *Individual Assignments* – you will develop materials to reinforce key concepts from the lecture topics. Format varies.
- *Team Assignments* – you will work in a team to develop materials to reinforce key concepts from the lectures and practice leading in a team setting.
- *Exams* – you will take two exams in this course – a Midterm and a Final. The exams will test your knowledge of the lecture materials and the readings. There will be no arcane questions as the goal is for you to learn the core concepts delivered by the instructors. The exams will be taken via Brightspace – short answer, short essay, and multiple choice. You will not have access to digital devices or notes during the exams.
- *Final Team Project* – you will work in a team to develop a final presentation as a culmination of innovation and business learnings for the semester.
- *Personal Portfolio site* – you will post your Final Team Project + any other work you'd like to a personal portfolio site as part of this class.

Participation

Students are expected to actively participate in this course in person and via Slack. Participation includes:

- Careful reading and viewing of assigned materials by the date due
- Regular, substantive contributions to discussions in person and via Slack
- On-time attendance and full attention in sessions
- Significant collaboration with classmates during in-class work and otherwise

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.

Grading Breakdown

Table 1 Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Read and Reflect Assignments	150	15%
Individual Assignments	300	30%
Team Assignments	200	20%
Final Team Project	125	12.5%
Personal Portfolio site	25	2.5%
Exams (Midterm and Final)	100	10%
Participation	100	10%
TOTAL	1000	100%

Grading Scale

Table 2 Course Grading Scale

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
A	100-95
A-	94-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-67
D	66-64
F	63 or below

Assignment Submission Policy

Instructors will specify how to submit each assignment as part of the assignment specifications. Nearly all assignments will require you to post a link to the course Master Spreadsheet.

Special Note: When students post files to the course Master Spreadsheet they must be set to “anyone with link can view” so the instructor can access. If a file is not set to allow access, then it will be considered late. See Late Policy below. Students are encouraged to create one Google Folder for all assignments in this course and set the folder to “anyone with link can view”.

Late Policy

Assignments will be accepted after the deadline with the following grade penalties.

- Submission in the 24 hours after the deadline 10% deduction
- Submission between 24 and 48 hours after the deadline 20% deduction
- Submission between 2 and 3 days after the deadline 50% deduction
- Submission more than 3 days after the deadline 100% deduction

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

Grading Timeline

Grades and feedback will be posted for students within 72 hours of submission.

Course Specific Policies: Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

We expect you to use AI (e.g., ChatGPT and image generation tools) in this class. Learning to use AI is a skill, and we welcome the opportunity to meet with you to provide guidance with these tools during office hours or after class. Keep in mind the following:

- AI tools are permitted to help you brainstorm topics or revise work you have already written.
- If you provide minimum-effort prompts, you will get low-quality results. You will need to refine your prompts to get good outcomes. This will take work.
- Proceed with caution when using AI tools and do not assume the information provided is accurate or trustworthy. If it gives you a number or fact, assume it is incorrect unless you either know the correct answer or can verify its accuracy with another source. You will be responsible for any errors or omissions provided by the tool. It works best for topics you understand.
- AI is a tool, but one that you need to acknowledge using. Please include a statement at the end of any assignment that uses AI explaining that you did so. Failure to do so is a violation of academic integrity policies.
- Be thoughtful about when AI is useful. Consider its appropriateness for each assignment or circumstance. The use of AI tools requires attribution. You are expected to clearly attribute any material generated by the tool used.]
- You will not be able to use AI on the exams

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 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 accommodation. Accommodation may also be made for essential professional or career-related events or opportunities. Additionally, students who need accommodations for religious observations should provide advanced notice to instructors and student athletes should provide Travel Request Letters. All accommodations remain at the discretion of the instructor, and appropriate documentation may be required.

Unless students provide an accommodation letter from USC's Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) or a letter from IYA Student Services detailing visa or travel restrictions, attendance and active participation is expected in the classroom. Any student with such accommodations should submit their accommodation document to the instructor as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Students who are experiencing illness should not attend class in person. Please inform the instructor in advance of any class sessions that you can't attend for medical reasons, and accommodations will be arranged to view recorded lectures and submit alternatives to any missed class participation. Students will not be penalized for not attending class in person under these circumstances.

Iovine and Young Hall Cleanout

The Academy is unable to store student projects and materials beyond the end of the semester. Students must remove all projects and personal materials from the Creators Studio, lockers/locker room, and other classrooms by the end of each semester. **All projects and materials left in Iovine and Young Hall will be discarded the day after final exams end. No exceptions.**

Zoom etiquette

Each course session will be recorded via Zoom. However, students must attend the class in person in IYH 210/211 to be counted as present.

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.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

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.

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 relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonesty and is strictly prohibited. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Course Evaluations

Students will be asked to complete a course evaluation via the university course eval system at the end of the semester.

Course Schedule

Table 3 Course schedule

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings Assigned	Deliverables Assigned
Market Opportunity Accelerator			
Week 1	Introduction to Validation	Read and Reflect	Individual Assignment 1
Week 2	Winning Business Concepts	Read and Reflect	Individual Assignment 2
Week 3	Team Project B2C & B2C Business Pitch & Selection		Individual Assignment 3
Data-Driven Messaging			
Week 4	Validation Funnel Metrics and Dashboards	Read and Reflect	Team Assignment 1, Individual Assignment 4
Week 5	Consumer Based Brand Equity	Read and Reflect	
Week 6	Personas and Ideal Customer Profiles	Read and Reflect	Team Assignment 2
Data-Driven Design, Funnels, & Ads			
Week 7	Creating a High Performing Funnel	Read and Reflect	Individual Assignment 4, Mid Term Exam
Week 8	Data-Driven Design for Landing Pages	Read and Reflect	Individual Assignment 5
Week 9	Introduction to PPC Advertising	Read and Reflect	Team Assignment 3
Week 10	Advertising Workshop	Read and Reflect	Individual Assignment 6
B2B Business Validation			
Week 11	B2B Validation	Read and Reflect	
Week 12	B2B Dashboards		Final Team Project
Week 13	B2B Cold Outreach	Read and Reflect	
Data-Driven Decision-Making			
Week 14	Data-Driven Iteration & Results	Read and Reflect	Individual Assignment 7
Week 15	Final Team Project Prep		Final Exam
Final Presentations			
FINAL	Final Team Project Presentation		

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

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.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate](#)- and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

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 consists 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) 740-2500

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.