USC Iovine and
Young Academy
*Arts, Technology and the Business
of Innovation*

IDSN 599: Design Strategy for Innovation

Units: 4.0
Term: Spring 2025
Day and Time: Fridays, 4:00-6:50pm

Location: Online

Instructor: Yihyun Lim
Office / Office Hours: Virtual / By Appointment
Contact Info: yihyun@usc.edu

IT Help:
https://uscedu.sharepoint.com/sites/IYAStudent/SitePages/IT-Resources.aspx
Hours of Service: 8:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Contact Info: iyahelp@usc.edu

Course Description:

This graduate-level survey course explores the multifaceted field of design strategy, focusing on its applications in various domains. Students will develop a deep understanding of design strategies for products, users, organizations, and the planet, incorporating approaches such as system design, human-centered design, planet-centered design, and ethical considerations in the design of AI-driven products.

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):

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.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Design Strategy Sprint 01:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 02:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 03:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 04:	50	5%

Design Strategy Sprint 05:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 06:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 07:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 08:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 09:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 10:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 11:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 12:	50	5%
Design Strategy Sprint 13:	50	5%
Final Project Presentation	100	10%
Final Project Deliverable (Digital Submission)	150	15%
Participation	10	10%
Total	1,000	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A   94-100
A-   90-93
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 yihyun@usc.edu (unless otherwise specified) by COB ("close of business", 6:00pm) the day the assignment is indicated as due.

Grading Timeline

Grades and feedback for all assignments will be returned to students within one week of submission. Grades will be provided via blackboard. Students are encouraged and expected to keep track of their status in the class through documenting these grades. If at any point, a student is uncertain about their status in the class, students may email yihyun@usc.edu

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

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 ⅓ 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. 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.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

*Please cross-reference with the Assignments section of the syllabus for greater details on deliverables.

Week	Session	
Module 1: Introduction to Design Strategy		
1	Understanding Design Strategy	- Course Overview - Introduction to Design Strategy, business of design strategy - Assignment #1: Case study analysis of design strategy and strategic design
2	Design Strategy Tools and AI Augmentation	- Introduce various design process frameworks and tools used in design strategy. - Explore how GenAI tools can enhance the design thinking process. Discuss the role of AI in ideation, concept generation, and problem solving (evaluation, etc. Discuss the strengths and limitations of various tools in different contexts. - Assignment #2: Gen AI-Powered Ideation Session - Form small groups and apply GenAI tools to a design project - Conduct a hands-on workshop using GenAI tools for ideation and concept generation - Explore AI platforms that assist in brainstorming, trend analysis, and pattern recognition. - Present how AI was used in the ideation, prototyping, or testing phase and discuss the impact on the overall design strategy. - Create a process map of AI-augmented design thinking process
Module 2: Design Strategy for Products		
3	Branding Strategy	- Introduction to Branding Strategy - Define branding and its importance in establishing a distinct identity. - Explore the psychology of branding and its impact on consumer perceptions - Discuss case studies showcasing successful brand building - Examine the strategic aspects of brand positioning in the market - Discuss techniques for differentiation to create a unique market presence - Assignment #3: Brand Analysis Using GenAI tools - Analyze existing brands using GenAI tools. Utilize sentiment analysis and trend prediction to understand brand perception and potential market trends.
4	Marketing Strategy	- Introduction to Marketing Strategy - Activity: GenAI-powered Marketing Strategy

		○ Use GenAI tools to analyze market trends, consumer behavior, and competitive landscapes. ○ Explore AI-driven tools for creating compelling visual content and marketing materials ● Assignment #4: Marketing Strategy for Product X ○ Form small groups and develop a comprehensive branding and marketing campaign for a product. Utilize GenAI tools for market analysis, content creation, and campaign optimization. Each group submits a report detailing their branding and marketing strategy
Module 3: Design Strategy for Users		
5	Value-Driven Design and Universal Human Values	● Lecture: Value-Driven Design for tech-products ○ Introduction to Value-Driven Design/Value-Centric Design, an approach to the design process that places a central emphasis on aligning products, services, or systems with universal human values. ○ Introduce to the concept of 'universal human values', which refer to the principles, ideals, and beliefs that individuals and communities consider important and meaningful. ○ Current trends in Value-Driven Design for Tech-Driven Products: discuss how emerging technologies, such as AI and IoT, are influencing the integration of human values in product design. ● Assignment #5: Value-Driven Design Analysis ○ Conduct case study on a tech-driven product that successfully employs value-driven design. Explore how the product aligns with user values, incorporating insights from the workshop and GenAI analysis.
6	Emotional Design for Meaningful Experiences	● Lecture: Leveraging Emotional Triggers in Design ○ Introduce the concept of 'emotional design', as a key element in creating user connections with products. Discuss the role of emotions in the design process and its impact on user perceptions. ○ Explore the concept of creating delightful interactions and memorable moments for users. ● Assignment #6: Emotional Design Case Study Analysis ○ Collect, analyze, and discuss real-world examples where emotional design contributed to successful product experiences. Explore the connection between emotions, usability, and overall user satisfaction.
Module 4: Design Strategy for Organizations		
7	Foresight and Strategic Planning	● Lecture: Introduction to Foresight/Strategic Planning/Scenario Planning and its Role in Design Strategy

		○ Define foresight as a discipline focused on understanding future trends, uncertainties, and possibilities. Foresight, strategic planning, and futures thinking are essential components in ensuring that design strategies are not only responsive to current challenges but also future-proof and adaptable in an ever-evolving business environment. ○ Discuss the importance of foresight in informing strategic planning for companies. ○ Explore the process of strategic planning within the context of design strategy for companies ○ Discuss the frameworks for developing and implementing strategic plans that align with organizational goals ● Assignment #7: Scenario planning ○ Use foresight techniques to anticipate alternative futures ○ Discuss how foresight informs strategic decision-making and mitigates risks in design strategy.
8	Futures Thinking and Speculative Design	● Lecture: Futures Thinking and Speculative Design in Design Strategy ○ An approach that considered multiple potential futures and their implications in design strategy ○ Discuss how designers can use future thinking/speculative design to create resilient and adaptive strategies ● Assignment #8: Strategic Roadmap ○ Develop a strategic roadmap for a hypothetical company, integrating foresight, strategic planning and futures thinking. Present how the design strategy aligns with potential future scenarios and adapts to changes over time.
Module 5: Design Strategy for Society		
9	Equitable Design for Social Justice	● Lecture: Equitable and Inclusive Design for Social Justice ○ Discuss the principles of equitable design and inclusive design as an approach that prioritize fairness, accessibility, and diversity in the design process. ○ Define social justice in the context of design strategy. Explore how these principles can be applied to address social issues and systemic biases. ○ Discuss the ethical considerations and responsibilities of designers in promoting justice through their work, emphasizing the transformative potential of design strategies in creating a more equitable and inclusive society. ● Assignment #9: Design Sprint for Social Impact

10	Accessible and Inclusive Design for Societal Well-being	• Lecture: Accessible and Inclusive Design for All ○ Explore the principles of accessible design and its importance in creating products and spaces that accommodate individuals with diverse abilities ○ Define inclusive design within the broader context of societal well-being. Discuss how inclusive design principles can contribute to creating environments that cater to a diverse range of individuals. • Assignment #10: Designing Inclusive Spaces ○ Students apply inclusive design principles to create inclusive spaces, considering physical and digital environments. Emphasize the integration of equitable, accessible, and inclusive design principles.
Module 6: Design Strategy for the Planet		
11	Transition Design and Wicked Problems	• Lecture: Transition Design and Wicked Problems ○ Discuss the foundational principles of Transition Design, emphasizing the need for holistic and long-term solutions. ○ Discuss the role of transition design in creating pathways for transitioning to more sustainable futures ○ Explore the characteristics of wicked problems, highlighting their complexity, interconnectedness, and the inherent difficulties in finding solutions. • Assignment #11: Apply Transition Design Framework to a Wicked Problem - scenario setting, system mapping, small-scale intervention brainstorming.
12	Planet Centered Design	• Lecture: Introduction to Planet-Centered Design and its Applications ○ Define planet-centered design as an approach that prioritizes the well-being of the planet and its ecosystems, bringing new perspective to the anthropocene. ○ Discuss the principles of regenerative design and the role of design in restoring ecological balance. ○ Explore how the planet-design principles can be applied across various industries. • Assignment #12: Re-thinking the product - applying planet-centered strategies.
Module 7: Design Strategy for Emerging Technology		
13	Design Strategies for Ethical and Responsible AI products	• Introduction to Ethics in Design of AI-driven products ○ Define the ethical challenges associated with designing AI-driven products. Discuss the impact of biased algorithms, privacy concerns, and the potential consequences of unethical AI applications. ○ Laws and Guidelines for Ethical AI: explore existing laws and ethical guidelines governing the development and deployment of AI-driven

		products. Discuss the role of international standards and organizations in shaping ethical practices in AI.
		○ Responsible AI Design: Emphasize the role of design strategists in integrating responsibility into the core of the AI design strategy. ○ Explore strategic approaches to make AI features transparent and explainable within the overall design strategy ○ Discuss the strategic impact on transparent communication on user trust and ethical considerations - Activity/Assignment #13: Tackling Bias in AI-driven products ○ Discuss how biases can manifest in product design decisions and user interfaces ○ Analyze existing product/service, explore design strategies that product designers can employ to recognize and mitigate bias in the user experience ○ Discuss strategies for maintaining transparency and accountability in strategic decisions related to data.
14	Final Project	• Launch final project
15	**Final Project Report Out**	• Final project report out. Revised final report due on Final Exam date.
	Study Days	
	Final Exam Date TBD (Check USC Schedule of Classes for Final exam dates) Submit final project report via Brightspace https://classes.usc.edu/term-20241/finals/	

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.