

Course Overview

In this class, we will illuminate the power of story—both personal and business—by revealing the key elements of storytelling, uncovering how storytelling helps build brands and organizations. This skill is important if you are a new venture trying to build a reputation, or you are an established company trying to grow and innovate. We will cover a broad swath of companies, from venture capital (Sequoia, August) to e-commerce (Nike), from experiences (NBA) to gaming. However, because the class is only 9 sessions, there are many gaps (e.g., B2B, nonprofit); the role of the readings is to cover some of the gaps and complement—but feel free to delve into topics on your own. To give you an overview of the class...

In the beginning, we start by looking at the behavioral science revealing the power of story (day 1) and dive into how to use both story and data (day 2), depending on the audience and context. Next, we'll explore how humor can be used in creating stories (day 3) and how story can be used to lead a team and an organization (day 4). In the second half of the class, we'll analyze how story can be used as an accelerant to fuel growth and innovation for your company (day 5) and build a global brand (day 6). Then, we'll reveal how story, humor and improv can drive culture (day 7) and what story looks like in an immersive virtual world (day 8). By the end, we hope that you understand what it means to be in the story mindset and how you can harness the power of stories to further you and your company's goals (day 9). The End.

Commencement Speech Story for Story Off!

At the end of a prosperous career, you will have hopefully collected a portfolio of signature stories—stories that define you, your leadership style, beliefs, and values. For the Story Off! we want you to imagine coming back to Stanford to give a commencement speech. In 1 minute during class, you will share your commencement speech story—it could be funny, inspirational or meaningful. The goal is for you to apply the tools you have learned in class to craft and share a personal story without visual aids during the presentation. You will turn in your story (400 words) on the class website at noon on Day 4, and will deliver your speech in class and then vote on the most engaging, inspirational stories in teams. The workbook is designed to help you craft your ideal commencement speech.

Innovation Pitch Finale

Harnessing both stories and data, your team will create a 3 minute pitch in class for brief feedback to key stakeholder for a brand (Nike)—so design to captivate and inspire. This final assignment is designed to help you (1) find, curate and bank user stories, and (2) use those stories to craft a growth story for a brand. In class, your team will do a four week design sprint to create a digital book or website, integrating in data, visuals, infographics, data charts and/or an assortment of photos that effectively and creatively tells the Nike growth story.

Note, good stories have clear goals which are easy to identify; they provoke, forcing the audience or stakeholder to pause and think; they create emotional connection through story; and they drive action. As you work on both of your assignments, remember to keep in mind four criterion: (1) Is your goal clear? (2) Is there a hook? (3) Is it authentic and compelling to the audience? (4) Does the audience know what to do, think or feel after the story?



GSBGEN 343

Spring 2016

The Power of Story

Jennifer Aaker
General Atlantic Professor of Marketing

**“Great stories happen to people who can tell them.”
Ira Glass.**

Stories can be a powerful tool for persuasion, critical for understanding customers, leading teams and building brands. Further, to grow and innovate, you not only need a big idea, you need stakeholder buy in and action. However, many fail in this regard because stakeholders are not aligned, the real problem that the innovation seeks to solve has not been identified, and the story has not been defined. Story can fuel stakeholder buy-in by painting a clear picture of what is and what could be for everyone—from employees, to investors, to customers. An excellent story allows you to delegate tactical aspects effectively because it clarifies how individuals can execute specific functions against the story. Further, when the stakeholder becomes part of the story, they are more likely to act, which generates momentum and create a culture of optimism. Story is equally important for leaders of companies, who often need to act as editors—shaping the stories told by employees and customers—to align everyone under a shared vision. Therefore, a second goal of the class is to demonstrate how personal stories can be used by leaders to build high performing teams and companies. By the end of the class, you will have gained insight into (1) How to use stories as an asset in business; (2) What makes for a good and bad story; (3) How to pitch stories. The End.



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Tuesday, April 5 – May 31 in CoLab (@ the GSB) aka McClelland 101

Section 1: 3:00-5:50 PM, Section 2: 6:00-8:50 PM



Course Website:

<http://powerofstory.stanford.edu/>

The Scoop

Theme	The Story of the Class	Storyteller	Readings/Videos	Workbook Assignment
Why Story (Day 1, 4/5)	Welcome! Today we'll dive into the science of story—when and why story matters, how to integrate data and story as you seek to understand customers, and how stories can build brands.	You!	Reading: The Dragonfly Effect	Complete Chapter 1 of workbook
How to Harness Data and Story (Day 2, 4/12)	Stories can be a powerful tool for persuasion, useful in the context of understanding customers and building brands but also in leading teams. In this class, we'll focus on the role of both story and data to build engaged and productive teams by taking a business chemistry quiz to help you understand the individual differences and contexts where story vs. data (vs. both) are differentially important.	Naomi Bagdonas (Deloitte) Optional: Visual Story Workshop 8:30-9:15 PM with Purin Phanichphant	Video: Nicole Kahn (IDEO) Video: Christian Roman (Pixar), Steve Jobs (Apple, Commencement Speech @ Stanford)	Complete Chapter 2 of workbook
How to Cultivate Comedy Mindset (Day 3, 4/19)	A good story takes you on a journey, one that can make you think, cry, and laugh. Today you will explore the role of humor in story and how to cultivate a comedy mindset at work and life. You will also embark on a Dish Walk with a "Mover and Shaker" partner for a practice pitch of your signature story—more details on this in class!	Naomi Bagdonas (Deloitte)	TED Video: Maysoon Zaid (99 Problems; Palsy is Just One)	Complete Chapter 3 of workbook
How to Harness Story to Lead (Day 4, 4/26)	Effective leaders are also effective storytellers. In this class, you'll learn how to leverage stories to build trust and respect from your colleagues. The goal is to help you develop skills to influence the key stakeholders in your organization, and advocate for your ideas. Build your own personal story bank of experiences from your career to clarify both your past and future.	Amy Brooks (NBA) + Yvonne Cagel (NASA)+ Story Off!	Video: Nancy Duarte (Duarte) Video: Tory Burch (Tory Burch)	Story Off! Complete Chapter 4 of workbook and share you 1 minute story.
How to Develop the Innovation Story (Day 5, 5/3)	What is the innovation story that you want to tell? In this class, you will be briefed on an innovation challenge posed by our brand partner. Your team will ideate solutions to key challenges facing your user. Then your team will develop a "story map"—showing how your user faces extraordinary challenges—ultimately to achieve something quite remarkable by means of your innovation.	Your Team!	Video: James Buckhouse (Sequoia) Video: Jeff Jordon (Andreessen-Horowitz)	(none)
How to Tell a Global Story (Day 6, 5/10)	It takes great storytelling on at least three levels to accelerate a digital business globally. People need a reason to "shop your store" when other alternatives are a click away. Investors need to understand why your strategy will create real shareholder value. Internal partners need to be inspired to lean in and provide support. We will dive into how you reach distinct audiences with distinct goals, and end today with an interactive session with Nike leaders.	Christiana Shi (Nike)	Video: Christiana Shi (Nike)	(none)
How to Harness Story, Comedy, + Improv to Build Culture (Day 7, 5/17)	How do you build strong cultures by harnessing story, comedy and improv. Cultures that do so are not only high performing, but they also tend to be innovative, relevant and fun. Leaders from Second City and David Hornik from August Capital will join us to delve in these questions, and we'll end with a design exercise intended to foster.	Kelly Leanard and Anne Libera (Second City) + David Hornik (August Capital)	Video: David Hornik (August Capital) TED Video: Dan Klein: Rapid Bonding through Improvisation Suggested Reading: Yes, And (Kelly Leanard)	(none)
How to Tell a Story in a Virtual World (Day 8, 5/24)	How to tell a story in an immersive environment? Whether you are creating 360 videos or animation or a walking simulator, the design principles change dramatically when your world is ambient, three dimensional, and user-centered. We will delve into how you build stories that interact, when the viewer controls the camera, and how to design ambient narrative storytelling for people, brands and companies.	Patrick Ewing (Firewatcher) + James Buckhouse (Sequoia)	TED Video: Chris Milk (How VR can create the Ultimate Empathy Machine) Video: Tom's Virtual Giving Trip	(none)
Innovation Pitch Finale (Day 9, 5/31)	Today is the big day: It's time to share your innovation with key stakeholders of your brand. Your 3 minute pitch is designed to hook us in, inspire confidence and buy-in. We'll conclude with behavioral insights on the role of story in fueling creativity, happiness, and meaning in life. The End.	Your Team!	(none)	Innovation Pitch Finale Your team will present a 3 minute pitch to Nike stakeholders