

MMC 3254 – Media Entrepreneurship

Fall 2025 Syllabus

Professor: Bill Stump

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Class Time: Wednesdays at 9:35 a.m. (Class #14415) and 10:40 a.m. (Class #14414)

Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. (Virtual)

First Class: August 27 | **Last Class:** December 3 | **No Class:** November 26 (Thanksgiving Week)

Course Overview

This is a dynamic, hands-on 1-credit course designed to equip you with the mindset, skills, and processes to create, launch, and sustain your own media brand in today's fast-moving, AI-influenced digital environment.

We'll combine **journalistic and storytelling fundamentals** with **modern media tools** so you can develop a personal or niche brand that connects with an audience, delivers value, and grows over time.

Through lectures, guest speakers, peer feedback, and frequent creation, you'll learn:

- How to identify a **unique value proposition** for your brand

- How to define and reach your **audience**
 - How to craft a consistent **tone of voice**
 - How to use **research and reporting** to establish authority
 - How to navigate **creativity in an AI-driven world**
 - How to build **distribution strategies** that actually work
 - How to maintain **consistency** without burnout
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Course Goals & Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you will:

1. Establish a personal or niche media brand with a clear **unique value proposition**.
 2. Produce and publish **six pieces of content** across your chosen platform(s).
 3. Apply **tone of voice, authority, and audience focus** on all your work.
 4. Use **research and reporting skills** to build credibility.
 5. Understand **distribution, analytics, and growth strategies**.
 6. Present a final portfolio and growth plan for your brand.
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Major Assignments & Grading

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Attendance & Participation	100	10%
Brand Pitch	100	10%
Six Brand Posts (published biweekly)	600 (100 each)	60%
Peer Review Sessions (2)	100 (50 each)	10%
Final Portfolio & Reflection	100	10%

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Total	1,000	100%

Assignment Details

Brand Pitch (Due Week 2)

A 1-page plan defining your brand's niche, unique value proposition, audience, tone of voice, visual identity, and distribution strategy.

Brand Posts (6 total)

Six platform-specific pieces of content published biweekly (e.g., newsletter issue, Instagram carousel, TikTok, blog post, YouTube short). Each must demonstrate progress in tone, authority, and audience engagement.

Peer Reviews

Structured sessions where you provide and receive feedback on tone, clarity, audience focus, and originality.

Final Portfolio & Reflection (Due Week 15)

A curated selection of your best 3 posts plus a written reflection on growth, metrics, and your plan to sustain the brand post-semester.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 – Aug 27

Topic: Introduction to Media Entrepreneurship in 2025

- The new media landscape: opportunity in a democratized distribution world

- Case studies of niche creators making a living
 - Class expectations + project overview
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Week 2 – Sept 3

Topic: Finding Your Niche + Unique Value Proposition

- Passion + authority + market gap = opportunity
 - Assignment: Brand Pitch due Sept 5
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Week 3 – Sept 10 (*Guest Speaker 1: Niche Social Media Creator*)

Topic: Building a Distinct Tone of Voice

- Brand personality + tone exercises
 - Assignment: Brand Post #1 due Sept 17
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Week 4 – Sept 17

Topic: Visual Identity + Content Formats

- How to create a recognizable, consistent look & feel
 - Platform-native content strategies
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Week 5 – Sept 24 (*Guest Speaker 2: Newsletter Founder*)

Topic: Research, Reporting + Authority Building

- How to source, fact-check, and cite in digital media

- Establishing credibility in your niche
 - Assignment: Brand Post #2 due Oct 1
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Week 6 – Oct 1

Topic: Creativity in an AI-Driven World

- AI as a collaborator, not a crutch
 - AI-assisted brainstorming, SEO research, and title testing
 - In-class: AI creativity challenge
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Week 7 – Oct 8

Topic: Distribution Channels + Growth Tactics

- Social algorithms, SEO, and cross-platform posting
 - Peer Review #1
 - Assignment: Brand Post #3 due Oct 15
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Week 8 – Oct 15 (*Guest Speaker 3: Multimedia Journalist / Brand Storyteller*)

Topic: Monetization + Partnerships

- Ads, sponsorships, merch, premium content
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Week 9 – Oct 22

Topic: Content Calendar + Consistency Systems

- How to publish weekly without burnout
 - Assignment: Brand Post #4 due Oct 29
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Week 10 – Oct 29 (*Guest Speaker 4: Growth Strategist*)

Topic: Measuring What Matters

- Analytics, KPIs, and feedback loops for improvement
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Week 11 – Nov 5

Topic: Scaling Your Media Brand

- Expanding reach, adjusting, adapting
 - Assignment: Brand Post #5 due Nov 12
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Week 12 – Nov 12

Topic: Peer Review #2: Final Content Feedback

Week 13 – Nov 19

Topic: The Future of You Inc.

- Career pathways: jobs, freelance, full-time creator
 - Assignment: Brand Post #6 due Dec 3
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No Class – Nov 26 – Thanksgiving Break

Week 14 – Dec 3

Final Portfolio Presentations

- Share your best work, lessons learned, and growth plan

Recommended Readings

- *The Strategic Digital Media Entrepreneur* – Penelope M. Abernathy & JoAnn Sciarrino
- *Purple Cow* – Seth Godin
- *How I Built This* – Guy Raz
- *Steal Like an Artist* – Austin Kleon