

BRANDED CONTENT

IE University

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Academic year: 22-23

Degree course: THIRD

Semester: 2^o

Category: **COMPULSORY**

Number of credits: 6.0

Language: English

PREREQUISITES

SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

Our world is changing at an exponential rate. We are constantly bombarded by content, both on and offline, which seeks to grab our attention and our loyalty. The challenge that individuals, small businesses, corporations, and even governments and nonprofits face is to get our attention, engage us and move us to action. But these days, advertising doesn't just compete with other advertising, it competes with everything online and everything else everywhere; with entertainment, information, art, etc. To effectively reach our audiences, we have to reach people where they will spend the time to engage with the content we produce. The content has to be relevant, worth their time, and most importantly, it has to create value. Advertising has to achieve the goal of starting conversations, engaging, creating communities and has to be worthy of sharing.

Not long ago, the main channel for advertising was television commercials. Although they continue to be useful and effective, this kind of advertising relies on a "push" model that disrupts the viewer's attention. As audiences shift to a reality in which they determine the content they will view, when and where they will view it, and whether or not to share this content with their own networks, push advertising is giving way to a "pull" methodology in which the objective is not only to get people's attention but to engage them.

ENTER BRANDED CONTENT: From this reality sprung an entirely new genre of communication referred to as Branded Content. It has its origins in early advertising models but has really only come into its own with the shift to online digital marketing and the prevalent use of social networks for consuming, viewing and sharing content. Different changes in several areas - market, consumer, media ecosystem, as well as sociocultural and economic ones - produced and/or accelerated by the so called Digital Revolution, have both led to a profound evolution of the marketing paradigm and leveraged consumers to an unprecedented level of empowerment, transforming the way they relate with brands.

This new marketing paradigm, together with new media consumption habits, implies a new way of communicating with consumers, in which traditional tools lose both effectiveness and efficiency, ushering in new ones based on audiences' freedom to access and consume content. This new way of communicating is the essence of Branded Content, a marketing communication technique in which brands become creators, producers and distributors of content, relevant to their respective audiences, in a new model based on the pursuit of engagement, on audiences' choice of access and on a non-interruption/pull approach.

While traditional ways of communicating are primarily based on both an interruption and push approach, new ways are based on both a non-interruption and pull one; it is being the audience who actively choose to engage with brands content.

Today's empowered consumer can access whatever content they decide to, as well as when, where and how they choose, thus skipping the traditional interruption model of traditional advertising. This new way of communicating is the essence of Branded Content, a marketing communication technique in which brands become creators, producers and distributors of content, relevant to their respective audiences, in a new model based on the pursuit of engagement, on audiences' choice of access and on a non-interruption/pull approach.

OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS

This course is aimed at providing students with an immersion into the world of Branded Content Strategy and Creation. The main objective is to develop the students into highly-competent creative project managers and content producers, capable of end-to-end creative management in the world of Branded Content, Content Marketing and Brand Storytelling.

Students should be able to create and execute a Branded Content campaign and fully integrate the creative process from initial concept to final production in a PULL methodology. Students will understand the concept and nature of Branded Content; they will be able to identify the main different Branded Content techniques and tools, their respective characteristics and dynamics, as well as to determine which one of them better fits into a given brand communications strategy.

By the end of the course they should be able to develop a comprehensive Branded Content strategy.

Students should be able to do the following:

- To understand what Branded Content is and its evolution to today's digital environment.
- To understand the structure of the advertising industry.
- To utilize the language of commercial visual communication
- To use storytelling techniques through still and moving images
- To write a high impact Creative Pitch
- To dissect brand identity and personality and utilize them towards creating campaigns concepts and brand stories
- To understand Production Planning
- To create, critique and evaluate creative portfolios
- To execute a high quality Branded Content campaign solution

EQUIPMENT

Students will use equipment that they have borrowed from IE (and optionally their own equipment) for their projects.

COURSE CONTENT

This course takes advantage of Experiential Learning Techniques to take the student on the journey of Commercial Image-making in both traditional Advertising as well as Branded Content Marketing.

The course uses the process of developing a CREATIVE PITCH as the basis for the entire process of exploration from Brand Analysis to actual Production of still and moving images as well as Content Marketing Methodologies. Special emphasis is made on the role of Brand Storytelling in the creation of Branded Content Strategies, Tactics and Campaign Concepts.

In addition, the course sets out to answer or accomplish the following:

- Why do certain images work for certain brands and not for others?
- What makes a campaign effective?
- Understanding the development of creative concepts
- Examining the most successful campaigns and why they work
- Brand archetypes and casting
- What is Branded Content?
- How does Branded Content differ from Advertising?
- Who are the players?
- What is the relationship between Art, Accounts and Production
- How do we measure the success of a campaign?
- What does a typical budget look like?
- How do you select your Creative Team?
- The production process from conception to delivery

METHODOLOGY

The course uses Experiential Education Techniques that combine active learning opportunities followed by hands-on experiences and finally, extensive feedback and review processes. Students will execute Individual Projects as well as Group Projects in which they will be responsible for the development and execution of "real-life" exercises and production of campaigns. Through games, activities, projects, production shoots, presentations and discussions students will develop their ability to conceptualize, pitch, produce and commission commercial image-making projects. A special emphasis will be placed on verbal communication of images as well as storytelling in commercial image-making.

We will examine many of the world's best Branded Content campaigns in order to learn what makes them grab people's attention, hang on for the ride and even share a Brand's content, the pot at the end of the rainbow.

PEDAGOGICAL PROGRESSION:

Students will learn a model for the process of developing a CREATIVE PITCH from brand analysis to final concepts and production proposals.

By virtue of the fact that it teaches this process one step at a time, students have the opportunity to build their capacity to execute Creative Campaigns because they have the opportunity to execute multiple campaigns throughout the course. The intention is that by the end of the course, each student will have completed the entire process across many different Branded Content tactics including still images as well as video and Content Marketing delivery strategies.

READING

Throughout the course, excerpts from several different books and articles will be supplied to the students including "Epic Content Marketing: How to Tell a Different Story, Break through the Clutter, and Win More Customers by Marketing Less" by Joe Pulizzi

| Teaching methodology | Weighting | Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---|
| Lectures | 33.33 % | 50 hours |
| Discussions | 13.33 % | 20 hours |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Exercises | 6.67 % | 10 hours |
| Group work | 33.33 % | 50 hours |
| Other individual studying | 13.33 % | 20 hours |
| TOTAL | 100.0 % | 150 hours |

PROGRAM

SESSION 1 (LIVE ONLINE)

Lesson: Getting started and examining attention as a factor in marketing

1. Introduction to the course.
 - Objectives of the course
 - Structure of the course
 - Evaluation Method
 - Learning Expectations
2. How brands get our attention
 - The psychology of attention
 - Getting and keeping our attention

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSIONS 2 - 3 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: Overview of Branded Content: From push advertising to pull content

1. From pay mechanisms to owned and earned media:
 - A new marketing paradigm implies a new way of communication between brands and consumers
2. Interruption Advertising (Push)
3. Branded Content (Pull)
4. Channels of advertising now and how they are changing
 - Traditional media reacts to new habits of media consumption
 - Linear/offline audiences decreasing
 - What is strategy and how is it changing?
 - Consumers determine their own content consumption
5. What is Branded Content?
 - Fulfilling the Brand Promise and the customer's needs, desires and wants through Content
 - Strategies and examples
 - Overview of all of the different tactics of Branded Content available
 - Breaking down Branded Content into categories
 - Information and knowledge
 - Lifestyle
 - Entertainment
 - Social Values & Emotional content

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSIONS 4 - 5 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: Storytelling and Dynamic Value Change

In this session we will examine the meaning of story and how it applies in the commercial world.

- What is Storytelling in a commercial world?
- Why do human beings tell stories?
- What is the hero's journey and what role does it have in Brand Storytelling?
- Dynamic Value Change
- Why do so many attempts at telling Brand stories fail?
- What makes a story compelling?
- Why are narratives less effective than real stories in capturing audiences attention? - How can you develop an authentic story?

Students will conduct an exercise in which they have to match the storytelling Dynamic Value Change with a series of Branded Content pieces.

- Students will examine a brand Case Study in their groups and discuss the following:
 - What is the story of the Brand?
 - What is the dynamic value change?
 - Create a Branded Content Storytelling campaign which will drive ENGAGEMENT for the Brand
 - Identify the target audience
 - Identify the story you will tell
 - How will the content drive engagement?
 - What channels would you use?

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 6 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Lesson: What is Content Marketing?

Online Activity: Examining different Content Marketing tactics

1. Content Marketing Touchpoints in the customer journey
 - Webpages
 - Social Media
 - Shopping
 - Editorial/Advertorial
 - Others
2. Channels evolve and shift
 - Hybrids messages in which brand message is inserted into non-commercial content:
Sponsorship, Product Placement, Brand Integration

Article: Tallie Gabriel: Infographic: A Brief History of Content Marketing (Contently, April 2nd, 2018)

Article: Your Content Marketing Strategy Doesn't Have to Be Complicated (to be published) (HBR H02WV4-PDF-ENG)

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 7 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: The Branded Content Funnel and the Customer Journey

Online Activity: The Customer Journey through the Branded Content World

Customer Journey: Understanding the relationship between the Customer Journey and the potential tactics used at each successive point

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 8 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Lesson: Branded Content Success Stories

Students will examine and discuss in an online forum various examples of Branded Content from each of the categories of content covered in the previous session

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSIONS 9 - 10 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: What Makes Brands Go Viral

- What makes online Branded Content Campaigns go Viral?
- What do all viral campaigns have in common and what elements make them unique?
- What is the structure of virality with respect to traditional forms of dissemination?
- The best examples of viral Branded Content out there
- What role does social influence have in shaping the choices we make?
- What kinds of content do we simply view, vs the content that we like or share?
- What does the future hold for online viral content?
- Emotional Triggers and Social Currency
- Examples

Activity: students will create a viral campaign concept based upon the learnings in class.

Book Chapters: Excerpts from Berger, J: Contagious: Why Things Catch on (IE Library)

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 11 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Lesson: Content Marketing Strategy and Practice

Online Activity: create a Branded Content Treatment and Strategy

Activity: The Brand Ambassador Program

- Examine examples of Brand Ambassador Programs
- Develop an idea for a Brand Ambassador program of your own and develop a brief treatment

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 12 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Lesson: When Branded Content is Information

Online activity analyzing different brands and their approach to providing information.

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSIONS 13 - 14 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: Understanding the Creative Pitch

1. Purpose of the Creative Pitch
2. What is meant by "the Deck"?
3. Creative Pitch: Structure and purpose
4. Research and its role in Branded Content Strategy
5. Creating a powerful and effective pitch which:
 - Presents the Brand History clearly and succinctly defines the Brand Personality Traits and elaborates each one
 - Identifies a series of unique and clever Campaign Concepts which communicate either one or several of the Brand's Personality Traits, as well as its Unique Selling Proposition
 - Provides visual references (photos, illustrations, sketches, videos, etc) which communicate each of the different concept ideas (to help you communicate what you see visually as the concept)
6. Brand Positioning, Brand Personality, and Brand Archetypes in Campaign Design Examining sample Brand Personality Architecture and Brand Personality Statements
7. Formulas for Writing a Brand Personality Statement/Brand Architecture
8. Element of the Creative Pitch:
 - Developing the Strategy
 - Identifying Tactics
 - Brand Archetypes
 - Brand Positioning Statement
 - Dissecting Brand Personality
 - Brand Archetypes & Color Archetypes
 - Methodologies for understanding Brands in order to develop Creative Concepts
 - The Mood Board
 - Concept Creation
 - The Mind-map as a creative tool

Presentation to the students of their Individual Final Project: "From Brand to Content" Research and ideation

- Building References
- Developing
- Mood Boards
- Creating the ideal Production Team
- Producing an Idea
- Deliverables and dates

Article: Lee Odden: Content Marketing: Definition & Tactics (Top Rank Marketing)

Multimedia Documentation: Content Marketing (Top Rank Marketing)

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 15 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: A Viral Challenge

Lesson: The Branded Content Funnel

Students will analyze a series of content and see its location online and determine and argue where it should be in the Funnel and where it fits in the Customer Journey

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSIONS 16 - 17 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: Putting it all together: "Creating a Branded Content Funnel that Engages"

Activity:

- Students examine the Branded Content Funnel
- Student groups examine the content funnel of a Brand and determine how each touchpoint drives the customer through the content

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSIONS 18 - 19 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: The language of image making

Activity:

- Students examine the language of image-making
- Developing look and feel
- Examining Branded Content Look and Feel and how it conveys Brand Message

Exercise: analyze brand look and feel

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 20 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Lesson: Brand Ambassador Creative Pitch

Activity:

- Students will complete the online exercise "Brand Ambassador Program"
- Students will then develop a Creative Pitch presenting a Brand Ambassador Program to the brand of their choosing

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSIONS 21 - 22 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: Brand Ambassador Creative Pitch

Activity:

Students will present their Creative Pitches in class and receive feedback from their peers and the professor.

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 23 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: Branded Content Production

1. Learning Objectives:

- To understand the elements of commercial image production

- To prepare a production brief which executes the student's Campaign Concept fully
 - To understand the roles within the Creative Team
2. Sessions Activities:
 - Production Planning
 - Treatments
 - Production Plans
 - Budgets
 - Contracts
 3. Creating a Treatment that captures the client's needs and sells your Creative Talent
 4. The Creative Team
 5. Elements of Production and how they work to convey Brand Personality
 - Styling
 - Makeup and Hair
 - Props
 - Locations
 - Models

Activity:

1. Students will analyze a series of Branded Content to determine the production planning that went into each one.
2. Then students will prepare a mock treatment for a piece of Branded Content.

Readings to prepare for this class session:

Excerpt <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ScPQYmGGhzaw6nqYMnCWberCjPjAKwXX>

Book Chapters: How to Succeed in Commercial Photography: Chapter 7: THE PORTFOLIO

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 24 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Lesson: The Branded Content Challenge

Activity: Students participant in an online challenge in which they create a Branded Content Strategy, online and in real time, during a one week period. During the activity students will follow each other's account, post content, comment, like and share (if they wish) each other's content.

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 25 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Lesson: The Purposeful Portfolio

Activity: Online activity

- Students will view a video on developing a portfolio

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSIONS 26 - 27 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: Branded Content Project Creative Rumble

Activity:

Just like in ad agencies and creative agencies, teams have creative processes which lead them, as a group, to the best creative ideas possible. You can have a great team, but if you don't have a great process your ideas might not achieve what you want them to achieve. In the lesson, groups will participate in a "Creative Rumble" in which they go through an intense series of brainstorming activities.

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 28 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Lesson: Individual Projects

Activity: Presentation of Final Individual Projects Part I

- Students will upload a short video presentation of their Final Individual Projects
- Using Feedback Fruits students will conduct a Peer Review Exercise evaluating a selection of their peer's projects

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 29 (ASYNCHRONOUS)

Lesson: Pre-production meeting

Activity: Students will participate in a pre-production meeting for their Branded Content Project and feedback session with the Professor

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

SESSION 30 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lesson: The Awards Ceremony

Final Projects Sharing and Awards

- Presentation of final Branded Content Production Projects
- Individual Project Awards for Best Projects

Assignment details and specific reading assignments will be delivered during the class period.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Recommended

- Berger, J. (2018). *Contagious: Why Things Catch on*. Reprint edición (18 septiembre 2018). Simon + Schuster Inc. ISBN 9781451686586 (Digital)

- Joe Pullizi. (2013). *Epic content marketing: How to Tell a Different Story*. 1st edition. McGraw-Hill Education. ISBN 0071819894 (Digital)

EVALUATION CRITERIA

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS Full details on the project objectives and deliverables will be given in class as well as specific reading assignments.

ORIGINAL MATERIAL: Unless otherwise stated by the professor, all material produced for this class by the students must be original material and must be produced for this class and during the period of this class. Any material that is submitted from previous work, whether it was made by the students or by others, will be considered "non-original" work and may result in the student receiving a "0" on the assignment and/or an incomplete or failing grade in the class.

1) Class Participation: 25%

2) Individual Projects: 40%

Throughout the course, Individual Projects will be assigned which permit the students to develop their skills and aptitudes in brand analysis, branded content campaign creation, and production of photography, video and other content. Students will be required to execute projects and turn in the final work for review. The Individual Projects will be progressively more challenging and require students to understand and execute turnkey audiovisual projects which require students to create original and unique campaigns, utilize a variety of different types of composition, lighting styles, understand different types of lighting, conceive, as well as to shoot and edit video in a creative way that tells a story.

Students will be required to execute the projects in a timely manner and present their photos in the format required prior to the start of class each day. Please keep in mind that many exercises require the use of professional or semi-professional equipment including lighting and camera gear. Those students who do not possess their own equipment may coordinate with the IE department to reserve and check out equipment as per the assignments. Failure to acquire the necessary equipment will not be considered as an excuse not to complete the assignment. In many cases, students check out equipment in groups even for the individual assignments and then share the equipment amongst themselves.

3) Group Projects: 35%

Throughout the course, Group Projects will be assigned which require students to work in a group to conceptualize, produce and execute both still and motion campaigns as well as to execute a variety of types or styles of photography, lighting etc. Group projects, unlike Individual Projects, permit students to collaborate and learn from each other, increasing the overall level of all the students.

The same rules regarding reserving and checking out equipment apply to Individual Projects as well as Group Projects.

EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE:

Attendance will be graded according to the sign-in sheets provided at the beginning of each session.

An absence will be counted as a "zero" for that particular class. Consideration for the reasons for the absence will be taken into account on a case by case basis. An "excused absence" will only be granted under special circumstances and supporting documentation may be required. Right of refusal for the excuse of an absence is at the sole discretion of the professor.

Online forums and discussion groups will take place on the Slack app which is available both for phone and computer. Participation in these forums will also count towards the participation grade.

BEHAVIOUR IN CLASS

1. Be on time: Students arriving more than 5 minutes late will be marked as "Absent".

Only students that notify in advance in writing that they will be late for a specific session may be granted an exception (at the discretion of the professor).

2. Do not leave the room during the session. If a student leaves the room during lectures, he/she will not be allowed to re-enter and, therefore, will be marked as "Absent". Students who need to use the restroom may do so during the break, not in the middle of the class session.

Only students that notify that they have a special reason to leave the session early will be granted an exception (at the discretion of the professor).

3. Do not engage in side conversation. As a sign of respect toward the person presenting the lecture (the teacher as well as fellow students), side conversations are not allowed. If you have a question, raise your hand and ask it. If you do not want to ask it during the lecture, feel free to approach your teacher after class.

If a student is disrupting the flow of the session, he/she will be asked to leave the classroom and, consequently, will be marked as "Absent".

4. Use of laptops, cellphones, tablets and other technology is strictly prohibited except when it is for course-related purposes. The use of laptops during the sessions must be authorized by the professor. The use of Social Media or accessing any type of content not related to the session is penalized. The student will be asked to leave the room and, consequently, will be marked as "Absent".

| Criteria | Percentage | Comments |
|---------------------|------------|----------|
| Class Participation | 25 % | |
| Individual Work | 40 % | |
| Other | 35 % | |

PROFESSOR BIO

Professor: **BRIAN HALLETT**

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Brian Hallett is a celebrated Photographer, Director, Brand Storyteller, Content Strategist and Educator.

As a creative professional Brian's passion is to work with clients to create campaigns which tell their Brand Stories through unique, high-impact campaigns with authentic and powerful visual content. He brings to the table over 20 years of experience in both the public and private sector. This journey has led him to work and teach in over 40 different countries with numerous international clients. He has photographed and produced and directed adfilms and branded content films with many of the world's top athletes, actors, singers, and celebrities.

Brian brings an international flavor to his work. Having lived in five different countries including 10 years in India and the last 18 years in Spain, his experience in the Americas, Europe and Asia as an organizational insider as well as external consultant have given him insight into Advertising and Branded Content Creation, Consumer Behavior, Brand Identity, and emerging trends in Visual and Digital Media.

With experience in the luxury, consumer, health care and education sectors, Brian and his team have created a strong loyalty amongst their clients, creating Advertising and Communications campaigns for Brands such as Cartier, Hugo Boss, Coca Cola, Pepsi, McDonald's, Max Factor, Subway, ESPN, Patek Philippe, Hyundai, Mastercard, BMW, Pantene and Max Factor, amongst many others.

He has over 20 years of experience as a professor, trainer, and coach. He has been an Adjunct Professor at IE University for almost 10 years teaching in the Masters in Visual & Digital Media and the International MBA Program. He has travelled to over 40 countries delivering Master Classes both in person and online to over 50,000 participants on subjects such as Storytelling, Branded Content, Brands Virality, and Curiosity & Innovation in Time of Crisis.

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OTHER INFORMATION

FAILING GRADE AND REASSESSMENT

When students receive a Fail in a course, they have the opportunity to present themselves for reassessment in order to earn the necessary credits toward graduation. The reassessment of students will be scheduled between 5 and 10 working days after the review session takes place. Grades for the reassessment are limited to a Low Pass and Fail.

The reassessment will consist of a written paper between 1000 and 1200 words in which the students will answer a series of questions related to the materials covered in the course as well as examining specific business cases related to the subject matter.

