Specialized Reporting & Writing: Event Planning

019:120:SCA
The University of Iowa
School of Journalism & Mass Communication

Instructor: Heather Spangler

Location: W326 AJB

Time: 3:30-5:20 p.m. Mondays & Wednesdays

Office Hours: 2-3 p.m. Mondays & Wednesdays in N454 LC and by appointment.

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*Email is the best way to reach me—my voicemail goes unchecked for days.

Course Overview:
Event planning is a growing, changing industry that allows journalists to employ their communication, marketing, social media and project management skills. In this course we will explore the event planning field through speakers, research, and hands-on experiences.

Prerequisite and requirements:
Students must be journalism majors and have completed 019:098. Students must also be willing and able to put in time outside of class to carry out and support classmates in carrying out events.

Readings:
There is not one required text for this course. Students will be divided into teams to focus on specific types of events. Teams will study printed and electronic references relating to their topic within the larger field of event planning, discuss them as a group, and present findings to the class.

Major Assignments:
Additional details about assignments will be given in a timely manner, but here is the gist:

- **Plan and carry out major event:** We will divide the class into four teams: Higher Education, Politics, Nonprofit and Social Media. Each group will take the lead on planning and carrying out an event related to their focus area. I have made arrangements with organizations or entities willing to let our class be involved in their events and will connect you with your clients. You will earn points along the way with presentations of ideas and plans to the class. You will be graded on the event’s success based on a written report you will complete and present orally as well as surveys to be completed by your classmates and clients. (100 points)
• **Work day participation:** Each event team is assigned a work day, when they can put the rest of us to work getting ready for their event. You earn 5 points per workday for participating and helping. (15 points total)

• **Class Events:** In addition to the major events you will plan in small groups, we will carry out two less involved events as a class—one for Halloween and one during finals week. You can earn up to 20 points per event for your active participation in the planning process and event. (40 points total)

• **Attendance & Participation:** 30 points (1 point for each class meeting, plus 3 flex points to reward extra effort)

• **Attend event as support team and evaluator:** In addition to the event you plan, you must attend at least one other event throughout the semester to support your classmates with the work of carrying out the event (as needed and appropriate) as well as to take on the role of an evaluator to add to our class discussion of lessons we can take away from each event. (20 points, up to 10 extra credit for attending a 2nd event)

• **Speaker and Client Hosts:** We will have a series of speakers and other guests visit or contribute to our course throughout the semester. Each guest will have a host or team of hosts who will prepare materials to help the guest feel welcome and ready to work with us, help ensure the guest’s comfort while with us, and thank the guest when our interaction is complete. (15 points)

• **Speaker preparation and response:** You will submit 5 questions for each guest speaker at least 48 hours in advance of their visit via a discussion board, and a 2-3 paragraph response to their visit via an ICON dropbox by the beginning of the next class period after their visit. (10 points each X 7 guests = 70 points)

• **Social Media Participation:** Modern event planners must also be social media gurus. Throughout our course, we’ll stay up to date on social media uses and best practices for event planning and we’ll share highlights from our class and ideas we encounter through a course Twitter profile. Each student will be responsible to manage the Twitter account at one point during the semester. [@PlanningInAJB, pw: 019120sca]. (10 points)

• **Final, solo event plan:** To end our course, you will identify a client in any sector you choose, communicate with the client about their event planning needs or interests, and produce a plan for an event that the client could choose to carry out. You will present this plan in class as well as submit a written plan via ICON for a final grade. Your submission will include notes from your client interview; background information on the client; information about competitors’ events or similar events; specific event plans including venue, guests, vendors, activities, estimated costs, etc.; your plans for promoting the event; how you will use social media throughout the process; and plans for measuring the event’s success. (100 points)

**Grading:**

- 99-100% A+
- 88-89% B+
- 78-79% C+
- 68-69% D+

- 94-98% A
- 84-87% B
- 74-77% C
- 63-67% D

- 90-93% A-
- 80-83% B-
- 70-73% C-
- 60-62% D-

**Attendance:**
I aim to make each meeting essential and meaningful, so please plan to attend every session or risk missing out on something important. You cannot be successful in this class if you are not consistently present and prepared. Out of respect for your classmates and our schedule, please also arrive on time and stay for the entire class period. Failing to do so may impact your grade.

Students who must miss class are accountable for all material presented and assignments given during their absence. It is your responsibility to communicate with me to see what you need to know for the next session and to turn in any work that was due during the missed class period prior to the next meeting. In-class assignments may not be made up.

Late work:
As journalists, it’s essential that you respect and meet deadlines with no exceptions. I will accept late work only in extreme circumstances, including an utterly debilitating illness or a documented family crisis. It is important that you communicate with me as soon as possible if you feel you will miss turning in an assignment and provide adequate documentation to prove your given excuse. Late work will be marked down 20 percent for each day it is late. I will not accept any late work more than three days past its due date.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Policies:

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml].

Academic Fraud
Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is a serious matter and is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Instructors and DEOs decide on appropriate consequences at the departmental level while the Associate Dean enforces additional consequences at the collegiate level. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Making a Suggestion or Complaint
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Accommodations for Disabilities
A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be
reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment at www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

**Reacting Safely to Severe Weather**
In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. (Operations Manual, Part IV, 16. See items e, h, and i.)

**Course Objectives/The Iowa Dozen:**

We learn to ...

1. Write correctly, clearly and well.
2. Conduct research and gather information responsibly.
3. Edit and evaluate carefully.
4. Use media technologies thoughtfully.
5. Apply statistical concepts accurately.

We value ...

6. Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
7. A diverse global community.
8. Creativity and independence.

We explore ...

10. Theories and concepts.
11. The history, structure and economy of media institutions
12. The role of media in shaping cultures.

**Schedule:**

Week 1:
*Monday, August 20: Course and classmate intro. Assignment explanations and sign up.
*Wednesday, August 22: Teams meet and review basic event information, establish preliminary roles.

**CLIENT VISIT (4 p.m.): Jill Fishbaugh,** UI College of Education’s strategic communications director.

Week 2:
Monday, August 27: **CLIENT VISIT: Kathleen Cannon,** executive director of Girls on the Run of Johnson County, to discuss her organization’s 5K fundraiser. Large group brainstorm for Halloween event concept and tasks.
*Wednesday, August 29: Social Media and event planning discussion. **GUEST SPEAKER: TBD.** Social Media team to meet and begin brainstorming ideas.
Week 3:
Monday, Sept. 3: LABOR DAY: NO CLASS
*Wednesday, Sept. 5: Homecoming & GOTR 5K teams to present preliminary plans: task list and assignments, client background report, competitors/similar events file, and event fact sheet. CLIENT VISIT: Election Night, TBD.

Week 4:
*Monday, Sept. 10: GUEST SPEAKER: Rachel Robertson of Johnson County Republicans, to speak on political event planning. Discuss Election Night event concept and begin research/planning.
*Wednesday, Sept. 12: Homecoming work day. Homecoming team to identify and assign tasks we can carry out as a class during this meeting.

Week 5:
*Monday, Sept. 17: Election Night team to present preliminary plans: task list and assignments, client background report, competitors/similar events file, and event fact sheet.
Wednesday, Sept. 19: All teams will meet to brainstorm, discuss and progress their plans. Teams will present informal progress reports to class.

Week 6:
Wednesday, Sept. 26: Last minute Homecoming Event preparation, presentation, all teams meet to discuss progress.

*Saturday, Sept. 29: College of Education Homecoming Tailgate

Week 7:
Monday, Oct. 1: Homecoming Event debriefing, prepare for guest speaker.
*Wednesday, Oct. 3: GUEST SPEAKER: Ken Aagaard, UI J-School graduate and executive director of operations at CBS. We will NOT meet in our regular classroom: meet in E254 AJB, Brownell Board Room.

Week 8:
Monday, Oct. 8: Election Night work day. Election Night team to identify and assign tasks we can carry out as a class during this meeting. Homecoming team’s final reflections due.
Wednesday, Oct. 10: Social Media team to present preliminary plans: task list and assignments, client background report, competitors/similar events file, and event fact sheet for Virtual Event.

Week 9:
Monday, Oct. 15: 5K work day. 5K team to identify and assign tasks we can carry out as a class during this meeting.
*Wednesday, Oct. 17: Halloween Event and Virtual Event work day. Social Media team to identify and assign tasks we can carry out as a class during this meeting. Prepare for next week’s guest speakers.
Week 10:
*Wednesday, Oct. 24: **GUEST SPEAKER: Laura McLeran**, outreach and events coordinator for UI President Sally Mason.

Week 11:
Monday, Oct. 29: Halloween Event last minute tasks and presentation.
*Wednesday, Oct. 31: Halloween Event

Week 12:
Monday, Nov. 5: Halloween Event debriefing. Election Night last minute tasks and presentation.
*Tuesday, Nov. 6: Election Night
Wednesday, Nov. 7: Election Night debriefing. Discuss and begin working on final projects

Week 13:
Monday, Nov. 12: Final projects work day and one-on-one conferences. Discuss Finals Week send-off event.
Wednesday, Nov. 14: GOTR 5K last minute preparations/presentation. Election Night team’s final reflections due.

*Saturday, Nov. 17: Girls on the Run 5K fundraiser 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Week 14:
Monday, Nov. 19: THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS
Wednesday, Nov. 21: THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS

Week 15:
Monday, Nov. 26: GOTR 5K debriefing. Social Media Virtual Event last minute preparations. GOTR 5K team’s final reflections due.
*Wednesday, Nov. 28: Social Media Virtual Event takes place. Final presentations (5 minutes each).

Week 15:
Monday, Dec. 3: Social Media Virtual Event debriefing. Final presentations (5 minutes each).
*Wednesday, Dec. 5: Event Planning internship opportunities panel. We will NOT meet in our regular classroom. Meeting location TBD. Social Media team’s final reflections due.

*Week 16: FINALS WEEK: Turn in final projects to ICON. End of course send-off event.

{{PS: It’s important to be flexible! Please note that this is a tentative schedule. Unplanned opportunities and challenges may require changes. }}