

ADVANCED CREATIVE PORTFOLIO

A highly-focused, hands-on class dedicated to concepting and creating spec creative ad campaigns that showcase the student's thought process and potential through an online portfolio. Prerequisites are MEJO 371 and an insatiable passion for getting a foot in the door of a creative department.

COURSE INFO

Tuesday 5-7:30 PM

Classroom - Curtis Media Center--302

There may be times we need to meet remotely on [Zoom](#). And if you can't attend in person, you can join in on Zoom.

Office hours by appointment - just reach out and we'll find a time

INSTRUCTOR

MITCH BENNETT

Adjunct Instructor & Executive Creative Director at [Baldwin& mitchben@unc.edu](#) (this isn't the best way to reach me though)

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SO YEAH THIS IS NOT A NORMAL CLASS

We're operating as if we're at an advertising portfolio school like VCU BrandCenter, Miami Ad School, or the former Creative Circus where I taught for 10 years. There won't be traditional lessons or lectures like in MEJO 371, or like, math or whatever. At portfolio schools, no one cares about grades. They only care about making really interesting, breakthrough work that will get them a job. (It's okay if you care about grades, don't worry! I'm just sayin'. The goal here is to make great work.)

There will be creative projects we'll work on in teams of two each week, and we'll use the real-time feedback and concepting to create the best spec advertising campaigns we can. The goal is to leave here with 2-3 portfolio pieces you can put in your online portfolio. It's going to take self motivation (you have to super care about making these fake ads amazing - that will sound unhinged to those around you!), an ability to think through and implement feedback, and some real creativity and scrappiness. The work will lead us to some great conversations on topics like how to tell the truth as a brand, creative strategy, copywriting, art direction, and how to generate a ton of ideas.

Oooh - and we'll meet some incredible guests from great agencies along the way, who will give us feedback on our campaigns.

If we're doing it right, it will be super fun.

YEAH BUT WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?

We're going to work on tapping into our creativity.

Pushing past the obvious and uninteresting to make the creative choice.

Telling the truth.

Connecting that truth about a brand to communications people actually enjoy.

Discovering that we are an un-dry-able well of creative ideas that can keep going and going.

Putting ourselves - and our naked ideas - out there.

Going beyond the ask.

Bringing joy to our work.

Working with a partner to get to a better place than we could on our own.

Presenting our ideas confidently.

Giving great feedback.

Taking feedback in a great way, whether it's good feedback or not.

Resetting our expectations of what advertising can be.

Infusing a creative mindset to everything we do.

SUGGESTED NEW BROWSER HOME PAGE:

Stay up to date on all the best creative advertising as it comes out, along with great articles and opinions by setting your home page to [Muse by Clio](#). They also have a podcast called [Tagline](#) that tells the behind-the-scenes stories of some of the best campaigns of all time.

Another good site to keep an eye on is [Creativity by Ad Age](#).

ONLINE RESOURCES:

These award shows and industry sites are great places to find inspiration for the kind of work we're trying to do. DEFINITELY explore these.

Award Shows: [Clio Awards](#) [One Show](#) [D&AD](#) [Cannes Lions](#) [Communication Arts](#)

Ad news sites: [Creativity](#) [Adage](#) [Adweek](#) [Campaign US](#) [Ads of the World](#)

EVALUATING WORK

Creativity is subjective, and ideas about what is “good work” vary from one person to another. Grading subjective material is always challenging, so remember that this is a class about discovering new ideas and innovative thinking. Real insight into thinking creatively will represent the highest evaluations. An A grade has a sense of delight and new thinking. Those participants who respond to feedback and use it to improve the work will perform better on evaluations than those who choose the safe, expected answers to each problem. The grading rubric for assignments will always include an Innovation element, as does the grade for class activity.

Grade	Minimum Percentage Required
A	93
A-	90
B+	87
B	83
B-	80
C+	77
C	73
C-	70
D+	67
D	63
F	62 and below

Course Objectives

It’s kind of simple. But it will also be pretty hard: make spec ad campaigns that are so interesting, they help you get the attention of creative directors and recruiters at good agencies. You’ll also learn the skills to apply to future assignments.

Course Format

Creative teams of two will create strategies, then use them as a springboard to come up with big creative ideas that generate 360-degree ad campaigns. This is important: you will be learning not just from your work and the feedback you receive, but you **MUST** stay totally engaged in the work of the other teams and their solutions. Your job is to learn from the discussions, and to give the best feedback you possibly can. You will be graded on that part!

Assignments

This class is about getting the chance to stretch your creative wings. We are not going to just talk about creative work others do, we’re going to produce creative work. Every assignment will require you to be flexible and open to many possible solutions.

All assignments will be presented professionally. Late assignments will only be accepted with medical excuses or family emergencies. Vacations, interviews, personal time, and travel are not excuses for late work. Deadlines are part of the reality of advertising and must be observed during this course in the same manner a job would require. I stole that language from another professor but basically - care a lot!

Evaluations

Your grade will result from the following:

Project 1	20%
Project 2	20%
Project 3	20%
Portfolio Review (Exam)	30%
Participation & Attendance	10%

Seeking Help

If you need individual assistance, please let me know right away. I'm here to help.

THE SCHEDULE

Here's a rough outline of how things will go. Things will certainly change, and I'll update this document accordingly. Plan to have a creative assignment that will take hours a week. I wish it could be faster, but getting to the smart strategies, good ideas, clever headlines, and non-boringness takes time. Again, it should be really fun if you're doing it right.

WEEK 1 / Tues Jan 16

In class: Let's get to know each other, because we're going to be working closely and sharing creative ideas. We'll go over the syllabus, and then jump into some examples of the student portfolios we're competing with for jobs.

Assignment: Find a student portfolio you like, and be prepared to take us through it next Week.

UNC: [John Ratkowiak](#) You probably know him! He just graduated straight out of UNC-CH and is kicking off his career as an art director at BBDO.

[VCU Brandcenter](#)

[Miami Ad School](#) (scroll down to see grads' portfolios)

[Denver Ad School](#)

[Taylor Moser, Art Director](#) - someone I hired from portfolio school

[Kateri David, Copywriter](#) - someone I hired straight out of UT

[Mitch Bennett, me](#) - here's an example of a professional portfolio, and a good way to get to know the kind of work I like to do.

WEEK 2 / Tues Jan 23

In-class: Discussion of student portfolios
Discussion of 1-10
Discussion of what "truths" are. A real human insight we can relate to! A tension in the world that involves the brand! Something about the company, category, customer, culture, or competition! Something someone said on Reddit that strikes you as super true!
Discussion of PROJECT 1

Assignment: PROJECT 1: Pick a brand, and identify 20 truths about the brand. Write them in a google doc, big type, centered, one strategy per page. Set the sharing settings to "anyone with link can edit."
ALSO! Reach out to the student whose work you shared. Tell them what you liked, and ask for advice on putting a great portfolio together.

WEEK 3 / Tues Jan 30

In class: We'll go over your truths.

Assignment: PROJECT 1: Pick your favorite most truth-y truths that resonate with you. Based on your best truths, start to see where they could take you directionally. Does one of these truths lead you to fun language, an interesting visual, and interesting *thing* the brand could do in the world? Write them down. Also, push yourself to find 5 more truths.
Here's the [presentation from my 371 class](#) with some strategy formats that could help. Here are some [5Cs flashcards](#) to play with.

WEEK 4 / Tues Feb 6

In class: Present where you are on PROJECT 1. We'll see if something starts to feel like a BIG IDEA and focus on it. You'll be looking for a sticky handle to name your idea. And ways to bring it to life.
We'll have a visit from Jonathan Cude, who runs creative at McKinney in Durham, NYC, LA. He'll talk about his story, creative, what he looks for in a portfolio.

Assignment: PROJECT 1: Based on the directions we're liking, start to figure out the language and visual identity of your campaign. What is the line that brings it all together? What does this campaign believe? How does it behave in the world? Start bringing it to life.

WEEK 5 / Tues Feb 13 / NO CLASS / WELLNESS DAY

WEEK 6 / Tues Feb 20

In Class: Present your campaign work for PROJECT 1. We should be looking at a campaign idea writeup, then 360-degree ads and acts that bring it to life. What are we saying to people? How are we inviting them to play?

Assignment: Take feedback and continue pushing PROJECT 1.

WEEK 7 / Tues Feb 27/ GUEST TBD

WEEK 8 / Tues Mar 5

In Class: Present your new and improved PROJECT 1. It should start behaving like a real thing now. Everything makes sense through the lens of your BIG IDEA.

Assignment: Keep working on PROJECT 1 while it's still fresh.

With a new partner, find a project for PROJECT 2 and start exploring 20 truths. ALSO - [Read this amazing chapter](#) from Thomas Kemeney's Junior on writing headlines. It is so good and so simple and quick to read.

WEEK 9 / Tues March 12 / NO CLASS / SPRING BREAK

WEEK 8 / Tues March 19

In Class: Present PROJECT 2 Truths.

Assignment: Focus on the best truths. If you need to revise, do that. You may be on to your BIG IDEA and if so, start to dig in with the language and beliefs of this campaign. Write a manifesto to get going. Think of what the brand should do in the world. If you need to start from scratch with feedback, go for another 20 truths. Let's get you set up for your BIG IDEA next week.

WEEK 10 / Tues March 26 / POTENTIAL GUEST

In Class: Present where you are on PROJECT 2. We'll see if something starts to feel like a BIG IDEA and focus on it. You'll be looking for a sticky handle to name your idea. And ways to bring it to life.

Assignment: PROJECT 2: Based on the directions we're liking, start to figure out the language and visual identity of your campaign. What is the line that brings it all together? What does this campaign believe? How does it behave in the world? Start bringing it to life.

WEEK 11 / Tues April 2 / OPTIONAL NO TEACHER WORK SESSION

In Class: I'll be out of town on my kids' Spring Break. But this is a good time to get together with your partner and show where you are. Bounce your campaign work for PROJECT 2 off other teams. We should be looking at a campaign idea writeup, then 360-degree ads and acts that bring it to life. What are we saying to people? How are we inviting them to play? When you show the idea, are people understanding it?

Assignment: Take feedback and continue pushing PROJECT 2. Revisit PROJECT 1 and see what improvements you might make, or executions you might add.

WEEK 12 / Tues April 9

In Class: Present your very tight PROJECT 2. It should start feeling like a real thing now. Everything makes sense through the lens of your BIG IDEA.
Discussion of portfolios and how we'll begin yours.

Assignment: Keep working on PROJECT 2 while it's still fresh.
Start a portfolio site. If you have one, tighten it up.

WEEK 13 / Tues April 16

In Class: We'll work on our portfolio sites together.

Assignment: Start putting your in-progress work in your portfolio site to see how it fits together. Feel free to add your best work from other classes. Think about how you want to present yourself.

WEEK 14 / Tues April 23

In Class: Working on portfolio sites.

Assignment: Keep refining your campaigns with your 2 partners. Apply what you're learning you need to tell the story of your campaign on your site.
Add your About page.

WEEK 15 / Tues April 30 / Where did the time go? / POTENTIAL GUEST

In Class: This will be a (potentially long) session where we meet project by project to tighten and refine for the Final Exam Portfolio Review. When not meeting with me or our guest, share your work with other students in the class for help making it better.

Assignment: Get ready for portfolio review!

WEEK 16 / Tuesday May 7? / Portfolio Review

In Class: Final Exam Presentations to our panel of guests

Assignment: [Keep in touch!](#)

Accreditation

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them [here](#).

ATTENDANCE:

University Policy:

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

Class Policy:

Attendance is mandatory. As this is a class that is rooted in participation and attendance, we will require attendance. If you need to miss for any reason, please communicate with me for approval before class or within 24 hours. Excessive unexcused absences (3 classes or more) will result in a lowering of ½ of final grade (A to A- for example). Please be aware that you are bound by the [Honor Code](#) when making a request for a University approved absence.

(source: <http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/>)

Spring 2022 Course Delivery: As long as it is possible to do so safely, we will meet in person this semester. I understand the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may require changes to this plan and will be monitoring the situation closely. If I need to change the format of the course temporarily due to outbreaks of illness, I will announce this via email and the course Sakai site.

HONOR CODE

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself or themselves within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Julie Dixon-Green, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Syllabus Changes

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

ARS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.

(source: <https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>)

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

TITLE IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion [mission and vision statements](#) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on [prohibiting harassment and discrimination](#). In summary, UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

MASK USE

Below is information on key areas related to COVID-19, and more details are available at [Carolina Together](#). As we have done in previous semesters, we will continue to monitor the current conditions and make changes to our standards if necessary.

Masking

- Masks continue to be encouraged yet optional in all University buildings.
- Masks are required in health care settings, including UNC Health, Campus Health, the Employee Occupational Health Clinic, the Student Stores Pharmacy and any other patient clinics or clinical simulation areas on campus.
- Masks are also required on university transit services like P2P and Safe Ride, and on Chapel Hill Transit.

- We will continue to follow UNC System guidance on masking policies as well as all state and county guidelines on masking.

If you choose to wear a mask, we recommend choosing one that is comfortable and fits well. There are many reasons why a person may decide to continue to wear a mask, and we respect that choice. Conversely, students, faculty and staff should not be penalized if they do not wear a mask in their classroom or office setting where it is now optional.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please reach out as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Services website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>