

Master of Entertainment Industry Management

Course Information	FANDOM in MUSIC and MEDIA – CLASS 93.859 (SPRING 2024) January 20th: 2:30-5:30pm; January 24th: 6:00-9:00pm; February 3 rd : 2:30-5:30pm Instructor: Alisa Ben alisaben77@gmail.com													
Description	Fandom and all forms of entertainment are inextricably tied. From the earliest development of human expression to the technologically diverse present: visuals, performances, games, music, fiction, and play of all kinds, have catered to and been funded/supported/disseminated/worshiped/appropriated by FANS (casual or rabid). Music, Sports, Politics (increasingly), Movies, TV/Streaming, Video Games, Social Media Platforms themselves, are all arguably the most influential methods in history for exposing audiences to new artists/celebrities/micro-celebrities/ideas/heroes/villains. Fandom has become more than content consumption. The role of FANS can, and often does, serve as the key driver of creative decisions and the entertainment business. The goal of this class is to provide students with the broadest understanding of the landscape of FANDOM today and historically, as well as the role it plays from the POV of decision makers and those that finance and produce content on the corporate level. We will also focus on the resources and processes for discovering artists/influencers/leaders/celebrities, mobilizing FANS as business strategies, navigating the process of FAN engagement effectively, and pushing the role of FANDOM (and artists themselves) in broad strategic thinking beyond the final produced project.													
Learning/Course Objectives*	By the end of the course, students should be able to: <table><tr><th>Learning Objective</th><th>How Assessed</th></tr><tr><td>Examine how businesses are created on the backs of fans by turning customers into fans or vice versa.</td><td>Class discussion</td></tr><tr><td>Analyze the broad mobilizations of FANDOM, the dark side of FAN attachment and action, and various FAN worlds within popular culture.</td><td>Class discussion</td></tr><tr><td>Articulate a cursory knowledge of the fan-driven economy and the various roles stakeholders have in the world of FANDOM.</td><td>Class discussion and in-class project. Final Project</td></tr><tr><td>Dissect the role of social media platforms, networks, streaming services, technology, producers, creatives and business that are vital to the relationship to FANS.</td><td>Class discussion and in-class project. Final Project</td></tr><tr><td>Discuss and Evaluate the development of FANS and FAN subcultures and incorporate them into a production/platform/celebrity/ content company’s holistic plan.</td><td>Class discussion</td></tr></table>		Learning Objective	How Assessed	Examine how businesses are created on the backs of fans by turning customers into fans or vice versa.	Class discussion	Analyze the broad mobilizations of FANDOM, the dark side of FAN attachment and action, and various FAN worlds within popular culture.	Class discussion	Articulate a cursory knowledge of the fan-driven economy and the various roles stakeholders have in the world of FANDOM.	Class discussion and in-class project. Final Project	Dissect the role of social media platforms, networks, streaming services, technology, producers, creatives and business that are vital to the relationship to FANS.	Class discussion and in-class project. Final Project	Discuss and Evaluate the development of FANS and FAN subcultures and incorporate them into a production/platform/celebrity/ content company’s holistic plan.	Class discussion
Learning Objective	How Assessed													
Examine how businesses are created on the backs of fans by turning customers into fans or vice versa.	Class discussion													
Analyze the broad mobilizations of FANDOM, the dark side of FAN attachment and action, and various FAN worlds within popular culture.	Class discussion													
Articulate a cursory knowledge of the fan-driven economy and the various roles stakeholders have in the world of FANDOM.	Class discussion and in-class project. Final Project													
Dissect the role of social media platforms, networks, streaming services, technology, producers, creatives and business that are vital to the relationship to FANS.	Class discussion and in-class project. Final Project													
Discuss and Evaluate the development of FANS and FAN subcultures and incorporate them into a production/platform/celebrity/ content company’s holistic plan.	Class discussion													

	Articulate an understanding of the continuum from building a FAN base to seeing it mobilized, become self-sustaining, and poised for growth and longevity. In-class project and final project
Guest Speakers	I will have occasional guest speakers. The guest speakers will only be presented if they have something interesting to say and are leaders in their field. You will have the opportunity to submit questions either prior to the guest speaker or after they have presented to the class—please come prepared to use them as a resource for your final project during this time.
Absences/Tardy:	Attendance is mandatory and will be reflected in the class participation portion of your grade. If you know you are going to be late or absent, please contact me prior to class via email (above). Copy Mary and Dan. Each unexcused absence, unexcused lateness or unexcused early exit from class will result in a one-third step down in grade (e.g., A- to B+).
Course Materials (Suggested Text)	There will be no formal text but I will hand out or post to the class Box folder assigned readings. Suggested Reading: Duffet, M. (2015). <i>Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the Study of Media Fan Culture</i>. Bloomsbury Academic. Glazer, A., Fraade-Blanar, Z. (2017). <i>Superfandom: How Our Obsessions are Changing What We Buy and Who We Are</i>. Profile Books.
Written Assignments	The first assignment will be due via email to Alisa Ben on Monday following Class 1. All remaining assignments are due via email to Alisa Ben two days (by 6pm) before the start of the scheduled class. Some assignments may be selected for discussion during class. Please make the Subject of all email submissions = Assignment Topic: Fandom – CLASS 93.859 – Student’s First and Last Name The format for all assignments must be the following or students will be deducted a 1/3 of a letter grade on the assignment (e.g., A- to B+): • 1-inch margins • 12-point Arial font • Min. 3 pages • Include Name, Assignment, Topic and Date in the Header section All late or missing written assignments will receive a 0. Written assignments will be graded based on the quality of the response to the prompt. Higher grades will be given for assignments that provide or indicate: • Analysis: Why did something likely occur, and what will likely happen as a result? What can be done better? • Originality: Boldness of thought and/or pursuit of innovative or outside the box thinking • Strong Conclusion: What is the net impact or result? What should someone do in response?

Evaluation* Method	<table><tr><td>Class Participation</td><td>10%</td></tr><tr><td>In-class Project</td><td>45%</td></tr><tr><td>Final Project</td><td>45%</td></tr></table>					Class Participation	10%	In-class Project	45%	Final Project	45%																								
Class Participation	10%																																		
In-class Project	45%																																		
Final Project	45%																																		
Class Participation Rubric	Grading for Class Participation As participation is a major factor in the grading of this class, I’m including a rubric for how I will be grading. Again, if you read the assigned articles and contribute in class you should be fine. <table><tr><td></td><td>A Grade</td><td>B Grade</td><td>C Grade</td><td>D/R Grade</td></tr><tr><td>Frequency and Quality</td><td>Attends class regularly and <u>always contributes</u> to the discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues, building on others’ ideas, synthesizing across readings and discussions, expanding the class’ perspective, and appropriately challenging assumptions and perspectives</td><td>Attends class regularly and <u>sometimes contributes</u> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.</td><td>Attends class regularly but <u>rarely contributes</u> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.</td><td>Attends class regularly but <u>never contributes</u> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.</td></tr></table>						A Grade	B Grade	C Grade	D/R Grade	Frequency and Quality	Attends class regularly and <u>always contributes</u> to the discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues, building on others’ ideas, synthesizing across readings and discussions, expanding the class’ perspective, and appropriately challenging assumptions and perspectives	Attends class regularly and <u>sometimes contributes</u> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.	Attends class regularly but <u>rarely contributes</u> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.	Attends class regularly but <u>never contributes</u> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.																				
	A Grade	B Grade	C Grade	D/R Grade																															
Frequency and Quality	Attends class regularly and <u>always contributes</u> to the discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues, building on others’ ideas, synthesizing across readings and discussions, expanding the class’ perspective, and appropriately challenging assumptions and perspectives	Attends class regularly and <u>sometimes contributes</u> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.	Attends class regularly but <u>rarely contributes</u> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.	Attends class regularly but <u>never contributes</u> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.																															
Grading Scale*	<table><tr><td>A+</td><td>99.0-100%</td><td>Exceptional</td></tr><tr><td>A</td><td>94.0-98.9%</td><td>Excellent</td></tr><tr><td>A-</td><td>91.0-93.9%</td><td>Very Good</td></tr><tr><td>B+</td><td>88.0-90.9%</td><td>Good</td></tr><tr><td>B</td><td>84.0-87.9%</td><td>Acceptable</td></tr><tr><td>B-</td><td>81.0-83.9%</td><td>Fair</td></tr><tr><td>C+</td><td>78.0-80.9%</td><td>Poor</td></tr><tr><td>C</td><td>74.0-77.9%</td><td>Very Poor</td></tr><tr><td>C-</td><td>71.0-73.9%</td><td>Minimum Passing</td></tr><tr><td>R</td><td>below 71 pts (< 71%)</td><td>Failing</td></tr></table>					A+	99.0-100%	Exceptional	A	94.0-98.9%	Excellent	A-	91.0-93.9%	Very Good	B+	88.0-90.9%	Good	B	84.0-87.9%	Acceptable	B-	81.0-83.9%	Fair	C+	78.0-80.9%	Poor	C	74.0-77.9%	Very Poor	C-	71.0-73.9%	Minimum Passing	R	below 71 pts (< 71%)	Failing
A+	99.0-100%	Exceptional																																	
A	94.0-98.9%	Excellent																																	
A-	91.0-93.9%	Very Good																																	
B+	88.0-90.9%	Good																																	
B	84.0-87.9%	Acceptable																																	
B-	81.0-83.9%	Fair																																	
C+	78.0-80.9%	Poor																																	
C	74.0-77.9%	Very Poor																																	
C-	71.0-73.9%	Minimum Passing																																	
R	below 71 pts (< 71%)	Failing																																	

Course/Topical Outline	Class 1: Saturday, January 20th: 2:30-5:30pm	
	Topic	The theory-based class will focus on the evolution of FANDOM and introduce a broad ‘state of the entertainment business’ and narrow the focus to FANDOM across Entertainment & media. The expectation is to come to class with some self-directed research in areas outlined in deliverables. We will investigate various projects that inspire and exemplify successful FANDOMS across all entertainment and media and their devotion (“good” or “bad”). This class is heavily weighted on in-class participation, healthy debate, and innovative ideas and philosophies of FANDOM.
	Required Readings	Personal research in the area of specific FAN BASES and FAN movements. Any Reading from Class Box Folder (if any).
	Deliverable	Individual Assignment – Students are required to select a subject that meets one of the FANDOM category choices (Emerging, Maintaining, Risk Management) attached to the syllabus and email a written example of no more than one or two paragraphs of FANDOM. It should identify the subject of the FANDOM, what it is (e.g., Taylor Swift’s “Swifties”), why you selected this particular FANDOM, an example of what it does extraordinarily well or poorly. Please use the FANDOM category descriptions/questions to guide your selection. Students must include links to socials for their subject and a general overview of the category or market the subject is in if outside Entertainment—any industry is fine. Students should be prepared to succinctly speak to it in class. Each student will get a timed 60 seconds.
	Class 2: Wednesday, January 24th: 6:00pm – 9:00pm	
	Topic	We will lay out relevant concepts related to the business of FANDOM in terms of business research/data and discuss applications of them in real world entertainment business settings. We will likely have a guest speaker sharing their expertise in the field.
	Required Readings	Marketing Plan vs Marketing Strategy SWOT Analysis Template/Example Personal research in FANDOM discovery, successful and unsuccessful activations of fandom/fan worlds in commerce and their cultural impact. Reading from Class Box Folder.

	Deliverable	Building on the first-class assignment, students have been placed into groups and will be assigned a FANDOM during class 1 that will serve as the final project topic. The group is required to submit via email a SWOT Analysis (minimum of three examples per quadrant) and devise an initial Business/Marketing Strategy for their assigned FANDOM. Groups must be prepared to discuss their assignments in class. Specific objectives and guidance will be given in class 1 for this in-class group project.
	Class 3: Saturday, February 3rd: 2:30-5:30pm	
	Topic	Final Project
	Deliverable	Finished projects viewable in class. Each team will prepare a PowerPoint presentation that builds upon and refines the assignment from class 2 that is complete with a marketing plan customized to achieve the strategy and goals of the business/marketing strategy. One exemplary piece of content must be included that illustrates the significant role of FANS and their impact on pop culture alongside their assigned subject. Detailed guidance given in class 2.
Plagiarism and cheating notice*	Plagiarism and other forms of academic misrepresentation are viewed as extremely serious matters. Misrepresentation of another's work as one's own is widely recognized as among the most serious violations. The violation is clearly flagrant when it occurs as plagiarism on a required paper or as cheating on an examination, including take-home as well as in-class examinations. The punishment for such offenses can involve expulsion from the MEIM Program and Heinz School. Cheating includes but is not limited to: 1. Plagiarism (explained below); 2. Submission of work that is not the student's own; 3. Submission or use of falsified data; 4. Unauthorized access to an exam or assignment; 5. Use of a stand-in for an exam; 6. Use of unauthorized material in the preparation of an assignment or during an examination; 7. Supplying or communicating unauthorized information to another student for use in an assignment or exam; 8. Unauthorized collaboration on an assignment. Collaboration must be explicitly permitted by an instructor for it to be considered authorized. 9. Submission of the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is the failure to indicate the source of work either with quotation marks or footnotes. The source can be a phrase, a graphic element, a proof, specific language, or an idea derived from the work of another person. Note that material on the web is another person's work and is therefore equally subject to the rules on plagiarism and cheating as any other source material.	

	Cheating and/or plagiarism on an essay assignment will result in a failing grade (0 points) for that assignment. The essay in which the cheating occurs will <i>not</i> be excluded from the offending student's assignments included in grade calculations; the points for that essay zero (0) will be factored into the grade. Furthermore, the cheating student's final grade will be reduced one full letter grade. A cheating student's final grade will be impacted significantly. In addition, cases of cheating and plagiarism will be submitted to and reviewed by the Dean's Office; more severe penalties may be imposed, <i>up to and including expulsion from the Heinz School.</i> Academic Dishonesty: Students are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards inside and outside the classroom. Cheating on exams and term papers (i.e., plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration) is obviously discouraged and will be treated appropriately. The usual penalty for violations is a failing grade for the particular assignment in question; however, in some instances, such actions may result in a failing grade for the course.
Artificial Intelligence Policy:	Any use of generative AI for any graded component of this course is explicitly prohibited. Using ChatGPT or other generative AI to generate any course content will be considered an academic integrity violation.

FANDOM GROUPS

Emerging: Fandoms that are growing either in engagement, popularity or with revenue stream opportunities. How do you take it into Stardom? Superstardom?

Maintaining: When you're on top the only way to go is down, or is it? Superstardom is hard to maintain so how do you grow audiences, improve/optimize your brand, stretch Fandoms to create an icon status and maintain as long as possible?

Risk Management: When Fandoms get too passionate and go too far/become toxic. What is too far? Can you turn it around? Do you lean into it and double down?

Emerging (Up and Coming)	Maintaining (Stay on Top)	Risk Management (Turn it Around/Double Down)
Your pick (Must be pre-approved) Teams 1 & 2	Your pick (Must be pre-approved) Teams 3 & 4	Your pick (Must be pre-approved) Team 5

FANDOM TEAMS

Team 1: Averì, Sarah, Natalie P
Team 2: Aditya, Renee, Akanksha
Team 3: Erin, Reese, Julia, Hongyun
Team 4: Angela, May, Tyler
Team 5: Natalie G, Scott, Ziqi