



Lloyd Greif Center
for Entrepreneurial Studies

USC Marshall
School of Business

BAEP 575 Entrepreneurship in the Media and Entertainment Industry (1.5 units)

Syllabus, Fall 2025

Location:	JFF 416
Dates/Times:	Thursdays, August 28 th - October 16 th , 2025 (first half of the semester)- 6:30pm-9:30pm
Professor:	Sherry Gunther Shugerman
Office:	JFF 5 th floor
Phone:	(818) 917-0021
Office Hours:	By appointment.
E-mail:	gunthers@marshall.usc.edu
Mobile:	(818)917-0021 (Texts only if time sensitive. Calls only if pre-scheduled.)

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION & LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course will provide students with an industry perspective on the ever-evolving field of media and entertainment, with a focus on entrepreneurial opportunities within the industry. As industry knowledge is a key factor in successful entrepreneurship, we will look at the historical evolution of the entertainment industry and how the emergence of digital media has not only opened up countless new opportunities for entrepreneurs but has also created new challenges. We will look at the constants as well as the constantly changing elements of the industry and how both can be used to create opportunities and ensure success in this creative industry.

The course will provide the foundation to stimulate opportunity recognition and will introduce the students to the necessary tools to succeed in a very competitive industry-both as an entrepreneur and as a corporate entrepreneur.

The class will be held for 8 weeks, one evening per week, for 3 hours each, for a total of 24 hours. It is a 1.5 unit class.

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and apply the traits and behaviors of successful entrepreneurs / corporate entrepreneurs in the media and entertainment industry- what does it take and how can one use them to succeed?
2. Leverage the acquired knowledge of the historical evolution of the industry (TV, Cable, Digital Media, and streaming) to identify opportunities and to build a new venture.
3. Recognize the key players, customers, and distribution channels, the importance of strong content, and the evolution of content itself, and apply to entrepreneurial opportunities.
4. Meet key industry executives and entrepreneurs, hear their perspective on the latest trends and how their experiences shaped their success, and establish and leverage these relationships.
5. Identify and evaluate the opportunities and barriers created by new industry trends. Analyze the latest and biggest "story"/trends happening in media – The State of New Streamers and the Effects of the Pandemic on Media.
6. Develop strategies for the funding and monetization of media and entertainment ventures.

II. COURSE MATERIALS, REQUIREMENTS AND PARTICIPATION

Course Graded Assignments

Weekly Topics

Over the course of the semester, 6 separate topics will be presented. The syllabus includes a description of each of the class topics. The class project begins as a group project (up to 4 students per group) and then transforms into an individual project for the final, and students will be working on it throughout the course. Each project should encompass a new venture. The venture can be within the media and entertainment industry or not. The new venture should either be a startup within the industry taking advantage of an opportunity arising due to the evolving trends and demands in the market as covered in the course, or it can be a venture in any industry, but utilizing knowledge gained from the course to leverage growth of the new venture through utilization of new media opportunities and evolving "audience" and marketing trends. The group will prepare the venture for the midterm. Then, each member of the group, will be responsible for preparing their final individually, evolving the venture based on what they learned throughout the course, and from the feedback they received on the midterm from the professor, from the classmates' in-class feedback, and from the classmates' critique papers.

Mid Term Written and Oral Presentation (200 points each)

These will be presented in class (on weeks 4 – September 18th, 2025). Each group will present to the class its preliminary project/venture idea.

The group will get 10 minutes for its presentation plus a 15 minute question/answer/discussion with the class to resolve any concerns, issues, barriers, etc. The presentations should include a visual Power Point slide presentation that answers the: who, what, why, why now, how, barriers to entry, financials, and marketing/strategic partnerships questions. You will be graded on content, feasibility, and both oral (well articulated, engaging, not read from slides, etc.), and visual presentation (slides should be legible, well presented, not wordy.)

Student must be present at in-class presentation to receive a grade for this assignment.

Student Critique Assignment (100 points each)

One paper is required per student per semester. Each student is responsible for writing a one page paper analyzing/critiquing one venture/business plan (other than their own). Each student may indicate their preference on which group's venture to do this paper on, but we will need to assign these to ensure that each presentation receives an equal number of critiques, and each student must submit one critique.

What are 3 concerns that you have about the venture presented? Name 3 areas that you think are problematic, have barriers, or are unrealistic/unfeasable about the venture. Elaborate and support with data.

This assignment is to be no more than a page long, can be bulletized, but must be analytical, well thought out, and helpful! **Student must be present in class when presentation is given, in order to submit a critique on it.**

Papers are due to be submitted into Brightspace at the start of class session on week 5- **September 25th, 2025.**

The Future of AI- AI Analysis Assignment (100 points each)

One paper is required per student per semester. Each student is responsible for writing a one to two page paper discussing the impact of AI on the entertainment industry. How has AI disrupted the entertainment industry- name 3 areas that have been impacted. How do you predict that these solutions will evolve? How would you use AI to monetize on this disruption? This assignment is to be no more than one to two pages long, can be bulletized, but must be analytical and insightful and use data/examples.

Papers are due on **September 11th, 2025.** Please submit to Brightspace before the start of class.

Final Project- A Better Venture- Written Presentation (300 points)

The final project will be a an individual analysis of what each student would improve/pivot/change about their group's venture based on everything that they learned in the course of the semester, as well as the feedback they received on their presentation both verbally and in the critique papers. The final should be no more than 2 pages in length, and should be an analytical explanation of what you would change and why, based on quantitative and qualitative data, and market analysis. It should present a clear view of how what you learned in the course influenced your decisions to improve the product or plan and how. How would you modify the original venture? How will you update it? Discuss these substantive changes, and why the venture is now better/more viable/poised for success.

The written plan is due by the beginning of our last and 7th class session (**October 16th, 2025**). **Student must be present in final class in order to receive a grade for this assignment.**

Class Participation (100 points)

Class participation is critical to the success of the course. Consequently, it is given a large point total. Grade will be based on student's active contributions to class discussions as well as grades on in class work:

91-100 points – student was highly engaged in class on a weekly basis contributing insightful questions and thoughts.

86-90 points – student was moderately engaged in class on a periodic basis and occasionally contributes insightful questions and thoughts.

80-85 points – student was somewhat engaged in class contributing obvious questions and thoughts.

75-79 points – student was present but did not participate

50-74 points – student missed classes with various levels of participation

0 points – student did not contribute in class.

Course Etiquette and Guests:

Treat your professor and our guests as you would a customer. We operate this class like the business world.

We anticipate several guest speakers throughout the semester. Please be prompt as they will be, and make sure to greet them and make them feel welcome! **Sometimes our guests will be joining us for dinner—Let me know ahead of time if you'd like to join us and we will try and accommodate. We will inform you of changes as they occur.**

The class is treated as a business meeting. Therefore, tardiness and absences without notice are not acceptable. If you have a customer meeting, you will be on time. If you cannot be on time, you will call well in advance. Similar etiquette is required in this program. Your responsibilities for all classes are to:

1. Attend the class promptly
2. Minimize distractions
3. Be present
4. Have your camera on and audio muted (unless you're speaking)
5. Be respectful of your fellow students when they are presenting
6. Be respectful of our guest speakers

Course Reader

The following readings are assigned by week in the course schedule below. Additional readings may be assigned throughout the semester, as much of what we will discuss in class is current trends and events in the industry. Readings and cases will be posted to Brightspace.

Case Study: Gunther Shugerman, Sherry and Dokic, Tamara, [Media Moonshot: Fred Seibert on the Launch of MTV and Entertainment's Branding Revolution](#), July, 2024 (**Week 1**)

Adalian, Josef, [Netflix Bad Decisions Have Caught-Up With It](#), *Vulture*, April 21st, 2022; Dropbox link: [Netflix Bad Habits Have Caught-Up With It](#) (**Week 5**)

Amidi, Amid, *Cartoon Brew*, [New Report Confirms Worst Fears: AI Will Disrupt Countless Animation Jobs Over Next 3 Years](#) January 21, 2024; Dropbox link: http://192.168.68.112:57436/share_lfvb#?source=link (Week 3)

BBC News- Tech, ["TikTok Overtakes YouTube for Average Watch Time"](#), BBC News- Tech, September 6th, 2021; Dropbox link: [TikTok Overtakes YouTube](#) (Week 3)

Bouvard, Pierre- <https://www.westwoodone.com/2021/04/26/the-state-of-tv-cord-cutting-viewership-declines>, Westwood One, April 26th, 2021; Dropbox link: [The State of TV Cord Cutting- Viewership Declines](#) (Week 5)

Canal, Alexandra, [Media layoffs: Google, Paramount, Disney, and others commit to job cuts in 2024](#), *Yahoo Finance*, February 27th, 2024; (Week 2)

Carras, Christi, [U.S. film and TV production down 40% from peak TV levels, report says](#), *Los Angeles Times*, July 11, 2024 (Week 5)

Das, Pritom, [The Future of the Entertainment Industry Beyond 2020](#), *Entrepreneur*, September 10th, 2020; Dropbox link: [The Future of the Entertainment Industry Beyond 2020](#) (Week 1)

Fowler, Adam J., [Future Unscripted- The Impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence on Entertainment Industry Jobs](#), CVL Economics report for Animation Guild (Week 3)

Granados, Nelson, [Predicting The Pivotal Role Of AI In Media And Entertainment](#), *Forbes*, November 6, 2023; Dropbox link: http://192.168.68.112:57436/share_lfvb#?source=link (Week 3)

Haan, Katherine, [Content Marketing Statistics for 2024](#), *Forbes Advisor*, March 28, 2024 ((Week 6)

Hern, Alex, [YouTube's battle with TikTok takes its toll as revenues dip](#), *The Guardian*, October 26th, 2022; Dropbox link: [YouTube's battle with TikTok takes its toll as revenues dip](#) (Week 3)

Iqbal, Mansoor, [Netflix Revenue and Usage Statistics \(2024\) - Business of Apps](#), *Business of Apps*, July 8, 2024; (Week 5)

James, Megan, [Disney got 'The Simpsons' and 'Avatar' but some now see the Fox deal as a mistake](#), *Los Angeles Times*, February 18th, 2023; Dropbox link: [Disney Got "The Simpsons" and 'Avatar' But Some Now See the Fox Deal as a Mistake](#) (Week 2)

Krueger, Troy S., [Entertainment Business and Successful Entrepreneurship](#), *OrlandoBands.com*, August 21, 2012, accessed March 10, 2017; Dropbox Link: ["Entertainment Business and Successful Entrepreneurship."](#) (Week 1)

Littleton, Cynthia and Spangler, Todd, ["Merger Mayhem- Media Companies Scramble to Bulk Up in Order to Survive"](#) *Variety*, April 24, 2018; Dropbox link: ["Merger Mayhem- Media Companies Scramble to Bulk Up in Order to Survive"](#) (Week 2)

Maglio, Tony, [How Many Subscribers Each Streaming Service Has - Spring 2024 Edition](#), *IndieWire*, March 29, 2024 (Week 5)

Noronha, Remus, [The 10 Most Popular YouTubers in the World Today \(June 2024\)](#), *Collider*, June 29th, 2024, (Week 3)

Ruvic, Dado, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/04/08/warnermedia-discovery-complete-merger-become-warner-bros-discovery.html>, *CNBC*, April 9, 2022; Dropbox link: [WarnerMedia, Discovery Complete Merger, Become Warner Bros. Discovery](#) (Week 2)

St. James, Emily, <https://www.vox.com/culture/2019/3/20/18273477/disney-fox-merger-deal-details-marvel-x-men> *Vox*, March 20, 2019; Dropbox link: [Here's what Disney owns after the massive Disney/Fox merger](#) (Week 3)

Takyar, Akash, [Exploring the use cases and applications of AI in the media and entertainment industry](#) Leeway Hertz, January, 2024; (Week 3)

Tsuo, Tien, [Streaming Media Trends 2024: Super Bundles, Niche Content & Personalization](#), Zuora, July, 2024 (Week 6)

Class Grading

Class participation	up to	100 (12.5%)
Midterm- In Class Venture Presentation (group)	up to	200 (25 %)
Venture Critique/Advice Paper	up to	100 (12.5%)
Industry Streamer Analysis Paper	up to	100 (12.5%)
Final Paper (Individual)	up to	300 (37.5%)

Total Possible Points		800 (100%)
------------------------------	--	-------------------

Grading Policies

To achieve an A in this class, you will need to go well beyond the minimum requirements as stated in the syllabus in terms of the quality of your work and your involvement in and contribution to the class. An A is a sign of superior work and, much like the efforts of entrepreneurs, reflects the fact that you stood out from the crowd.

Please be advised that your papers will be submitted on a random basis to “TurnItIn” through the Brightspace system, which will generate an originality report on your paper. Bottom line: Your original thought, in addition to carefully cited sources, will insure that you don’t run into academic integrity issues that may affect your grade or your standing at the university. Any material cited verbatim from its original source should be in quotes and contain a reference to a full citation for that source. Paraphrased work should also contain a reference to the source citation.

If you have any questions about your grade during the semester, please make an appointment to see me to discuss your concerns. Do not wait until the end of the semester to do so!

Evaluation of Your Work

You may regard each of your submissions as an “exam” in which you apply what you’ve learned according to the assignment. I will do my best to make my expectations for the various assignments clear and to evaluate them as fairly and objectively as I can. If you feel that an error has occurred in the grading of any assignment, you may, within one week of the date the assignment is returned to you, write me a memo in which you request that I re-evaluate the assignment. Attach the original assignment to the memo and explain fully and carefully why you think the assignment should be re-graded. Be aware that the re-evaluation process can result in three types of grade adjustments: positive, none, or negative. Participation is evaluated based on your level of involvement in class discussions – both the quality (relevance and insightfulness) and quantity (frequency) of your participation.

Guidelines for all Course Assignments (Please read carefully!)

The following guidelines apply to ALL assignments without exception.

All assignments must be posted to Brightspace by the date and time due as posted in the Course Plan. No exceptions. If you will not be in class on the due date, your individual or team assignment must still arrive no later than the time and date it is due. Please keep copies of all your files and emails until the end of the semester.

File labels are critical because all assignments are submitted online. It is critical that you follow the labeling conventions below (they're very logical).

1. Any files (only SINGLE files please) must be labeled as follows:
yourlastname_575_assignment name. I do not accept files with generic labels like "assignment."
2. You should put your name and your teammates' names (if it is a team assignment) in alphabetical order at the top of the page of the actual assignment document or on the cover slide of a PowerPoint deck.

Assignments that do not follow these rules will be returned and considered late when resubmitted correctly if it is past the time it is due. These requirements are necessary to maintain order and to find files quickly.

Participation Requirements

The Entrepreneur Program is a real life experience and as such expects you to be real world professionals. We only have 8 weeks together to cover a lot of ground and the class discussions depend on a full class of active participants to best accomplish our objectives. Additionally, each class builds on subjects discussed in previous classes, so it would be challenging to have a discussion as a group if some of the group lacks the building blocks. You get out of it what you put into it!

Engagement in classroom discussions is essential to the graduate student's learning experience, especially in a class that addresses an ever-evolving industry. Students should be prepared to participate in each class session and also be ready for follow-up questions when they choose to participate. Students should attempt to contribute to the class in different ways (e.g., laying out related facts, presenting analyses, forming opinions about subjects discussed and opportunities they represent, bringing in outside knowledge, etc.). At the end of the semester you will be asked to complete a self-assessment of your participation. It is impossible to earn a participation points if the student is not in class. Students are expected to attend all classes on time and stay until dismissed.

1. Attendance at class sessions is critical. We may discuss material not found in the course materials as well as conduct in-class exercises. If you do miss a class, you are responsible for staying up-to-date on course content and assignments. Please download class slides from Brightspace and check with classmates or me regarding potential handouts and announcements.
2. Show up on time and stay until the end—it is disruptive to your classmates' learning experience if you arrive late or leave early.
3. Prepare for the class.
4. Participate actively in classroom discussions and in-class exercises. Effective class participation consists of analyzing, commenting, questioning, discussing, and building on others' contributions. The ability to present one's ideas concisely and persuasively and to respond effectively to the ideas of others is a key entrepreneurial skill.
5. Make good use of guest presenters' time. Ask thoughtful questions after guest speaker and student presentation.

IV. COURSE POLICIES

Add/Drop Process

We can drop you from our class if you don't attend the first meeting of a class that meets once per week or first two meetings of a class that meets twice per week. If you are dropped from the class you risk not being able to add yourself to another section this semester. Please visit www.usc.edu/soc and note the final deadlines to add/drop.

Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies Confidentiality Policy

Throughout The Entrepreneur Program's classes and events, students will be exposed to proprietary information from other students, guest lecturers, and faculty. It is the policy of The Entrepreneur Program that all such information be treated as confidential.

By enrolling in and taking part in The Entrepreneur Program's classes and activities, students agree not to disclose this information to any third parties without specific written permission from students, guest lecturers or faculty, as applicable. Students further agree not to use any such proprietary information for their own personal commercial advantage or for the commercial advantage of any third party.

In addition, students agree that any legal or consulting advice provided without direct fee and in an academic setting will not be relied upon without the enlisted opinion of an outside attorney or consultant without affiliation to The Program. Any breach of this policy may subject a student to academic integrity proceedings as described in the University of Southern California "University Governance Policies and Procedures" as outlined in *SCampus* and to any remedies that may be available at law.

The Entrepreneur Program, the Marshall School of Business and the University of Southern California disclaim any responsibility for the protection of intellectual property of students, guest lecturers or faculty who are involved in The Entrepreneur Program classes or events. Receipt of this policy and registration in our classes is evidence that you understand this policy and will abide by it.

Technology Policy

Laptop and Internet usage is not permitted during academic or professional sessions unless otherwise stated by the respective professor and/or staff. Use of other personal communication devices, such as cell phones, is considered unprofessional and is not permitted during academic or professional sessions. ANY e-devices (cell phones, PDAs, I-Phones, Blackberries, other texting devices, laptops, I-pods) must be completely turned off during class time. Upon request, you must comply and put your device on the table in off mode and FACE DOWN. Use of any recorded or distributed material is reserved exclusively for the USC students registered in this class.

No AI usage permitted

Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

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 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](#).

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.

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 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) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
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.

OPEN EXPRESSION AND RESPECT FOR ALL

An important goal of the educational experience at USC Marshall is to be exposed to and discuss diverse, thought-provoking, and sometimes controversial ideas that challenge one's beliefs. In this course we will support the values articulated in the USC Marshall "[Open Expression Statement](https://www.marshall.usc.edu/open-expression-statement)" (<https://www.marshall.usc.edu/open-expression-statement>).

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, the *USC Emergency Information* web site (<http://emergency.usc.edu/>) will provide safety and other information, including electronic means by which instructors will conduct class using a combination of Brightspace, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Please make sure you can access this course in Brightspace and retrieve the course syllabus and other course materials electronically. You should check Brightspace regularly for announcements and new materials. In the event of an emergency, the ability to access Brightspace will be crucial. USC's Brightspace learning management system and support information is available at Brightspace.usc.edu.

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" <https://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, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

Students with Disabilities:

USC is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. If you have a disability which may impact your performance, attendance, or grades in this course and require accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Services and Programs (www.usc.edu/disability). DSP provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS (Grace Ford Salvatori Hall) 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. Email: ability@usc.edu.

IMPORTANT! RECEIPT OF THIS SYLLABUS AND REGISTRATION IN THIS COURSE WILL SERVE AS EVIDENCE THAT YOU UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE.

VI. COURSE SCHEDULE BY WEEK

This schedule may change due to changes in guests' schedules, and additional readings may be distributed during the semester.

WEEK 1: Thursday, 8/28/25

TOPIC

Introduction / Course Overview, Traits of an Entrepreneur in Media and Entertainment, Media Entrepreneur's journey- Sherry Gunther Shugerman

Traits of an entrepreneur- this session will examine the traits of an entrepreneur and how such traits may match or differ from those of an entrepreneur in the media industry. What does it take to make it in the media industry, what does it take to innovate in the media industry, are those all the same skills? What do you believe are the traits of an entrepreneur in media? Are they different than the traits of other entrepreneurs? What are the traits of a corporate entrepreneur in media? What makes a successful media executive, and are some of the traits the same as those as an entrepreneur in any industry? As a way of introduction, I will share my personal entrepreneur's journey story.

Class Schedule:

-Introduction to class and review of the class project/deliverables and exciting line up of speakers

-Lecture on weekly topic- Traits of an Entrepreneur in the Entertainment Industry

-Form student groups for Class Project

-Break

- Sherry Gunther Shugerman's journey- A Media Entrepreneur's Journey. Sherry Gunther Shugerman is a two-time Emmy-Award winning producer and media executive with 5 additional Emmy-Award Nominations, a Cable-Ace Award, and multiple film festival awards.

Sherry is currently producing two adult animated series for Netflix with Zack Snyder and his team.

Additionally, Sherry is building a new venture, KazooBadoo, a K-5 immersive educational platform for content driven experiential learning.

As a producer, studio executive and serial entrepreneur, Sherry holds an unparalleled track-record of creating developing and producing some of television's top hits for the past 3 decades as well as feature films, digital media content and AR/VR. Sherry was the original producer of *'The Simpsons'*, *'Family Guy'*, *'Rugrats'*, and more.

Sherry has headed up studios and production divisions for Twentieth Century Fox, Warner Bros., Nickelodeon, and Klasky Csupo. She also helmed Hanna Barbera when the company was bought by Turner and was part of the team that launched The Cartoon Network with hits such as: *'PowerPuff Girls'*, *'Dexter's Laboratory'*, *'Johnny Bravo'*, *'Courage the Cowardly Dog'*, *'Cow and Chicken'* and more.

Sherry's passion for quality entertainment, her mastery of the creative and production processes, and her cultivated relationships with creative talent, global networks, distribution and co-production partners, have enabled her to continue to innovate and produce hit franchises.

As an entrepreneur, Sherry spent 7 years as a pioneer innovating digital content for virtual worlds and social gaming.

She then created and launched *The Beatrix Girls*, a true multi-platform media brand of pop-star fashion dolls supported by digital content and original music, which her company manufactured and sold in retail in 13 countries with 9 additional brand licensees. Sherry's current EdTech venture, KazooBadoo, is an immersive platform for experiential learning for elementary school kids.

Sherry has been consulting, advising and serving on boards of numerous start-ups in the tech, digital and media space. Sherry has a BS from UCLA and an MBA from USC.

Deliverables:

-Readings:

[\(Entertainment Business and Successful Entrepreneurship\)](#)

[The Future of the Entertainment Industry Beyond 2020](#)

[Media Moonshot- Fred Seibert Case Study](#)

WEEK 2: Thursday, 9/4/25

TOPIC

Historical Overview- TV, Cable, Digital Media, Streaming

Who are the players then and now? Customers, distribution channels, and content providers.

Industry Mergers- How the large media companies continually react to the inevitable evolution.

Industry Perspective- Fred Seibert.

The media industry is ever evolving, and with it, evolve the opportunities, points of entry, customers, audience, distribution channels, content providers, and even the content itself. This class will review the historical evolution of content outlets and how they affect all of the above factors. Digital media, streaming networks, and incredible demand for content, has left large media companies scrambling. To better position themselves for future growth and to be able to compete, huge mergers took place that have allowed media companies to vertically integrate. From AT&T/Time Warner/Discovery to Disney/Fox and CBS/Viacom/Paramount and now Skydance – How have they each fared and how has this consolidation affected the industry as a whole?

From there we will discuss what the future of media holds.

Guest speaker: **Fred Seibert**- Founder and CEO of Fred Films. Fred, a media industry innovator and trail-blazer, will share his journey in multiple areas of the industry and his insights on where we may be headed

Class Schedule:

- Guest Speaker- **Fred Seibert**- Media Entrepreneur and innovator-Fred Seibert is the founder of [Frederator Networks](#), co-founder of [Thirty Labs](#), and a serial media entrepreneur. He was the first creative director of MTV and the last president of [Hanna-Barbera Cartoons](#). Fred was the founder of [Next New Networks](#) (acquired by YouTube). He's on the board of directors of [Sawhorse Media](#), and was the first investor in [Tumblr](#). [Frederator Networks](#) is [Channel Frederator](#), the leading online cartoon network, [Frederator Studios](#), an independent production company with hits on Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon, [Cartoon Hangover](#), the home of [Bravest Warriors](#) and [Bee & PuppyCat](#) (the most funded web series [Kickstarter](#) in history), and [Frederator Books](#). Frederator distributes hundreds of independently owned, animator operated, YouTube channels. Frederator was bought out by Rainmaker to form [WOW! Entertainment](#) in 2019 and Fred resigned in 2020 to form Fred Films. [Thirty Labs](#) is a technology start-up studio, focused exclusively on video innovations. - Break

-Break

-Lecture/Discussion- Historical Overview of the media industry- From TV to cable to digital media- Defining distribution channels and customers- lecture/Discussion- Where have we been, where we are, and where we are headed.

-Discussion about the recent merger/consolidation trend and the implication on the industry.

Deliverables:

-The Future of AI' Analysis Paper (due prior to the start of class- to be turned in digitally online.)

-Readings:

["Merger Mayhem- Media Companies Scramble to Bulk Up in Order to Survive"](#)

[Warner Media Discovery Complete Merger Become Warner Bros. Discovery](#)

[Disney Got "The Simpsons" and 'Avatar' But Some Now See the Fox Deal as a Mistake](#)

[Media layoffs- Google, Paramountm Disney and others commit to job cuts in 2024](#)

WEEK 3: Thursday, 9/12/24

TOPIC

The Digital Evolution- From YouTube to TikTok - How did it all come about, how has it evolved, and where is it headed?

From content distribution to content itself and how it has been affected by this digital evolution.

The advent of YouTube created abundant opportunities for content creators and for brand marketers. It broke down the barriers of traditional networks and enabled a new forum. YouTube created an

opportunity for content creators to be their own outlets by uploading their own content without having to go through the traditional gate keepers/networks- but how does one garner an audience? Lack of barriers creates excessive competition. Can you/your content stand above the noise? What does it take to succeed? And what kind of success can one expect? With the creation of this new format, new channels, like TikTok have risen, and new forms of content were created. We will view various forms of content that have resonated and examine the implications on this evolving content and how the digital revolution has affected traditional and emerging media channels, content, and audience, and what new entrepreneurial opportunities have arisen within the industry.

This discussion will then lead us to the new player, AI, and how it may affect content opportunities.

How is AI impacting the industry today, and what is its current and future place and impact in the entertainment business.

Generative AI- Its speed of light evolution has impacted our ability to use predict audience behavior, and it has thereby influenced programming and our ability to tailor content to viewer preferences. But now it is facilitating and threatening every aspect of content creation- from writing to visual effects, to fully creating content. What has been the role and impact of AI to date and what do we anticipate in from it in the future?

We will hear from a prominent media executive who has helped shape the face of the industry as we know it today. Guest Speaker- **Eric Shamlin**, CEO, Secret Level AI, the most accomplished and prolific AI-native entertainment studio. With a career spanning three decades across Hollywood, Silicon Valley and Madison Avenue, Eric has delivered iconic work at Apple, Omnicom, Entertainment One, and Monks. He is a multiple Emmy, Peabody and Cannes Lion winner. Eric is an active member of the creative community and currently sits on the Board of Governors for the Emmys, where he Chairs their AI Task Force, in addition to being the Innovation Chair for the Producers Guild of America and holds multiple advisory positions for the SXSW film festival.

Eric will share his insights on what is going on in the AI space and AI's impact on the industry.

Class Schedule:

-Guest Speaker- **Eric Shamlin**

-Break

-Lecture/Discussion -The evolution of YouTube- quick rise, amazing opportunities, game changer!
-YouTube Influencers, content and demographics-- review of channels and influencers that are resonating.
- New digital media content outlets- FB, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, and more
- Generative Artificial Intelligence The power and influence of AI- it's role and impact in the industry and how will it shape the future of entertainment?

Deliverables:

-Readings:

[YouTube's battle with TikTok takes its toll as revenues dip](#)
[TikTok Overtakes YouTube](#)
[The 10 Most Popular YouTubers in the World Today \(June 2024\)](#)
[Predicting The Pivotal Role Of AI In Media And Entertainment](#),
[Future Unscripted- The Impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence on Entertainment Industry Jobs](#),

WEEK 4: Thursday, 9/19/24

- **Group Presentation Mid-Terms**
- **Classmates listen and provide in class questions and critique and prepare for their critique papers.**

Deliverables:

-Groups Mid-Term presentation (Digital deck due on Brightspace prior to the start of class, group in class presentations.)

WEEK 5: Thursday, 9/25/25

TOPICS

The Streaming Wars- OTT-Streaming Networks- Netflix Amazon Hulu Paramount+ Peacock and so many new ones. How did they evolve, what role are they playing in the industry? Where are they headed? Are they taking over traditional broadcast networks and cable networks? And how are traditional networks/media companies adapting?

Guest Speaker- **Todd Mendeloff**, Co-founder & COO of Wisecrack- an independent YouTube content channel that has recently been acquired. Todd will share his insights on what it takes to succeed, and where we are headed.

Class Schedule:

-Guest Speaker- **Todd Mendeloff**, a seasoned digital media executive and entrepreneur, has had a thriving career in digital media, from managing client partnerships to digital operations, to heading up production, and had a 5 year stint at the Walt Disney Studios as the VP of digital media marketing and distribution as well as VP of Product. He has launched several digital media companies, and his latest venture, Wisecrack, is a fast growing YouTube channel focusing on a niche audience and content strategy. Wisecrack that has demonstrated success in growing its audience to over 500M views and 5M subscribers and has recently been acquired by Blue Ant Media.

-Break

-Lecture and discussion on streaming networks with a focus on Netflix and the latest rush by all media giants to control the space. Disney, Time Warner, Apple and more.

Deliverables:

-Readings:

[The State of TV Cord Cutting- Viewership Declines](#)

[Netflix Bad Decisions Have Caught-Up With It](#)

, [Netflix Revenue and Usage Statistics \(2024\) - Business of Apps](#)

[U.S. film and TV production down 40% from peak TV levels, report says.](#)

-Critique papers due (Student must be present in the class session where venture is presented in order to have their critique accepted.)

WEEK 6: Thursday, 10/2/25

TOPIC

Content is King/Breaking into the Industry

Then, now, always- How does one make sure their content stands out? -We will discuss the elements of strong content, as well as the emergence of different types of content.

We will also discuss trends in new media and entertainment and the evolution of content- Serial, Reality, Social, YouTube Influencers, shorter format for digital, continuous programming for bingers, Music, Gaming, Apps, VR, AR, Content Marketing.

Exploring trends in content- how is the entertainment industry setting and reacting to trends. How do you take advantage of new trends to help define new trends?

Content is king- no matter the outlet, no matter the demographic of the audience. We've discussed the evolution of the media industry over time, from distribution channels, to consumer behavior, to product (the nature of content itself.)

But regardless of the genre, outlet, or demographic, the importance of strong content cannot be denied. But has the nature of content changed over time, and how? Will it continue to evolve? We will hear from content creator, **Guest**

Speaker- Farnaz Esnaashari-Charmatz- Creator of Nickelodeon's hit international franchise - SHIMMER AND SHINE | Executive Producer | Kids & Family Specialist | Creative Strategist and Consultant | Creative Storyteller | Founder of The Pitch Docs

Class Schedule:

-Guest speaker- **Farnaz Esnaashari-Charmatz**- is the creator of *Shimmer and Shine* pre-school hit on Nickelodeon, a prolific creator, producer, and creative executive, will discuss her journey through the entertainment industry and how

she created her own path. She will also discussed how she identified an opportunity
-Break
-Content is King- the importance of great content, and how it has changed over time

Deliverables:

-Readings:

[Content Marketing Statistics for 2024,](#)

[Streaming Media Trends 2024: Super Bundles, Niche Content & Personalization,](#)

Thursday 10/9/25 – Fall Recess

WEEK 7: Thursday, 10/16/25

TOPIC

Funding and Monetizing Media Venture

So you have a great idea but need funding. Where do you go?

Funding media ventures- as always- it is not easy to raise funding. What are the outlets, what other options are there?...And, whether you've had your venture funded and now need to deliver and begin to monetize to sustain and grow, or whether you need to bootstrap and monetize to support your new venture from the start, monetization is crucial to success. Where would you go to fund your project/company in media? What options are available for outside funding? How can you possibly bootstrap and build on your own? Do you see any new opportunities emerging on the funding front? What ways can you monetize a new media venture? How have opportunities to monetize evolved as the industry has evolved? How do you believe monetization and monetization opportunities will continue to evolve?

We will be joined by Guest Speakers- **Thea Knobel**- former student in this class© and successful entrepreneur and investor, Thea will discuss her journey from Techstars to GSV Ventures, to Launch Haus and now Medium. **Maria DeSantis**- Principal at Muse Capital, Maria began her career as an entrepreneur. The two will share their experiences as entrepreneurs and investors.

Class Schedule:

-Lecture and discussion regarding funding and monetizing media ventures

-Break

-Funding Your Media Venture- guest speaker :-**Thea Knobel** is Vice President at boutique real estate development company Solaris Group, where she recently launched Chasing Rabbits. Chasing Rabbits is an entertainment venue that offers many experiences under one roof including dining, cinema, a speakeasy, library lounge, and a revamped arcade. (www.crvail.com).

Previously Thea worked at various venture capital firms, investing in and supporting founders building startups. There she hosted a weekly show interviewing top CEOs, founders, & VCs and a popular tech newsletter. Additionally, she ran a \$1M pitch competition (the GSV Cup) with 700+ global founders from across the world.

Thea is a guest lecturer at USC Marshall, where she teaches public speaking at the graduate level. Additionally, Thea holds a Masters in Entrepreneurship & Innovation from USC, where she received honors going towards the top 1% of graduates.

Maria DeSantis- Maria is currently a Principal at Muse Capital, an LA-based consumer tech venture fund, where she supports and leads due diligence, portfolio management, investment thesis development, portfolio construction and fund strategy. She began her career in the tech startup ecosystem in Madrid, Spain. Working as Head of Business Development for a venture backed seed stage startup building a consumer facing gamified platform in the mobility space, Maria helped the company internationalize across Europe - specifically in Italy - onboarding new partners and building top of funnel strategies.

Upon graduating in the top 10% of her class from IE Business School, one of Europe's leading institutions in business, Maria moved to Los Angeles to pursue a specialized Masters Degree in Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California, where she took an active investment role at the USC Marshall Venture Fund. There, she conducted in depth due diligence into

potential investments, pitching the opportunity to the investment committee, which includes partners from Kleiner Perkins, Techstars, Index Ventures, Upfront, Pritzker Group and Y Combinator. Born from an Italian father and a Taiwanese mother, Maria is fluent in four languages and has lived across Milan, Madrid and Los Angeles..

Deliverables:

-Final project due digitally (to be submitted into Brightspace) prior to the start of class. (Student must attend this class session in order for Final project to be accepted.)