

USC Annenberg

CMGT 529: Creator Culture

Fall 2024

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Office Hours: By request via email; state the topic; reconfirm meeting prior.

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Office Hours: email the professor with the course name (CMGT 529 Creator Culture) in the subject line and the reason for requesting office hours. If we cannot assist by email, we will schedule a meeting in person or by zoom. You must confirm the meeting in advance.

Course Description: Whether referred to as creators, influencers, YouTubers, TikTokers, games, vloggers, streamers, wanghong, KOLs, or zhubo, a vast and diverse wave of entrepreneurs have emerged globally with the ability to harness social media platforms for commercial and socio-cultural value. Creators operate centrally within two new cultural industries, Social Media Entertainment (Cunningham and Craig 2019) and Wanghong (Craig, Lin, and Cunningham, 2021), which are distinguishable from the copyright industries of film, TV, music and publishing, have radically changed the entire marketing and advertising industries, the nature of publicity and communication, if also the future of labor and economies. In this course, we will examine the rise of the “creator economy” and creator culture, contrast SME and Wanghong culture, and research national creator cultures operating off of both systems primarily in the Global South and digital periphery.

Learning Outcomes:

- To map the distinctive contours and dimensions, platforms and policies, labor and management, commercial and cultural influence of global creator industries.
- To develop core competencies and work skills, including conducting research and analysis, developing an argument, creating state of the art presentations, and podcasts.

TECH POLICY: This course will use blackboard and email as a means of communication on readings and assignments. 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.

COURSE READINGS (additional reading may be posted on Blackboard)

- [Social Media Entertainment \(2019\)](#)
- [Creator Culture \(2020\)](#)
- [Wanghong as Chinese Social Media Entertainment \(2021\)](#)

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Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown. *This syllabus is subject to change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

Wk	Topics	Read/Watch	Assignments due
1	Creator Cultures; introductions and syllabus		None
2	Creator Markets; review Economy Reports; first blog	Creator Economy reports	1st blog (due in class)
3	Creator Platforms; in class: assign global project	SME 1; WH 3	2nd blog
4	Creator Labor and Content; review global outlines	SME 2; WH 4	3rd blog; post Global outlines by noon
5	Creator Economics and Management; review global drafts	SME 3;	4th blog; post Global drafts by noon
6	Present Global projects; assign/ choose national projects	WH6/ SME 6 PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF DESIRE	5th blog; post final drafts by noon
7	Creator Governance and Rights	Creator Governance article; WH2 The Conversation commentaries	6th blog; post outlines by noon
8	Creator Cultures and Politics	SME 4-5; WH 5	7th blog
9	Guests	Creator Culture/ Chp 1-4	8th blog
10	Guests	Creator Culture/Chp 5-8	9th blog
11	Guests; essay instructions; review drafts; assign week	Creator Culture/ Chp 9-14	10th blog; post national drafts by noon
12	National presentations	No reading	No blob
13	National Presentations	No reading	No blog
14	National Presentations	No reading	No blog
15	National Presentations	No reading	No blog
16	Final Essay Project	No reading	Post essay by noon

Course Assignments/Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Blogs (10 reading blogs x 3 points each)	30	30
Group: Global Analysis	30	30
Individual: National Creator Culture	30	30
Individual: Final essay	10	10
TOTAL	100	100

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Blogs (Individual/ 30 points)

This assignment is designed to connect readings to recent industry news. Complete 10 reading blogs worth 3 points each for a total of 30 points. Blogs must be posted as indicated on the schedule on Blackboard by 6pm. You cannot make up for missing blogs. Each blog must contain the following elements, worth 1 point each.

- **SUMMARY:** a 2-3 line summary of the reading, even if multiple chapters or sources.
- **WORKING LINK:** to a current media industry news item from reputable sources including but not limited to industry/trade news and creator newsletters.
- **CONNECTION:** a 2-3 line explanation for how the reading and news is related.

GLOBAL CREATOR CULTURES (Group/ 30 points)

RQ: what changed in SME (Global) and Wanghong creator culture since the books were written? The class will be divided into groups and compare both creator culture systems in terms of markets, platforms, and creators, verticals, management and CSOs/MCNs.

Grading will be based on following instructions including meeting deadlines, research, analysis, design and performance. Instructions will be provided in class.

NATIONAL CREATOR CULTURES (Individual/ 30 points)

RQ: what distinguishes national creator cultures from Global SME and Chinese wanghong?

Every student is to choose a country outside of the "west" and China and conduct analysis of their national creator cultures, examining the creator markets, key creator policies, platforms, creators, verticals, management, CSOs, and culture. Grading will be based on following instructions including meeting deadlines, research, analysis, design and performance. Instructions will be provided in class.

Final Essay (Individual/ 10 points)

This essay is meant as a summative assessment of the course that synthesizes and confirms student comprehension of the readings, lectures, speakers, and presentations. Instructions will be provided in class.

Presentations: Students must use Canva and create clear and engaging presentations. Points will be deducted for too much text, too many bullet points, cluttered screens, use of screenshots, etc. All quantitative data should be presented in original charts (not borrowed) and only feature relevant data. You will also be graded on performance based on professionalism and confidence. Points will be deducted for the lack of rehearsal and reading off your screens. You should present as though you are giving a job talk or keynote speech.

Assignments: All assignments need to be completed and handed in on time to avoid a grade reduction. If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide written documentation that will allow you to be excused, or discuss your situation in a timely manner. If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must appeal it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate, within one week of receiving the graded assignment. No late appeals will be accepted for review. In order to pass this class, you will need to complete ALL of the assignments. Failure to complete one or more of them will result in an F in the class.

Assignment Submission Policy: Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a lower grade.

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Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range		
94% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 93%: 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

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.

Classroom Policies: A supportive culture is critical to successful learning. We aim for Psychological Safety, which means having the kind of culture where individual risk taking can occur without fear of threat to image or status. While honest feedback, debate, and critical thinking is encouraged, we strive to show respect for everyone in the class. During debate of ideas, let's please try to emphasize academic inquiry over advocacy.

Attendance: While it is expected that students will make every effort to attend classes, it is recognized that personal circumstances will arise which preclude class attendance. Extensive non-attendance can result in lowering your overall grade. In such circumstances, the student is responsible for obtaining the materials presented in missed classes and for making up missed tests and other assignments. If you are a student athlete, please submit an approved Travel Request Letter in advance.

Course Evaluations: An official course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class.

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, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire

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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](#).

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.

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 is prohibited 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 is also prohibited. 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).

AI Generators in your course -permitted on specific assignments

AI generated research is discouraged. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. To adhere to our university values, you must cite any AI-generated material (e.g., text, images, etc.) included or referenced in your work and provide the prompts used to generate the content. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution will be treated as plagiarism

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and reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Please review the instructions in each assignment for more details on how and when to use AI Generators for your submissions.

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/ Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training 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

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.

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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. 24/7 on call

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) 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.

TrojansAlert TrojansAlert is an alert system that allows university officials to contact you during an emergency. It is your connection to real-time updates, instructions on where to go, what to do, or what not to do, who to contact and other important information. Visit the website to sign up.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

ITS Customer Support Center (CSC): (213) 740-5555

The ITS Customer Support Center (CSC) provides support to the USC community for connecting to the USC Network and using supported applications. For help with network connectivity and software, contact CSC. Walk-in support is available in Leavey Library's Information Commons.