

AAD 0097 - BUSINESS PRACTICES FOR CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS

Catalog Description

Formerly known as AAD 66

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: Intended for students nearing program completion and who have determined they will pursue a future as a creative professional. The course covers business skills and best practices for emerging creative professionals, including legal requirements for operating a business, drafting contracts, pricing and billing, copyright protections and completing "work for hire," licensing structures, and methods for building and maintaining professional relationships with clients, industry colleagues, and related business services. (CSU)

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Outline the process for legally establishing a small creative business with local and federal entities and identify the best structure for the venture.
- CSLO #2: Develop contracts, forms, and documents that promote transparency, clear communication, and ethical business practices and provide protections for intellectual property.
- CSLO #3: Establish a brand identity and brand strategy that will promote your creative business, attract clients and contracts, and unify your presence across platforms.
- CSLO #4: Design a workflow to enhance project management, track progress, and promote clear communication and documentation.

Effective Term

Fall 2025

Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

Contact Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Student Learning Hours

162

Course Objectives

1. Examine the various business structures recognized by the federal government, such as sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, and S corporations, as well as state-level classifications such as Limited Liability Companies (LLC), then assess which may be best suited to your needs.

2. Research tax implications for small business, such as establishing a business tax account, forms required for filing taxes on behalf of a small business, and strategies for managing small business finances.

3. Compare and contrast work-for-hire and contract employment as it relates to ownership of intellectual property, taxes and employment impacts, and lifestyle.

4. Assemble a resource list of business services and bureaus including the county tax offices, the Small Business Administration, and other legal and support resources.

5. Differentiate between terms such as intellectual property, copyright protection, public domain, fair use, Creative Commons, stock, Artificial Intelligence and convey their role in the legal and ethical aspects of working in a creative industry.

6. Produce a series of professional documents that can be used for business communications and contracts such as proposals and estimates, contracts, invoices, and emails.

7. Establish a brand identity that can be unified across all marketing and promotional materials, such as portfolios, websites, social media accounts, and business documents.

8. Research methods for identifying target markets and audiences to assist with finding contract work, in-house employment, client projects, art licensing and other sources of income.

9. Draft a list of promotional strategies that can be used to increase visibility and publicize your services and skills.

10. Research and test a selection of project management practices and workflows, including the use of online platforms and tools to improve efficiency and documentation.

11. Establish connections with national professional organizations such as AIGA, local creative professional communities, and online resources that foster success and growth for creative professionals.

12. Develop a business plan to outline your business goals and services, business structure, projected expenses and needed equipment, predicted income, anticipated milestones, and define a clear workflow of steps in necessary to launch and sustain a small creative business.

General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)

Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable

Methods of Evaluation

- Classroom Discussions
 - Example: Provide an annotated resource list for your peers with at least three entries on the topic of project management tools for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Present your favorite resource to the class for open discussion, making sure to: a) Summarize the resource in terms of its primary usage goals, target audience, key features and top benefits. b) Address

any potential drawbacks to be aware of. c) Ask your peers if they have follow-up questions on the resource you presented. Students will be assessed on the quality and completeness of their discussion presentation. Students will also be assessed on their clear, specific, and thoughtful engagement with peers during the discussion period.

- Objective Examinations
 - Example: In an objective exam, students will be asked to differentiate between terms such as intellectual property, copyright protection, public domain, fair use, Creative Commons, stock assets, and Artificial Intelligence and convey their role in the legal and ethical aspects of working in a creative industry.
- Projects
 - Example: Synthesize the course content into a business plan introducing your goals and services, business structure, projected expenses and needed equipment, predicted income, and anticipated milestones. Present a clear workflow of the steps necessary to launch and sustain this small creative business. Include samples of your professional documents and contracts. Apply your visual brand identity to the presentation to create a unified presence.

Repeatable

No

Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. The instructor will present lecture content on the pros and cons of social media platforms for creative professionals, as well as cover strategies for leveraging these outlets for their business. The students will then perform research on the platforms discussed and additional platforms that may be more suitable to their needs and goals. Students will share their findings with their peers and their instructor by adding their findings to a shared class resource benefitting all students.

Distance Learning

1. The instructor will provide a lesson on evaluating and drafting contracts intended to protect creative business owners in retaining and transferring rights to intellectual property and provide transparency for all parties in terms of pricing, scope of work, deadlines and timelines, deliverables, etc. Students will then be asked to evaluate a sampling of existing contracts, before drafting a custom contract to then be reviewed by their peers and instructor.

Typical Out of Class Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read Chapter 16: Talking to Clients About Money, and Chapter 17: Your Estimates Can Make or Break You in the textbook "How to Start A Successful Creative Agency." Be prepared to discuss the key concepts with the class. 2. Read the AIGA Standards of Professional Practice on the AIGA (Professional Association for Design) webpage and be prepared to discuss your findings in class.

Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

1. Research potential markets, clients, or industries, then identify a list of best practices for marketing your portfolio or creative business to them.
2. Conduct an informational interview with an experienced principal or freelancer in an area of interest and write a report/prepare a presentation to the class.

Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

1. Perform independent research on project management tools and practices that can support efficiency and streamline creative business workflows. Assemble an annotated resource list that includes at least three resources you've become familiar with. Outline the key features, and any potential drawbacks, along with any additional tips, thoughts, and important notations.

Required Materials

- Graphic Arts Guild Handbook: Pricing and Ethical Guidelines
 - Author: Graphic Artists Guild
 - Publisher: MIT Press
 - Publication Date: 2021
 - Text Edition: 16th
 - Classic Textbook?: No
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Becoming a Graphic Designer: A Guide to Careers in Design
 - Author: Heller, Steven and Veronique Vienne
 - Publisher: Wiley
 - Publication Date: 2015
 - Text Edition: 5th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- How to Start a Successful Creative Agency: Essential Business Guide for Graphic Designers, Copywriters, Filmmakers, Photographers, and Programmers
 - Author: Strote, Andy
 - Publisher: Independent
 - Publication Date: 2021
 - Text Edition: 1st
 - Classic Textbook?: No
 - OER Link:
 - OER:

Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.