

MKT 494: The Business of Esports

Fall 2019

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CLASS HOURS:	Friday, 9:00 - 11:45pm
CLASS LOCATION:	BA 253, Tempe Campus
OFFICE HOURS:	By appointment

Course Description:

With total revenues expected to reach \$896 million in 2018 and grow to \$1.6 billion by 2020, esports is a global phenomenon. But what are the business factors driving and sustaining its rise? This course will dive deep into the business of owning and managing professional teams as well as operating leagues and major events. Students will learn how live and video-on-demand content is being distributed and how brands are activating in the esports space. Special attention will be paid to the underlying economics of the game publishers, top tier teams, events, platforms, and streamers.

Classes will feature frequent guest experts, giving students an opportunity to learn from leaders in the esports industry. Guest speakers will hail from all ends of the esports ecosystem including team officials, publishers, platforms, brands, streamers, and event organizers.

Students will conduct a real-world group project developing a business plan for a varsity (scholarship) esports program for Arizona State University. The class will break into groups with each group tackling a different part of the business model to develop a comprehensive proposal to be presented to senior ASU Administration officials.

The Undergraduate Program of the W.P. Carey School of Business has established the following learning goals for its graduates:

- **Critical Thinking**
- Communication
- **Discipline Specific Knowledge**
- Ethical Awareness and Reasoning

- **Global Awareness**

Items in bold have significant coverage in this course.

Course Objectives:

- Define the esports industry and explore business models of each part of the industry
- Learn about the esports fanbase; how it overlaps traditional sports and how it is unique
- Learn to develop a real-world business plan and present it to senior executives
- Study business models of key publishers, leagues, teams, players, events and distributors in the esports industry
- Demonstrate proficiency in esports industry knowledge

Course Pre-requisites:

Prerequisite(s): W.P. Carey BA or BS major; MKT 300, 302, or 303 with C or better

Course Schedule:

Week	Date	Topics	Reading / Assignment
1	8/23	Course Introduction & Overview Esports 101 Introduction of Class Project	
2	8/30	Understanding Business Models Business Model: Game Publishers Guest speaker: TBD	*See Reading list In-class quiz
3	9/6	Collegiate Esports Guest speaker: Kurt Melcher, Intersport	*See Reading list In-class quiz
4	9/13	Business Model: Esports Leagues Part 1: Overwatch League In-class work: Class Project (meet in groups) Guest speaker: TBD	*See Reading list In-class quiz
5	9/20	Business Model: Esports Leagues Part 2: NA LCS Guest Speaker: David Higdon, Global Head of Communications, Esports, Riot Games	*See Reading list In-class quiz
6	9/27	Business Model: Teams Guest Speaker: Jason Lake, CEO, Complexity Gaming Midterm exam review	*See Reading list In-class quiz
Week	Date	Topics	Reading / Assignment
7	10/4	Midterm exam Fortnite Esports	No Readings No quiz this week

8	10/11	Business Model: Twitch / Mixer Guest speaker: Mark Candella (@Garvey), Twitch In-class work on group project	*See Reading list In-class quiz
9	10/18	Investments in Esports Guest speaker: Chris Chaney, Aurelius Partners	*See Reading list In-class quiz
10	10/25	Other Leagues: Eleague, Rocket League Championship Series; Rainbow Six, etc Time in class to work on group project	No quiz this week Issue Papers due by 9am
11	11/1	Business Model: Events (TI, IEM, EVO, ESL One) & Venues In-class exercise: Guest speaker: TBD	*See Reading List In-class quiz
12	11/8	Sponsorship & Activation in Esports Esports Fan review Guest speaker: TBD In-Class work on Twitch Student project	*See Reading List In-class quiz
13	11/15	Group presentation rehearsals in-class;	Project Presentation rough drafts due
14	11/22	Group Presentations to ASU executives	Final presentations due by 8am
15	12/6	Esports player rights issues and opportunities Guest speaker: Scott Smith, Esports pioneer Final Exam review	*See Reading List In-class quiz
16	wo 12/9	Final exam (date/time TBD)	

Discord Server

Readings, study guides, and class presentations will be posted to the class Discord server, located at <https://discord.gg/vjRSNtt>. Discord is free to download and use and is a communications platform utilized by many gaming / esports organizations. Guest speakers will utilize the Discord live chat feature to communicate with our class.

Readings/Videos

Readings are a very important part of this course. Each week students will be required to read select newspaper and magazine articles (or watch specific videos) in advance of the class session. Quizzes will be given to test basic knowledge of the readings. The reading list can be found below. Updates to the reading list may be made from time-to-time to address a key learning initiative. Those updates will live on the class Discord server.

August 30- Publishers

[With Activision's Influence Growing, Blizzard Is Cutting Costs](#)

[The Fortnite World Cup Finals Were a Victory Lap For Epic Games](#)

[Who Holds the Cards: How Developer Control in Esports Can Impact the Ecosystem](#)

[Esports Is Already Nearing \\$1 Billion in Revenue for Activision Blizzard](#)

[A Look Inside Riot Games, From \\$320,000 Player Salaries To Using Esports As A Catalyst For Sales](#)

September 6- Collegiate / High School Esports

[Esports Gains Traction With Higher Education as Universities Hope on Board](#)

[NCAA Votes to Not Govern Collegiate Esports](#)

[Ohio State embraces esports with passion](#)

[Video Games: Entertainment or Sports? Inside Higher Ed](#)

[Meet the 26-year-old entrepreneur turning high-school gamers into varsity athletes](#)

September 13- Overwatch League / Call of Duty World League

[Call of Duty Global League Player Contract and Salary Details Announced](#)

[Activision Blizzard's esports marketing chief: We want brands to help us build Overwatch League](#)

[New Overwatch Commissioner explains what his plans are for Overwatch League | ESPN Esports \(VIDEO\)](#)

[What's Overwatch? Why is it on ESPN? An AP esports explainer](#)

[How Blizzard convinced sports billionaires to buy into the Overwatch League](#)

September 20- LCS (League of Legends)

[Why Riot Games Is Inc.'s 2016 Company of the Year](#)

[Riot Games "a long way from breaking even" on esports investment](#)

[Creator of the biggest esports league gives his take on the state of gaming \(VIDEO\)](#)

[Ousted from LCS, Echo Fox release players](#)

September 27- Teams

[7 Days Out- League of Legends \(Netflix\)](#)

[FaZe Clan Head of Esports Discusses Apparel, Partnerships, and Call of Duty League](#)

[The FALL of OpTic Gaming \(VIDEO\)](#)

[Envy COO: Good Corporate Structure Key to Overwatch League Team's Future](#)

[How Do You Best Monetize an Audience? Esports Team Execs Weigh In](#)

October 11- Twitch / Mixer

[What is Mixer, Ninja's new exclusive streaming home?](#)

[Mixer may have found the secret sauce for paying streamers full-time](#)

[Why is Mixer's community seen as more positive than Twitch and YouTube?](#)

[How Much MONEY Do Twitch Streamers REALLY Make? \(VIDEO\)](#)

[Twitch is expanding its sales team as it seeks bigger deals](#)

October 18- Investments in Esports

[G2 Esports Closes \\$17.3M Growth Funding Round](#)

[Esports Professionals, Team Owners Predict a Market Correction](#)

[The World's Most Valuable Esports Companies](#)

[Why Venture Capital is flooding into Esports teams](#)

[Mark Cuban reveals his main problem with esports and the OWL](#)

[Drake and Scooter Braun become co-owners of 100 Thieves after Series A funding round](#)

October 25- Other Leagues: Eleague, Rocket League Championship Series; Rainbow Six, etc

[Why Magic: The Gathering is Changing its Esports Approach for 2020](#)

[EA Competitive Gaming SVP on Creating an Esports Ecosystem for FIFA](#)

[How Clash Royale Followed Its Own Path in Mobile Esports](#)

[How Rocket League Carved Out Its Own Niche With High-Octane Car-Soccer](#)

[How Rainbow Six Siege Methodically Grew Into a Major Esport](#)

November 1- Events (TI, IEM, EVO, ESL One) & Venues

[No one mold for esports venues as arenas continue to grow](#)

[Full Sail University Builds Massive Esports Venue](#)

[OPINION: The Past, Present, and Future of Evo Makes It Prime for Investment](#)

[How To Get To The Super Bowl Of eSports \(HBO\) \(VIDEO\)](#)

[How The International became a global 'Super Bowl for nerds'](#)

November 8- Sponsorship & Activation

[Esports' next big mission: Win over sponsors](#)

[Kellogg's shifts sports-related ad spending to esports](#)

[Honda's New Tactic for Attracting First-Time Car Buyers: Esports](#)

[AT&T, ESL Show Plenty of 'White Space' In Esports Partnerships](#)

[Farming Simulator Esports Expands with League and Farm-Tech Sponsors](#)

[Mastercard's League of Legends Partnership Expands to LCS](#)

December 6- Esports player rights issues and opportunities

[Not one of the Fortnite World Cup's 100 finalists was a woman. Why?](#)

[Women navigate toxicity, other barriers in esports](#)

[Esports: The Price of the Grind \(VIDEO\)](#)

[Esports players are burning out in their 20s](#)

[Esports Is Getting Bigger Every Year — So Where Are All The Women?](#)

Course Deadlines

Drop/Add Deadline:	8/28/2019
Course Withdrawal Deadline:	11/6/2019
Complete Withdrawal Deadline:	12/6/2019

Grading and Course Requirements*

<u>Deliverables</u>		<u>Points</u>
<u>Individual Work:</u>		
Weekly Quizzes	10@ 10 points*	100 points
Issues Paper	1@ 200 points	200 points
Midterm Exam	1@ 200 points	200 points
Final Exam	1@ 200 points	200 points

**Missed quizzes may be made up by submitting a 150-word summary of one reading before 9am on the day of class.*

Team Project:

ASU Esports Group Project	1@ 300 points	300 points
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Total: 1,000 Points

Late assignments are not accepted without previous approval, and otherwise receive an automatic grade of zero.

Grading Scale:

970+ = A+, 940-969 = A, 900-939 = A-
870-899 = B+, 840-869 = B, 800-839 = B-
770-799 = C+, 740-769 = C, 700-739 = C-
600-699 = D, 0-599 = E

Deliverables

Weekly Quizzes (10%)

Each week, the class discussion will be guided by the readings and or videos assigned for that week. During most class sessions a five-question quiz will be distributed. The quiz will cover major topics of the readings / videos and are intended to encourage students to read/watch the material in advance of class. Because of the amount of material we will be covering it will be challenging to introduce new material each week without a basic understanding by the students. Excused absences may make up a quiz by writing a 150-word summary of one of the articles/videos assigned for that week. Summaries must be received by 9am on the day of class for credit to be received.

Midterm Exam (20%)

The midterm exam will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and long-answer questions covering material from the required readings, lectures, guest presentations, class discussions, and in-class exercises from weeks 1-6. A make-up mid-term exam may be given at the discretion of the instructor and a request must be received at least one week in advance. Failing to attend class on the day of the midterm exam without prior notification, will result in a grade of zero.

Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and long-answer questions covering material from the required readings, lectures, guest presentations, class discussions, and in-class exercises from weeks 7-12 and 15. A make-up final exam may be given at the discretion of the instructor and a request must be received at least one week in advance. Failing to attend class on the day of the final exam without prior notification, will result in a grade of zero.

Issues in Esports Research Paper (20%)

Students will prepare a fact-based research paper on an issue facing esports today. Papers will be fact-based and feature syndicated and/or third-party research and proper citations.

Topics could include but are not limited to the following:

- The challenge and opportunity for non-endemic brands looking to invest in esports.
- Pick a professional esports franchise, interview the organizers and share why you think they are set up for success?
- Despite (or because of) one game, Riot Games is a set for success in the future.
- Investments in esports- are they overvalued? Is there a bubble on the horizon?
- How is Fortnite redefining esports? Will Epic Games be successful creating a new kind of esports?
- Which traditional sports game (NBA2K, Madden 18, etc.) has the opportunity to become a dominant esports title?
- What are the roots of gender equity issues in esports? How can esports be more equitable for women?
- What is the most fitting governance / organizational model for collegiate esports?
- What can traditional sports learn from esports?

ASU Esports Student Project (30%)

This team applied project will include several key components:

- a. Students will be divided into teams of five to develop an objective business plan outlining the opportunities for a varsity (scholarship) esports program at ASU.
- b. Each group will tackle a different portion of the business plan (e.g. costs, revenues, oversight, academic integration, etc.) and will collaborate with each other to develop a comprehensive presentation for ASU executives. Each team will give a ten-minute presentation and each member will need to speak during the presentation. Please allow for 5-minutes of Q&A following presentation. Your final presentation to ASU executives will be on November 22 during regular class time.

- c. Grading criteria and a more detailed project rubric will be distributed at the launch of the project.

Classroom Policies

Classroom Behavior

You are enrolled in a professional course; please treat our classroom in the professional manner it deserves. Students are coming to class to learn - please do not disrupt this process. Regular class attendance is required. Please arrive on time and listen respectfully while the instructor, guest lecturer or other students are speaking. In addition, the university takes threatening behavior very seriously and these situations will be handled in accordance with the *Student Services Manual*, SSM 102-02 <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm104-02.html>.

Technology

Cell Phones: Please turn your cell phone off or to silent before class begins. If you need to take/make a call or send a text, please leave the classroom to avoid distracting others. Use of mobile phones in class is a significant distraction and will not be tolerated. I intend to treat this course like a business meeting. Students are welcome to excuse themselves should an urgent matter arise during class.

Laptops / Tablets: You are welcome to bring your laptop/tablet to class to take notes. As stated above, this class will run like a business meeting. When you are at work in a meeting with your supervisor, using laptops and/or phones for non-business purposes will likely result in you being disciplined or fired. So just as you would not use your phone or laptop for non-business purposes during a business meeting, using these devices for non-class related purposes will not be tolerated.

Penalty: Students whose use of mobile devices disrupts class will be asked to leave and may be faced with other disciplinary action.

Academic Integrity and Ethical Behavior

The W. P. Carey School takes academic integrity very seriously. Therefore, unless otherwise specified, it is imperative that you do your own work. Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Any suspected violations of academic integrity will be taken seriously and result in the following sanctions:

- A minimum of zero on the assignment AND
- A reduced grade in the course OR
- A failure in the course OR
- An XE which denotes failure due to academic dishonesty on the transcript OR
- Removal from the W. P. Carey School of Business

For additional information on ASU's academic integrity policy, visit:

<https://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/studentacint.html>

Value Statement

The ASU Charter sets forth a vision of a New American University, measured not by whom we exclude, but rather whom we include and how they succeed'; that advances research of public value, and that assumes responsibility for the well-being of the communities it serves. Now and in the future, ASU remains committed to supporting our students' success, to encouraging diversity and inclusion, and to enhancing the public good...We look forward to the continuation of conversations on our campuses that facilitate understanding among us, and that demonstrate respect, kindness, and civility towards all members of our diverse and multifaceted ASU communities.

Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Absence Policies

Religious Accommodations

Include a statement about religious accommodations (see sample below). Note: we recommend giving students a deadline to request accommodations – such as the 2nd week of class. Accommodations will be made for students with religious holidays. Below is the calendar of official religious holidays. Each holiday noted with two asterisks denotes an observance for which work is not allowed. For these holidays, students will not be penalized in any way for missing class or assignment. This means that this will not count as an absence in class and they will be granted a makeup assignment or exam, etc.

<https://eoss.asu.edu/cora/holidays>

All requests for accommodation must be submitted by the end of the second week of class.

University-Sanctioned Activities

Accommodations will be made for students who miss class related to university-sanctioned activities according to ACD 304-02. If you are participating in a university-sanctioned activity, please let your instructor know as early in the course as possible so that accommodations can be made.

Tutoring Support

The W. P. Carey School of Business provides free tutoring in BA 201 for a number of undergraduate business classes. Assistance with writing is also provided. For more information regarding courses offered and available hours, visit: <https://my.wpcarey.asu.edu/undergrad/student-success/success-center.cfm?>

Threatening Behavior Policy

The university takes threatening behavior very seriously and these situations will be handled in accordance with the Student Services Manual, SSM 104-02
<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm104-02.html>.

Disability Accommodations

If you need an accommodation for a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. You must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and submit the appropriate documentation.

Copyright Material

Plagiarism is the intentional use of material from someone else's written work without acknowledging the source. This includes turning in papers written by someone else or copying passages from someone else's work without properly citing it. If you use someone else's written work and misrepresent it as your own, it is plagiarism, which is among the most serious forms of academic cheating.

W. P. Carey School of Business Undergraduate Student Honor Code

The mission of the W. P. Carey School of Business is to change lives through delivering a business education, while adhering to the highest standards of academic and personal integrity. To achieve this, the W. P. Carey School of Business is committed to fostering an atmosphere of personal responsibility, trust, honor, and academic excellence for its students both on and off campus.

1. *Honesty and Faithful Representation:* W. P. Carey undergraduate students will be honest and act with integrity in all their interactions and decisions. Students will follow the Arizona State University Code of Conduct and the W. P. Carey School of Business Academic Integrity Policies during all academic and extracurricular activities.
2. *Thoughtfulness and Consideration for Others:* W. P. Carey undergraduate students will treat their peers, ASU staff, and faculty with respect and courtesy. Students should strive to add value to the university environment by helping and encouraging others, fostering intellectual dialogue, and promoting justice. By respecting others and articulating thoughtful input, students will continue to improve the image of business and business leaders.
3. *Commitment to the W. P. Carey Mission:* W. P. Carey undergraduate students should understand and recognize the value of cultivating an intrinsic desire to promote ethical and successful business practice. This means that students should implement their acquired knowledge with the intention of greatly enhancing their own business and social environments. In this sense, W. P. Carey students will become positive and responsible role models in their respective communities.

**Information contained within this syllabus
(except grading and absence policies) is subject to change.**