

USC Iovine and Young Academy

*Arts, Technology and the Business
of Innovation*

ACAD 360: Design Strategy

Units: 04

Spring 2025–TTh–8:00-9:50am

Location: IYH 210

Instructor: Matthew Manos

Office Hours: Online, By Appointment

Contact Info: manosm@usc.edu.

Timeline for reply: within 48 hours.

Classroom Assistant: TBD

Office Hours (if applicable): N/A

Contact Info: TBD

IT Help: <https://iovine-young.usc.edu/ait/index.html>

Hours of Service: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Contact Info: iyhelp@usc.edu, 213-821-6917

Catalogue Description

This course takes a professional, collaborative and multidisciplinary consulting approach to diagnosing problems and applying design-based solutions on behalf of organizations.

Course Description

This course takes a professional, collaborative and multidisciplinary consulting approach to diagnosing problems and applying design-based solutions on behalf of organizations. The course draws on student knowledge and skills garnered from previous Academy coursework in design, technology and business, and references additional perspectives from psychology, anthropology, sociology, public policy, complexity science, and other areas. For this experience, Academy methods and frameworks are synthesized toward preparing students to analyze multiple facets of an organization (for-profit and not-for-profit), and designing solutions for maximum positive impact.

Learning Objectives

Students will demonstrate, through a series of assignments and projects, requisite knowledge to:

- Lead, consult, or collaborate in high-performance teams and organizations
- Use qualitative methods in branding, marketing, IA, service design, etc..
- Bring multiple diagnostic and creative problem-solving tools to bear in ambiguous situations
- Develop future scenarios and supporting strategic plans
- Articulate insights, conclusions and recommendations with compelling rational and emotional arguments.
- Gain an introductory understanding of the business of design strategy and consulting, including proposals, agreements and operational models

In addition, you will exercise the following skills:

- Critical thinking: Develop the awareness to identify problems and opportunities, create hypotheses, gather data through primary and secondary research sources, and draw conclusions in environments of high uncertainty
- Collaboration: Share ideas and form group work products in impromptu and organized team environments without formal structure
- Effective Communication: Create and deliver concise, compelling oral, written and visual presentations; convey the essence of the critical thinking process and defend conclusions rationally
- Strategic Foresight: Leverage metrics and models to understand markets, choose among potential outcomes and make better decisions.

Prerequisite(s): ACAD 181 and 182 or permission from instructor. Please notify Bria Bourgeois (briabour@usc.edu) if you are interested in enrolling in the course.

Required Readings

1. *Exponential Listening*, verynice: <https://gumroad.com/l/listeningtoolkit>
2. *Responsible Brand*, verynice and Riggs Partners: <https://www.responsiblebrand.com/>
3. *Give All* toolkit series, verynice. <http://giveall.io>
4. *Time Machine*, verynice. <https://gumroad.com/l/timemachinetoolkit>

Description and Assessment of Assignments

The following is a breakdown of the assignment expectations. Unless otherwise noted, all submissions will be in the PDF format.

1. **Design Strategy Sprint (x 5)** Throughout the first half of the semester, students will engage in a series of five (5) "Design Strategy Sprints". Each Sprint will take two class sessions. In the first

session, students will be introduced to a unique prompt to solve using a method that they will be guided through. In the second class session, students will have group work time to finalize their response to the challenge as a team, and submit a one-page deliverable that recaps their process and solution.

2. **Quiz:** The quiz will test for comprehension of all of the major topics discussed and explored in class, including the six design strategy sprints.
3. **Projected vs. Perceived Analysis:** The first deliverable for the major project of the course. Students will conduct desk research, along with user interviews with 15 people in order to understand the perception of their client.
4. **S-Curve Analysis:** Students will collect signals of change, emerging issues, and trends via desk research, and organize/map these findings using an S-Curve.
5. **Final Project Presentation:** The Final Project Presentation will include an overview of the Projected vs. Perceived Analysis and S-Curve Analysis assignments, as well as a series of future scenarios, a strategic plan, and accompanying strategic recommendations.
6. **Final Project Deliverable (Digital Submission):** The course will culminate in a Final Project Deliverable that will be submitted digitally during the designated final slot of the course. The deliverable will serve as a chance to not only create a “leave behind” version of the Final Project Presentation, but also to further develop and edit the project based on feedback from the presentation.

Grading Breakdown

Each **Design Strategy Sprint** (total of six throughout the semester) is worth a total of 50 points. This deliverable includes a one-page report that provides a clear problem statement, synthesis of the process utilized to get to the solution, and an overview of the solution/answer to the challenge. The following is the breakdown of assessment for each Design Strategy Sprint:

- Problem statement clarity, specificity, usefulness, and inclusion of all required elements (stakeholder, obstacle, step, task, feeling). **10 points**
- Clear synthesis and process overview. **20 points**
- Creativity of the solution (determined by the professor based on the uniqueness of the idea in the market and in comparison to the other solutions proposed by the class). **20 points**

The **Projected vs. Perceived Analysis** is worth 100 points. Assessment Details TBA.

The **S-Curve Analysis** is worth 100 points. Assessment Details TBA.

The **Week 15 Report-Out** is worth 150 points:

- **Presentation Style:** Are you presenting this in a fun and engaging way? Do you come across as well rehearsed and professional? **15 points**
- **Research:** Strength of the overview of your projected/perceived analysis as well as the competitive and market analysis. **25 points**
- **Innovation:** The level of creativity and novel thinking in the idea presented (business model and future scenarios). **50 points**
- **Visual Supplement:** The ability for your presentation to make this tangible for us. **50 points**
- **Next steps:** The sophistication of your next steps. **10 points**

The **Final Project Deliverable** is worth 200 points:

- **Readability and Experience:** Are you presenting this deck in a comprehensive and easy to follow way? Does the deck come across as professional? **20 points**

- **Research:** Strength of the overview of your projected/perceived analysis as well as the competitive and market analysis. **40 points**
- **Innovation:** The level of creativity and novel thinking in the idea presented (business model and future scenarios). **60 points**
- **Visual Supplement:** The ability for your presentation to make this tangible for us. **60 points**
- **Next steps:** The sophistication of your next steps. **20 points**

The **Participation** grade is worth 50 points. By default, everyone starts with 25 points for participation. Students who consistently engage in the class will receive full points for participation. The status of your participation grade will be shared in Week 7. Consistently showing up late to class, or consistently failing to participate in class will result in a participation grade of “0” at the end of the semester.

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Sprint 01: Brand Strategy	50	5%
Sprint 02: Marketing Strategy	50	5%
Sprint 03: Business Model Design	50	5%
Sprint 04: Analyzing Design Strategy; Ethics	50	5%
Sprint 05 & 06: WILD CARD	100	5%
Quiz	150	15%
Projected vs. Perceived Analysis	50	5%
S-Curve Analysis	100	10%
Week 15 Report-Out	150	15%
Final Project Deliverable (Digital Submission)	200	20%
Participation	50	5%
Total	1,000	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

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

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments must be submitted as a PDF presentation. For assignments delivered in class (such as presentations), the work must be completed before the commencement of the class session in which the assignment is due. For assignments that are designated for virtual submission, one team member is expected to submit the assignment to manosm@usc.edu (unless otherwise specified) by COB (6:00pm) the day the assignment is indicated as due. Quizzes and presentations are always do during the specified class times.

Grading Timeline

Grades and feedback for all assignments will be returned to students within one week of submission.

Academy Attendance Policy

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.

Additional Policies

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

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Session 01 (Monday)	Session 02 (Wednesday)
Week 01	1/14: Course Overview, Welcome, and Introduction to Design Strategy; How to write a problem statement workshop.	1/16: Crash course into the Business of Design Strategy: Client relationships, proposals, agreements, invoices
Week 02	1/21: AMA with industry professionals/design strategists working in the field	1/23: Exponential Listening: How to Listen; Best Practices in Creative Facilitation
Week 03	1/28: Design Strategy Sprint 01: Creative Vision and Ideation	1/30: Sprint Continues/Work-in-Class; Design Strategy Sprint 01 Deliverables
Week 04	2/4: Design Strategy Sprint 02: Service Design	2/6: Sprint Continues/Work-in-Class; Design Strategy Sprint 02 Deliverables
Week 05	2/11: Design Strategy Sprint 03: Brand Strategy	2/13: Sprint Continues/Work-in-Class; Design Strategy Sprint 03 Deliverables
Week 06	2/18: Design Strategy Sprint 04: Marketing Strategy	2/20: Sprint Continues/Work-in-Class; Design Strategy Sprint 04 Deliverables
Week 07	2/25: Design Strategy Sprint 05: WILDCARD	2/27: Sprint Continues/Work-in-Class; Design Strategy Sprint 05 Deliverables
Week 08	3/4: Design Strategy Sprint 06: WILDCARD	3/6: Sprint Continues/Work-in-Class; Design Strategy Sprint 06 Deliverables
Week 09	3/11: Quiz	3/3: AMA with industry professionals/design strategists working in the field
SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES		
Week 10	3/25: Final Assignment Kick-Off; Team formation and collaborative practices	3/27: S-Curve Analysis; Projected & Perceived Analysis; Studio time
Week 11	4/1: 1:1 Meetings; Ideation exercise and in-class deliverables	4/3: 1:1 Meetings; Ideation exercise and in-class deliverables
Week 12	4/8: S-Curve Analysis Due; Projected & Perceived Analysis Due	4/10: Extreme Futures framework; Strategic Planning
Week 13	4/15: Narrative & Storytelling in Design Strategy projects	4/17: 1:1 Meetings; Ideation exercise and in-class deliverables
Week 14	4/22: Future Artifacts workshop	4/24: Studio Time + Advising
Week 15	4/29: Week 15 Report-Out (Day 01)	5/1: Week 15 Report-Out (Day 02)
	STUDY DAYS	Final Slot: Final Deliverable Due

Yellow = Zoom Day

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.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 Services (RSVP)
-213-740-9355 (WELL)

<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/>

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services provides immediate therapy services for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (e.g., sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking). (wording from the site)

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of 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.

USC Policy Reporting to Title IX (213) 740-5086
<https://policy.usc.edu/reporting-to-title-ix-student-misconduct/>

The university encourages individuals to report prohibited conduct to the *Title IX Office*. Individuals can report to the university *Title IX Coordinator* in the *Office of Equity and Diversity*.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation 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

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

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.