

BUSINESS FOR CREATIVES

Business for Creatives

Freelancing & the Gig Economy: Entrepreneurship, Studio Systems & Professional Practice

COURSE PROPOSITION

A creator operating in the gig economy is not merely moving from job to job. The creator is a business owner. This course develops the self-awareness, adaptability, professional judgment, trusted networks, business systems, discovery skills, and accountable creative practice required to build a sustainable career and create meaningful value for clients and communities.

2026 CURRENT RESOURCE EDITION • VERIFIED SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

Professor Mark E. Henry

Communications Department | Film

COURSE PROPOSAL • INSTRUCTOR MASTER • CURRENT RESOURCE EDITION

Course proposal summary

An experiential creative-business course that moves students from self-awareness to professional practice through a functioning studio organization and real-world business discovery.

Original course designation ENTM386.1 - Freelancing & The Gig Economy	Updated descriptor Business for Creatives: Entrepreneurship, Studio Systems & Professional Practice
Format Designed as a 10-session intensive. It can be expanded into a semester format by separating studio, discovery, and client-strategy work into additional weeks.	Recommended audience Creative-media, film, communications, design, software/product development, game development, robotics, maker/fabrication, entrepreneurship, CTE, and other interdisciplinary students preparing to operate independently or within small project-based businesses.

CORE PREMISE

Business is human communication. The student must understand self, people, resources, value, trust, and systems before worrying about selling services. A freelancer is an entrepreneur choosing business in alignment with personal, professional, and creative goals.

What makes the course distinctive

- Students do not begin with marketing. They begin with self-awareness, adaptability, values, goals, and the life they are trying to build.
- The class treats the gig economy as a networked business environment in which reputation, trust, collaboration, and demonstrated value matter after a single job ends.
- Students form a 15-person, three-division studio model and build operating systems rather than merely discussing entrepreneurship in theory.
- Students conduct discovery with real local businesses, identify actual needs, and convert research into individual, team, and company-level creative strategies.
- Ethics, intellectual property, confidentiality, accountability, and responsible use of technology are integrated into professional practice rather than taught as afterthoughts.

Teaching philosophy & course spine

The class develops the person, the professional, the network, the business system, and finally the ability to create value for others.

THE COURSE IN ONE LINE

Know yourself → learn continuously → become an expert → earn trust → build the network → organize the work → discover the need → create value → execute professionally → remain on the hook.

The experiential spine

1. Self-awareness: understand current state, desired future, gaps, priorities, resources, values, and constraints.
2. Learning and adaptability: know how you learn so you can teach yourself what you do not yet know.
3. Professional value: become useful, accountable, trustworthy, and difficult to replace for the right reasons.
4. Creative thinking: separate modes of thought, reduce ego defense, and practice lateral problem solving.
5. Team formation: build trusted multidisciplinary relationships and understand the strength of networked linchpins.
6. Business systems: create workflows, communication protocols, project visibility, documentation, and quality control.
7. Purpose, discovery, and value: listen before prescribing; diagnose before proposing; understand price in relation to value.
8. Community research: conduct real discovery with local businesses and understand the community-business relationship.
9. Strategy and execution: convert understanding into an executable professional response.
10. Presentation and handoff: explain what was discovered, why it matters, what is proposed, how it will be executed, and what success means.

PROFESSIONAL ETHIC

Expertise without accountability is incomplete. Students are expected to communicate honestly, protect trust, respect intellectual property and confidentiality, acknowledge limits, involve other experts when appropriate, and remain responsible for the quality of what they deliver.

Learning outcomes & evidence of learning

The course is designed so the final portfolio demonstrates applied capability, not just familiarity with business vocabulary.

By the end of the course, students should be able to

- Operate as creative business owners rather than thinking of themselves only as hired labor.
- Identify personal skills, values, goals, limitations, learning habits, creative priorities, and non-negotiables.
- Remain adaptable and independently learn unfamiliar business, creative, and technical subjects.
- Build professional reputation and strategic relationships based on trust and demonstrated value.
- Participate in and lead multidisciplinary creative teams.
- Use structured lateral-thinking and parallel-thinking methods.
- Build repeatable professional workflows using communication systems, task management, documentation, and quality control.
- Understand practical business foundations including entity structure, contracts, taxes, invoicing, banking, insurance, IP, licensing, and recordkeeping.
- Conduct professional discovery rather than prescribing solutions from assumption.
- Identify a client's desired future state, success metrics, underlying need, value, and most pressing creative need.
- Develop an appropriate creative strategy and value proposition.
- Conduct a Community Creative Needs Assessment with actual businesses.
- Work inside a functioning professional studio organization.
- Develop individual, team, and company-level responses to real market needs.
- Produce and present a professional Company Portfolio and strategy.
- Use AI and emerging technology responsibly while protecting client confidentiality, intellectual property, factual accuracy, and professional accountability.

Primary evidence of learning

- Personal Creative Needs Assessment, including Ikigai reflection
- Learning Preferences & Adaptability audit
- Six Thinking Hats / Parallel Thinking exercise
- Trusted Professional Network map
- Studio operating system and business-foundation research
- Discovery practice and Community Creative Needs Assessment
- Individual, team, and company strategy decks
- Final Creative Studio Company Portfolio and presentation

The Freelancer as Business Owner

Who are you in the marketplace, and what are you actually building?

SESSION PREMISE

Challenge the assumption that freelancing means temporary labor. A freelancer is an independent creative enterprise. The session begins with the idea that business is human communication and that durable professional value starts with self-awareness, adaptability, reputation, and relationships.

Learning objectives

- Distinguish gig work from operating a creative business.
- Identify what the student actually sells: skill, judgment, reliability, creativity, network, problem solving, IP, access, or results.
- Begin a Personal Business Profile connecting discipline, transferable skills, experience, resources, values, and desired direction.
- Understand learning preferences as useful strategies rather than fixed identity labels.

Studio / classroom practice

- Student introductions: discipline, background, current creative work, and how each student hopes to innovate.
- Define freelancer, gig, economy, business, entrepreneur, client, value, and network in practical terms.
- Learning Preferences & Adaptability exercise: notice → test → practice → adapt.
- Discuss why a creator must remain auto-didactic in a changing technical and business environment.

Assignment / deliverable

- Complete the Learning Preferences & Adaptability companion workbook.
- Identify one business topic and one technical topic the student needs to learn, plus reliable sources and a method for verifying learning.

CARRY FORWARD

Carry the learning strategy into every later session. The student is responsible for learning what the work requires.

INSTRUCTOR EMPHASIS

Know how you learn so you can teach yourself what you do not yet know.

Personal Creative Needs Assessment

Before students diagnose a client's business, they diagnose their own.

SESSION PREMISE

The needs-assessment method begins with the gap between current and desired states, then identifies priorities, resources, and strategy. The point is not self-branding. It is honest alignment between the work being pursued and the life the student is trying to build.

Learning objectives

- Describe the student's current state using evidence rather than aspiration.
- Define a desired future state with enough detail to guide decisions.
- Identify gaps, root causes, priorities, resources, and tradeoffs.
- Use Ikigai as a working question about the overlap between energy, competence, service, and sustainable livelihood.

Studio / classroom practice

- Work through Current State → Desired Future State → Gap → Priorities → Resources → Strategy.
- Discuss non-negotiables and deliberate tradeoffs.
- Identify what the student can own directly and what responsibly requires another expert.
- Connect personal purpose to business choice without pretending one permanent answer exists.

Assignment / deliverable

- Complete the Personal Creative Needs Assessment and prepare to discuss the major findings.
- Write a 90-day commitment with a review date and an accountability person.

CARRY FORWARD

Students will later apply the same diagnostic discipline to clients and community businesses.

INSTRUCTOR EMPHASIS

Be on the hook. Don't cheat yourself.

Becoming a Linchpin

Move from self-awareness to professional value.

SESSION PREMISE

A linchpin is not indispensable because information is hoarded or because a title creates status. The student becomes valuable by producing results, solving problems, communicating clearly, accepting responsibility, and earning trust inside a professional network.

Learning objectives

- Distinguish commodity work from trusted expertise.
- Understand how reputation, responsibility, ethics, values, and word-of-mouth shape professional value.
- Map a trusted network of complementary people and disciplines.
- Practice the difference between a vendor, an advisor, and an accountable expert.

Studio / classroom practice

- Build a Trusted Professional Network Map: mentors, producers, technicians, artists, legal/accounting/business experts, vendors, and collaborators.
- Discuss why no creative professional is expert at everything.
- Explore the working equation: Expertise + Accountability + Trust = Professional Value.
- Identify professional behaviors that create trust before, during, and after a project.

Assignment / deliverable

- Write: What would make me difficult to replace for the right reasons?
- Identify three capabilities or relationships that would make the student's network stronger.

CARRY FORWARD

Networked linchpins become the strategic foundation for the studio formed in the next session.

INSTRUCTOR EMPHASIS

Everyone a linchpin.

Parallel Thinking & Team Formation

Thinking is a skill. Make time to practice thinking.

SESSION PREMISE

Creative teams are stronger when they can examine a problem without immediately defending individual positions. Six Thinking Hats and lateral-thinking practice give the class a common process for moving from ego defense to parallel examination, then into team formation.

Learning objectives

- Use White, Red, Black, Yellow, Green, and Blue thinking modes intentionally.
- Understand that the hats are modes of thought, not personality types.
- Practice group examination before judgment or decision.
- Form multidisciplinary teams using skills, goals, learning preferences, schedules, responsibilities, and creative needs.

Studio / classroom practice

- Use the Six Thinking Hats / Parallel Thinking companion workbook on a real decision.
- Practice the Feynman loop: learn → explain simply → find the gap → return to the source → explain again.
- Divide the class into three divisions of five.
- Each division identifies strengths, gaps, roles, and a proposed team name; the class selects the studio identity using a thinking process rather than a popularity contest.

Assignment / deliverable

- Each division finalizes its team identity and proposes roles.
- Prepare a short statement of how the team's combined strengths create more value than any one member alone.

CARRY FORWARD

The teams formed here become the operating divisions of the professional studio model.

INSTRUCTOR EMPHASIS

Explore different viewpoints in ways that enhance the voice of everyone involved.

Business Foundations & Studio Operating Systems

Make the business real, visible, and accessible to other businesses for commerce.

SESSION PREMISE

A workflow turns strategy into completion and makes collaboration, communication, and organization repeatable. Students move from a creative team to an operating studio by building the systems that allow other people to trust the work.

Learning objectives

- Understand workflow as a nested system of decisions, information, responsibilities, approvals, and delivery.
- Research the actual business requirements where the student intends to operate.
- Build a studio operating system that makes work visible and repeatable.
- Recognize that professional organization protects creativity by reducing preventable confusion.

Studio / classroom practice

- Build communication, roster, client-intake, scheduling, storage, review, publication, and file-management systems.
- Create a Kanban or project tracker appropriate to the studio.
- Define QC, delivery, invoicing/closeout, archive, vendor/network, and risk processes.
- Research current business infrastructure: entity options, DBA/registration, banking, taxes, insurance, contracts, IP/licensing, invoicing, and recordkeeping.

Assignment / deliverable

- Each student verifies the current requirements applicable to the jurisdiction where they expect to operate using primary government or professional-authority sources, not remembered rules or generic summaries.
- Each student maintains a Source Verification Log recording the authority, live URL, access date, jurisdiction, and what requirement was verified.
- Each division contributes one documented studio system to the company operating manual.

CARRY FORWARD

The studio should now be capable of receiving, organizing, and executing real client work.

INSTRUCTOR EMPHASIS

Technology changes. Accountability doesn't.

Purpose, Discovery, Value & Pricing

Serve the client, not yourself.

SESSION PREMISE

This session is the philosophical center of the course. Students learn that amateurs prescribe from assumption; accountable experts ask questions, listen, diagnose, and understand value before proposing a solution.

Learning objectives

- Use purpose as a practical test of whether the business being built is congruent with the life being pursued.
- Conduct discovery without pitching.
- Identify desired future state, success metric, underlying problem, value, stakeholders, and cost of inaction.
- Understand the difference between price and value, estimate and contract, deliverable and outcome, revision and scope change, license and ownership.

Studio / classroom practice

- Practice the discovery flow: Desired Future State → Success Metric → Value → Pricing.
- Expand the professional flow: Discovery → Strategy → Scope → Estimate/Proposal → Agreement → Execution.
- Role-play consultant/client conversations in which the consultant may not pitch services during discovery.
- Discuss how trust changes when a professional asks better questions rather than rushing to demonstrate expertise.

Assignment / deliverable

- Conduct and document a mock discovery interview.
- Write the client's desired future state, success measure, underlying need, and the questions still unanswered.

CARRY FORWARD

This discipline becomes the basis for the Community Creative Needs Assessment.

INSTRUCTOR EMPHASIS

Amateurs give advice based on assumption. Experts ask questions, listen, and diagnose.

Community Creative Needs Assessment

Apply to businesses what students first applied to themselves.

SESSION PREMISE

Students now leave the classroom framework and conduct real discovery. The purpose is to understand businesses and communities, not to hunt for projects. The assessment becomes a bridge between creative capability and genuine market need.

Learning objectives

- Develop questions that reveal business meaning, goals, audience, growth, perception, community connection, value, and need.
- Practice permission, confidentiality, and professional interview conduct.
- Separate discovery from sales.
- Understand the relationship between community needs and business opportunity.

Studio / classroom practice

- Teams draft proposed assessment questions.
- Use the Idea Board to combine the strongest questions into one company-level Community Creative Needs Assessment.
- Review interview etiquette, note taking, confidentiality, permission, and public/private portfolio boundaries.
- Plan interview assignments so no business is duplicated.

Assignment / deliverable

- Each team interviews one local business.
- Each individual interviews one different local business.
- No duplicate businesses.
- Bring completed assessments and notes to Session 8.

CARRY FORWARD

Every assessment becomes research for the studio's community-level strategy.

INSTRUCTOR EMPHASIS

How can you develop your business based on the community around you?

From Data to Understanding

Interview answers are not insight until the team gets the point.

SESSION PREMISE

Students turn raw responses into understanding. They separate what was said from what it means, identify the most pressing need, and formalize the studio organization that will carry strategy into execution.

Learning objectives

- Distill discovery into desired future state, success metric, underlying problem/opportunity, value, and most pressing creative need.
- Identify the conceptual point behind client responses rather than simply repeating them.
- Distinguish evidence from inference and assumption.
- Formalize studio roles, accountability, project visibility, and escalation.

Studio / classroom practice

- Idea Board meeting using all individual and team assessments.
- Identify patterns across businesses without erasing important differences.
- Ask: What would an accountable expert do?
- Formalize the studio ladder: Production Assistant / Creative Specialist → Studio Coordinator → Studio Manager → Head of Studio Services, with faculty executive oversight.
- Define the Head of Studio Services as the company-wide fixer and operational authority for schedule, resources, visibility, standards, risk, QC, deadlines, and network.

Assignment / deliverable

- Prepare exploratory analysis for the business each student interviewed.
- Prepare team and company-level findings for strategy development.

CARRY FORWARD

Session 9 converts the strongest findings into individual, team, and company strategies.

INSTRUCTOR EMPHASIS

Data means nothing without getting the point.

Strategy & Company Portfolio

Creative strategy has to become executable business.

SESSION PREMISE

Students convert discovery into a professional response. The original course required a one-page strategy deck at individual, team, and company levels. The updated course preserves that structure and adds the operating detail needed to make strategy executable.

Learning objectives

- Translate a diagnosed need into a desired result and coherent strategy.
- Define deliverables, workflow, resources, schedule, value, and proposed investment.
- Separate creative concept from execution plan.
- Build a company portfolio that demonstrates how the studio thinks and operates.

Studio / classroom practice

- Individual: one-page deck for the business interviewed by the student.
- Team: one-page deck for the business interviewed by the division.
- Company: one-page deck addressing the most pressing community-level creative need found across the research.
- Assemble the Company Portfolio: company identity, org chart, roles, operating system, business foundation, community research, strategies, professional response, ethics, IP/data/AI policy, and presentation.

Assignment / deliverable

- Complete individual and team decks.
- Complete the company strategy deck and professional response.
- Prepare the full Company Portfolio for presentation.

CARRY FORWARD

Every student must be able to explain what was discovered, why it matters, what is proposed, how it can be executed, what success means, and what role the student played.

INSTRUCTOR EMPHASIS

Be creative. Have fun. Think laterally. Everything is possible.

Presentation, Evaluation & Handoff

The simulated company dissolves. The network does not.

SESSION PREMISE

The closing session returns to the first premise of the course. Students have now examined themselves, built teams, built a studio, learned business systems, interviewed real businesses, discovered actual needs, created strategies, and presented professional solutions.

Learning objectives

- Present a professional strategy clearly and responsibly.
- Defend decisions with evidence while remaining open to critique.
- Evaluate individual, team, and company performance.
- Identify what the student will carry into an independent creative business after the class ends.

Studio / classroom practice

- Studio presentation to the class as though presenting to a client or executive panel.
- Individual accountability: each student explains contribution, decisions, learning, and unresolved questions.
- Peer and faculty evaluation of clarity, strategy, ethics, execution, collaboration, and professional readiness.
- Network handoff: identify the relationships and trusted advisors worth carrying forward beyond the course.

Assignment / deliverable

- Submit the final Company Portfolio and individual reflection.
- Write a next-business-step statement connecting the student's own business goals to the tools built in class.

CARRY FORWARD

Students leave not as 'gig workers,' but as independent creative business owners with a trusted network of people they have actually worked beside.

INSTRUCTOR EMPHASIS

After gaining the learning outcome provided by this class, you are on the hook.

Signature project: Creative Studio Company Portfolio

The final project is the record of a functioning creative company, its research, its systems, and the strategies it developed in response to real market needs.

I. THE COMPANY

- Studio name and purpose
- Value proposition
- Organizational chart
- Studio roles and contact structure
- Professional standards

II. THE OPERATING SYSTEM

- Workflow
- Communication system
- Kanban/project tracker
- Client intake and discovery
- Scheduling and resource management
- Review/approval and quality control
- Delivery and closeout
- Studio network and risk/fixer process

III. BUSINESS FOUNDATION

- Business-structure research
- Banking/accounting approach
- Insurance considerations
- Contracting
- IP/licensing
- Data security
- AI policy
- Professional ethics

IV. COMMUNITY RESEARCH

- Individual assessments
- Team assessments
- Interview information
- Discovery findings
- Exploratory analysis
- Conceptual points
- Company-level findings

V. STRATEGY

- Individual strategy deck
- Team strategy deck
- Company strategy deck

VI. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSE

- Proposed scope
- Timeline
- Resources and responsibilities
- Pricing rationale/value relationship
- Deliverables
- Success metrics

VII. PRESENTATION

- What was discovered
- Why it matters
- What is being proposed
- How the company will execute it
- What success means
- What role each student played

CAPSTONE STANDARD

The portfolio should demonstrate that the student can move from self-awareness and learning, through teamwork and operating systems, into discovery, strategy, execution, communication, and accountable professional practice.

Suggested assessment framework

A university may adapt the weighting to its program requirements. The important principle is that evaluation rewards applied professional behavior, not just written recall.

Evidence of learning	Suggested weight	What is evaluated
Participation & professional practice	10%	Preparation, contribution, communication, accountability, collaboration
Personal Creative Needs Assessment	10%	Self-awareness, evidence, priorities, resources, strategy
Learning & adaptability audit	10%	Learning strategy, source quality, verification, teach-back
Parallel thinking / team formation	10%	Thinking discipline, listening, collaboration, decision process
Studio systems & business foundations	15%	Workflow, organization, research, documentation, professional readiness
Community discovery	15%	Interview quality, listening, ethics, permission, evidence, diagnosis
Strategy decks & professional response	15%	Fit between need, strategy, value, feasibility, success measure
Final Company Portfolio & presentation	15%	Integration, clarity, execution, accountability, reflection

EVALUATION PRINCIPLE

Students should be rewarded for asking better questions, recognizing when they do not know something, verifying information, involving the right expert, protecting trust, communicating clearly, and delivering work responsibly.

Companion materials & enrichment

The companion workbooks create continuity across the course and make the teaching method visible to students and reviewing institutions.

Recommended instructional order: Learning Preferences & Adaptability → Personal Creative Needs Assessment (with Ikigai) → Six Thinking Hats / Parallel Thinking.

Learning Preferences & Adaptability A companion workbook for identifying useful learning strategies, practicing the Feynman loop, and turning self-directed learning into business resilience.	Personal Creative Needs Assessment Current State → Desired Future State → Gap → Priorities → Resources → Strategy, followed by an Ikigai purpose/fit section.
Six Thinking Hats: Parallel Thinking & Creative Collaboration A companion workbook for structured thinking, team decision making, client strategy, and reducing ego defense in collaborative work.	Community Creative Needs Assessment A company-level discovery instrument developed by students, then used with real local businesses as the research basis for the final strategy work.

Foundational texts & optional enrichment

- Seth Godin — Linchpin: use for responsibility, initiative, and professional value; discuss critically rather than as a current labor-market authority.
- Edward de Bono — Six Thinking Hats: use as a structured parallel-thinking method, not a personality test.
- Seth Godin — Tribes: optional context for networks, leadership, and community; compare ideas against current professional practice.
- Blair Enns — The Win Without Pitching Manifesto: optional framework for expertise, positioning, discovery, and value conversations.
- Older business and self-development texts may be used as historical or conceptual context, never as authority for current law, tax, technology, rates, platforms, or market conditions.
- Current case studies, interviews, and professional-practice media may be assigned only after the instructor confirms that the page/video is still accessible, accurately labeled, and relevant to the present course objective.
- Broken, removed, region-blocked, or heavily paywalled supplemental links are replaced rather than assigned through archived or unofficial copies.

RESOURCE POLICY

Readings, videos, regulations, platforms, and examples should be reviewed each term for availability and currency. Students should be taught to verify current legal, financial, licensing, tax, and business requirements rather than treating old course links as permanent authority.

University implementation notes

The course can live inside film, communications, media production, design, entrepreneurship, or interdisciplinary creative-business programs.

USE OF “CREATIVE TEAM” AND “STUDIO”

The course uses “creative team” broadly for any multidisciplinary group that designs, builds, communicates, produces, or solves. A team might be a film or arts studio, design group, software or programming team, game-development studio, robotics company, maker or fabrication lab, communications/marketing unit, or another career-technical enterprise. “Studio” means the shared operating structure, not necessarily an art studio. The transferable core is self-awareness, communication, adaptability, collaboration, project systems, discovery, problem solving, value creation, and professional accountability.

Recommended delivery

- 10-session intensive: preserve the original architecture shown in this proposal.
- Semester expansion: split Sessions 4-9 into separate thinking, team, systems, discovery, field research, analysis, strategy, and presentation weeks while preserving the same sequence.
- Studio size: the original model used 15 students in three divisions of five. Other class sizes can preserve the same logic by creating small multidisciplinary divisions inside one class-wide studio.
- Community partners: select businesses that can participate without exposing confidential or regulated information beyond what students are prepared to handle.

Contemporary professional standards

- Client-confidential information, unreleased creative work, likenesses, scripts, proprietary information, or protected IP should not be placed into third-party AI systems without appropriate authorization.
- AI-assisted work must still have a human accountable expert responsible for factual accuracy, copyright/IP considerations, quality, and delivery.
- Students should document permissions, confidentiality expectations, source verification, and whether client information may appear in a public portfolio.
- Professional ethics should be evaluated through decisions and behavior throughout the course, not isolated in a single lecture.

Institutional value

- Creates a bridge between creative craft and the business realities graduates immediately encounter.
- Produces portfolio evidence of collaboration, research, strategy, systems thinking, and professional communication.
- Connects the university to local businesses through structured discovery rather than speculative student pitches.
- Teaches students to build professional networks before graduation and to see those networks as reciprocal systems of trust and expertise.

Current authorities & live-reference policy

Foundational books may remain useful for ideas; current legal, tax, business-registration, advertising, intellectual-property, and platform-sensitive claims must come from a live primary authority.

All web resources below were opened and verified on September 30, 2026. Stable official landing pages are used instead of version-specific download links wherever possible.

Resource integrity policy

- Do not teach a tax threshold, filing rule, registration fee, license requirement, disclosure rule, or AI/IP status from memory. Verify it at the point of use.
- Students distinguish conceptual readings from legal/financial authority and are taught when to involve an attorney, accountant, insurer, or other qualified professional.
- Client-confidential information, unreleased work, likenesses, scripts, proprietary information, or protected IP are not uploaded to third-party AI/cloud tools without authorization and an institution/client-approved workflow.
- If an assigned web resource stops resolving or materially changes, replace it with the current official source instead of sending students to cached, mirrored, or unofficial copies.

Verified live resources

- [U.S. Small Business Administration — Launch Your Business](#) — current federal starting point for structure, registration, tax IDs, licenses, banking, insurance, and local requirements.
- [IRS — Independent Contractor \(Self-Employed\) or Employee?](#) — current federal worker-classification guidance; students still verify state/local rules and obtain professional advice when needed.
- [IRS — Manage Taxes for Your Gig Work](#) — current federal gig-work tax overview; thresholds and forms are checked live rather than memorized from an old handout.
- [Utah Division of Corporations & Commercial Code](#) — current Utah registration landing page; students operating elsewhere use the equivalent authority in their jurisdiction.
- [U.S. Copyright Office — Copyright Essentials](#) — current official education hub for copyright fundamentals, including creator- and filmmaker-focused sessions.
- [U.S. Copyright Office — Copyright and Artificial Intelligence](#) — current official AI/copyright initiative and report hub; use the status shown on the live page rather than a cached summary.
- [USPTO — Trademark Basics](#) — current federal trademark fundamentals and filing guidance.
- [FTC — Endorsements, Influencers, and Reviews](#) — current advertising/disclosure guidance relevant to creators, endorsements, testimonials, reviews, and influencer work.

Term-start verification checklist

- Open every required web resource before the term begins and again before the class session in which it is assigned.
- Verify the current federal, state, and local requirements for the jurisdiction students are actually researching.
- Review current AI/copyright guidance, platform terms, client confidentiality expectations, and school policy before AI-assisted client work.
- Refresh examples, screenshots, prices, software/platform names, and market statistics instead of carrying them forward automatically from a prior term.

INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT

Utah Arts Academy

Philosophical alignment with UAA's published arts-school model.

PUBLISHED INSTRUCTIONAL CHARACTER

UAA's published vision and charter emphasize arts and academics together, pre-professional training, collaboration and the creative process, candid feedback, original work, critical thinking, creative problem solving, contribution to community, and whole-person development. UAA does not appear to publish one named school-wide classroom methodology, so this mapping is intentionally based on those published priorities rather than claiming a formal UAA method.

Where the course already aligns

Published emphasis	Course alignment
Pre-professional arts training	Students operate inside a working creative-studio model with defined roles,

BUSINESS FOR CREATIVES COURSE PROPOSAL

	deadlines, standards, client research, and professional presentation.
Collaboration & creative process	Three multidisciplinary divisions, a class-wide studio, trusted-network development, and Six Thinking Hats / parallel-thinking practice make collaboration structural.
Candid feedback	Peer review, faculty evaluation, discovery critique, strategy review, and final presentation require students to receive and act on specific feedback.
Original work	Students create original assessments, studio systems, research findings, individual/team/company strategies, and a final Company Portfolio.
Whole-person development	The Personal Creative Needs Assessment, Ikigai work, learning-adaptability audit, values, priorities, and non-negotiables connect professional choices to the life being built.
Critical thinking & problem solving	Discovery, lateral thinking, evidence vs. assumption, root-cause analysis, and real business pain points require students to diagnose before proposing.
Learning beyond the classroom	Students conduct Community Creative Needs Assessments with real local businesses and turn field research into professional strategy.
Individual growth & adaptability	Learning preferences are treated as flexible strategies; students practice self-directed learning, verification, reflection, and revision.

BEST-FIT UAA ADAPTATION
For UAA, the course could function as an advanced creative-business elective, senior capstone, or pre-college professional-practice course. The strongest fit is preserving the studio, critique, original-work, self-awareness, and community-discovery components while calibrating legal/financial depth to the age and readiness of the students.

Published basis verified September 30, 2026: [Utah Arts Academy Vision](#); [2026–2027 Course Offerings](#).

Utah Tech University

Direct alignment with Utah Tech's Core Instructional Methods and Personalized Active Learning Model (PALM).

UTAH TECH PUBLISHED FRAMEWORK

Utah Tech's Center for Teaching & Learning identifies five Core Instructional Methods: Active Learning, Applied Learning, Authentic Learning, Inclusive Learning, and Student-Centered Learning. Its PALM model centers learning on a real-world task or problem and uses the sequence Acquire -> Expand -> Apply -> Evaluate, with ongoing reflection, revision, innovation, technology, and person-centered teaching.

Core Instructional Methods mapping

Published emphasis	Course alignment
Active Learning	Students think, discuss, investigate, create, solve problems, role-play discovery, run studio meetings, use parallel thinking, and explain decisions rather than passively receiving information.
Applied Learning	Business concepts become workflows, operating systems, interview protocols, strategy decks, professional responses, and portfolio-ready deliverables.
Authentic Learning	Students work with real businesses, open-ended needs, ambiguity, competing constraints, community context, and professional-style presentation.
Inclusive Learning	The course uses multiple learning routes, deliberate team roles, parallel-thinking structures, and processes designed to let different voices and strengths enter the work.
Student-Centered Learning	Students begin with their own goals, values, strengths, learning preferences, desired future, Ikigai fit, network, and 90-day commitments before serving clients.

PALM mapping

PALM stage	Course expression	Representative sessions
Acquire	Readings, business-foundation research, learning resources, frameworks, terminology, and pre-class preparation build the knowledge needed for the real-world task.	1, 3, 5, 6
Expand	Questioning, research, discussion, Feynman teach-back, Six Thinking Hats, discovery practice, and team analysis deepen and challenge initial understanding.	1-6
Apply	Students build and operate the studio, interview local businesses, conduct needs assessments, diagnose pain points, and create executable strategies.	4-9
Evaluate	Students analyze evidence, distinguish insight from assumption, review strategy, present the Company Portfolio, reflect on performance, and transfer learning to their own business.	8-10

WHY THE FIT IS UNUSUALLY STRONG

The course was already designed around a real-world problem: how a creative professional becomes a capable business owner and creates value inside a trusted network. Its sequence repeatedly moves from knowledge acquisition to questioning, real application, feedback, reflection, revision, and transfer. The course therefore requires very little philosophical redesign for Utah Tech; the institutional language can be mapped onto work the course already does.

Published basis verified September 30, 2026: [Utah Tech Center for Teaching & Learning — Active Learning / PALM](#); [Utah Tech Faculty Affairs — Teaching Resources](#).

Instructor perspective

A course built from production practice, teaching experience, and the belief that creative professionals should understand both their craft and the responsibility that comes with using it.

Mark Henry is a producer, production sound mixer, audio supervisor, and educator with more than 25 years across documentary, unscripted television, feature film, commercial, branded, production, and post-production environments.

Academic appointments include professorships at the American Film Institute and John Paul the Great Catholic University. At AFI, Henry taught the artistic and technical fields of production and post-production sound and trained Fellows to understand the complete workflow, including the responsibilities of post-production sound supervision. At JPCatholic, he taught production sound, post-production sound, and ENTM386 Freelancing & The Gig Economy.

His teaching emphasizes craft, collaboration, accountability, service to story, ethics, trust, and integrity. He is known for remaining available to the next generation of filmmakers and for treating professional education as something that continues beyond the classroom.

COURSE CLOSING STATEMENT

The simulated company ends with the class. The professional habits, trusted network, and responsibility to create value should continue. Students leave with a practical framework for operating their own creative businesses and with firsthand experience of what it means to remain on the hook.

Business for Creatives

Business for Creatives: Entrepreneurship, Studio Systems & Professional Practice

THE WHOLE COURSE

Know yourself → learn continuously → become an expert → earn trust → build the network → organize the work → discover the need → create value → execute professionally → remain on the hook.

PROFESSOR MARK E. HENRY

Communications Department | Film

2026 CURRENT RESOURCE EDITION