Foundations of Event Management

JMC/EVNT: 3250:0001
The University of Iowa
School of Journalism & Mass Communication

Instructor: Heather Spangler

Location: E146 AJB

Time: 12:30-1:45 p.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays

Office Hours: 10 to 11 a.m. and 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays and by appointment

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Course Overview:
Event planning is a growing, changing industry that allows professionals 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 willing and able to put in time outside of class to volunteer at an event and visit an event site. It may be necessary to travel off campus or out of Iowa City to complete these tasks.

Text:
There is no required text. Supplementary readings and resources will be posted to ICON.

Major Assignments:
Major assignment sheets are attached at the end of this syllabus. Each assignment will be discussed in more detail in a timely manner, but here is the gist:

- **Attendance & Participation:** I will administer at least 6 unannounced attendance quizzes throughout the semester at 5 points each. (30+ points)
- **EXTRA CREDIT Class Project Participation:** We will plan a real-world event as a class. At times, there will be action steps that need to be taken outside of class. Students can earn up to 5 extra credit points by volunteering to take on one of these tasks and successfully completing it. You will document your completion and points earned by sending me an email.
• **BizBash Daily Reports:** Students will monitor BizBash Daily, an e-newsletter from an industry leader, and will present a highlight on their assigned day. (10 points)

• **Speaker preparation:** You will submit a bio and questions for each guest speaker by the start of the class period before their visit via ICON. (5 points each = 20+ points)

• **Venue Visit:** Each student will arrange to visit an event venue to tour the space and speak with an event planner about the venue and his or her job. You will take notes and photos during your visit and present your findings in a visually appealing PowerPoint or Prezi. (50 points)

• **Event Volunteering Experience:** Each student will volunteer at an event. You will observe and report on successes and failures of the event along with your role and the event’s overall organization. You will describe your experience in a visually appealing PowerPoint or Prezi. (75 points)

• **Final Event Plan:** 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. (100 points)

**Grading:**

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

- 94-98% A
- 84-88% 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 will 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 or your classmates 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 work may not be made up.

**Late Work & Early Work**
As budding event planners, it’s essential that you 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.

On the other hand, early work is accepted and celebrated in this course. Event planners must have an excellent sense of what needs to be done when to maximize productivity and success. I’m giving you all of the course assignment details now. If you wish to begin working on your assignments and turn them in before the deadlines, be my guest. Please check in with me and let me know of your plans in case there’s anything you need to know before you dig in.
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:
Students in this course will gain a broad understanding of the event-panning field. Through lectures, guest speakers, hands-on exercises, and assignments, you will learn about:
• Career opportunities in the field
• Essential event planning skills
• Proven and emerging technologies in event planning
• Integrating marketing and social media techniques
• Green event planning
• Working with clients and vendors
• Legal and ethical considerations in event planning
• Crisis management
• Evaluating event successes and failures

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:
Tuesday, August 25: Course and classmate introductions.
Thursday, August 27: Primary assignment explanations and sign up.

Week 2:
Thursday, Sept. 3: Discussion: Event Planning Timeline, Budgets.

Week 3:
Tuesday, Sept. 8: Discussion: Date selection, Venues, and Contracts.
Thursday, Sept. 10: Discussion: Décor and Design.

Week 4:
Tuesday, Sept. 15: Guest Speaker: Allie Boenish, Director of Special Events at the Iowa City/Coralville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.
Thursday, Sept. 17: Guest speaker follow up. Discussion: Vendors and Catering.

Week 5:

Week 6:
Tuesday, Sept. 29: Guest Speaker: Emily McMahon, owner of Soiree, a private events company.
Thursday, Oct. 1: Guest speaker follow up. Discussion: Technology.

Week 7:
Tuesday, Oct. 6: Discussion: Homecoming Events. Discussion: Corporate Event Planning.
Thursday, Oct. 8: Guest Speaker: Nick Arnold, event planner at ACT.

Week 8:
Tuesday, Oct. 13: Guest speaker follow up. Discussion: Marketing & Social Media.

Week 9:
Tuesday, Oct. 20: Discussion: Green Events.
Week 10:
Thursday, Oct. 29: Event Volunteering Experience presentations.

Week 11:
Tuesday, Nov. 3: Guest Speaker: Terrence Neuzil, Johnson County Supervisor.
Thursday, Nov. 5: Guest speaker follow up. Discussion: Event Planning in Politics.

Week 12:
Tuesday, Nov. 10: Discussion: Veterans Day and Annual Events. Conferences sign up.
Thursday, Nov. 12: Individual Conferences.

Week 13:
Tuesday, Nov. 17: Individual Conferences.
Thursday, Nov. 19: Individual Conferences.

Week 14:
**Thanksgiving Week: Please be safe and enjoy your time off.**

Week 15:
Tuesday, Dec. 1: Discussion: Measuring Success and Post-Event Steps.
Thursday, Dec. 3: End of course evaluations.

Week 16:
Tuesday, Dec. 8: DUE: Final Event Plan. Final Event Plan presentations.
Thursday, Dec. 10: Final Event Plan presentations.

Week 17:
**Finals Week**

{{PS: It’s important to be flexible! Please note that this is a tentative schedule. Unplanned opportunities and challenges may require changes. }}
A successful event planner is innovative, on top of industry trends, and keeps an eye on the “competition.” To get you in the habit, I’m asking each student to sign up for BizBash Daily, a daily e-newsletter from a leading source of inspiration in the events industry. You’ll find a link at www.bizbash.com.

You each will be responsible for monitoring the newsletter for one week and will present one highlight to the class on your assigned day. A highlight can be something that you found inspiring, surprising, or even an example of something you didn’t like.

Your presentation should be brief (less than 5 minutes) and informal, but you should plan to pull up a visual to help foster understanding and discussion. BizBash discussions will generally be at the start of our class period, so please plan to arrive a few minutes early on your day to set up.
We are lucky to have some interesting, successful event planners join us for in-depth conversations about their work. To help our guests know that we are engaged, and to make the most out of their visits, you should conduct a little research on each person and their work in advance.

Based on that research, please submit to ICON a 3+-paragraph summary of the speaker’s bio and pertinent details about their occupation/place of work along with at least 3 questions you’d like to ask the speakers.

I will likely browse through the submissions and let our speakers know about the topics you would most like them to cover.

You should plan to ask one of your questions if there’s a lull or an appropriate time. There’s nothing I hate more than crickets when a speaker is willing to answer questions.

Speaker Preparations are due by the start of the class period before the speaker’s visit. Example: If the speaker is coming on a Thursday, the assignment is due by class time Tuesday of that week.

**Speaker dates:**

**Tuesday, Sept. 15:** Allie Boenish, Director of Special Events at the Iowa City/Coralville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.

**Tuesday, Sept. 29:** Emily McMahon, owner of Soiree, a private events firm.

**Thursday, Oct. 8:** Guest Speaker: Nick Arnold, corporate event planner at ACT.

**Tuesday, Nov. 3:** Terrence Neuzil, Johnson County Supervisor and political events expert.
Venue Visit Assignment  
Due Sept. 22  
50 Points

At the start of our course, you should have signed up to visit one of several local venues or opted to visit a venue in your hometown.

**Step 1:** Contact the venue to schedule a visit. Depending on the type of venue you chose, you might reach out to a catering manager, event supervisor, etc. Please note: there will be no extensions or venue switches allowed for this assignment unless you let me know by the end of Week 2 of our course that there is a scheduling problem with your assigned venue.

**Step 2:** Tour the venue to learn about the types of events the venue hosts, examples of annual or typical events, examples of outliers or unusual events, how events are planned at the venue, and details entities planning events there need to know.

Ask for copies of contracts, checklists, other pertinent documents related to events in the venue.

Ask about the person giving you the tour—what is his or her title, what are his or her responsibilities? What does he or she like and dislike about the job?

Ask your own questions as well. What do you want to know?

**Step 3:** Take photos on your tour and locate supplementary visuals online or through your host.

**Step 4:** Organize your findings into a PowerPoint or Prezi and submit your presentation file and additional notes via ICON. As time permits, all students will share their presentations with the class on Sept. 22 and 24.
Event Volunteering Experience  
Due Oct. 27  
75 Points

**Step 1:** Identify an event that can use you as a volunteer. To qualify, the event should draw at least 20 people. You can find events by searching community and university calendars.

**Step 2:** Post to the ICON discussion board by Sept. 1 the event you plan to volunteer with. If more than 4 other students have already posted about your event, you need to choose a different one.

**Step 3:** Be in touch with event organizers letting them know you would like to volunteer. Follow their instructions for how to carry out that goal. You should dedicate at least 4 hours in advance of the event and at least 4 hours carrying out the event. If your selected event doesn’t need volunteers or it doesn’t work out for any reason, be in touch with me ASAP.

**Step 4:** As you are completing your volunteer duties, take notes on how the event is organized. How do event managers communicate with volunteers? How do guests learn the details they need to know? What choices do you see the event managers making—venue, vendors, décor, marketing, technology, activities, etc.? How are guests responding to the event? How are event managers handling the stresses of carrying out an event? What recommendations would you make for improving the event in the future?

**Step 5:** Take photos of the event and gather supplementary photos online.

**Step 6:** Organize your findings into a PowerPoint or Prezi and submit your presentation file and additional notes via ICON. As time permits, all students will share their presentations with the class on Oct. 27 and 29.
Final Event Plan
Due Dec. 8
100 Points

Throughout the semester we’ve been talking about the elements of an event plan and planning an event as a group. This is your chance to call all the shots! 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. As time permits, students will present their plans to the class on Dec. 8 and 10.

Grading:
You will be graded based on incorporation of course content and ideas, professionalism, attention to detail, evidence of research, potential for event plans to be implemented, as well as spelling, grammar, and organization.

Client & Event Parameters:
1) You should not be currently affiliated with the client—no planning something for an organization or business where you already have insider knowledge and access.
2) The event you plan should require in-depth thinking and research to allow you to gain meaningful experience. Choose an event of appropriate scope. A brownbag lunch for 10 people is too simple. A week-long international conference with 10 locations is too complicated.
3) This should be a new event, not a revamping of an existing event.

Details:
Your ICON submission should be in one Powerpoint/Prezi with an embedded spreadsheet and links to external components on Trello and Pinterest. Be sure your settings allow me to access your work, or, if you’d rather, invite me to join your boards privately. Please also include screenshots of your boards as a backup method to provide me access to your work. This report should be specific, in depth and a go-to document to actually make this event happen. It should include:

1) Background information on the client.
2) Notes/bullet points from your client interview about event goals and preferences.
3) Information about competitors’ events or similar events.
4) Specific event plans including:
   a. Venue
      i. A description of where the event should take place and why.
      1. Contact information for venue representatives (who has the keys?)
      2. Details for guests about parking, restrooms, whatever else they’ll need to know.
      ii. Two alternative sites in case your client prefers other options.
      iii. If you’re planning an outdoor event, a back-up plan for inclement weather.
   b. Guests
      i. Who is the target audience for this event?
      ii. How many people are you planning for and how did you arrive at that number?
   c. Vendors (PINTEREST)
i. Who will provide food, decorations, staffing, entertainment, etc.?
ii. What specifics can you share with each vendor?
   1. Proposed menu.
   2. Decoration vision.
   3. Space set up.
   4. Staffing needs/tasks.
d. Activities (PINTEREST, TRELLO)
   i. What will happen at your event?
   ii. What is your proposed schedule of activities at the event?
e. Estimated costs (GOOGLE DOC or Excel spreadsheet embedded into your Word Doc, please).
   i. This should be as detailed and accurate as possible.
   ii. Include options for shaving costs whenever possible, to allow flexibility.
f. Your plans for promoting the event.
   i. How will you reach out to potential guests?
   ii. How will you collect RSVP information (if relevant)?
g. Social Media component
   i. What role will social media play leading up to your event?
   ii. How will social media be incorporated in your event?
   iii. Post-event?
h. Sustainability details.
   i. What will be the environmental impact of the event?
   ii. What ideas do you have to minimize that impact?
i. Crisis Management
   i. What crises can you anticipate?
   ii. How will you prepare to prevent and face these anticipated crises?
j. Plans for measuring the event’s success.
k. A timeline with task list for implementing the event. (TRELLO)
l. Any other details pertinent to your specific event.

**External Components:**
1) Trello: Please provide links to two Trello boards.
   a. Detailed task list for planning the event.
   b. Detailed task list for the day of the event.
   c. To ensure that I can see your board, please set it to public, invite me to join the board, AND attach to your assignment submission a screen shot of your boards.

2) Pinterest: Please create a vision board to gather ideas and specific examples. If you do not wish to make your board public, you must invite me to join the board. Please also submit a screenshot of the board with your assignment.
   a. Venue
   b. Menu
   c. Décor
   d. Entertainment
   e. Activities
   f. Etc.
Day 1 Survey

Name:

How is your name pronounced?

Major:

Have you signed up to earn or are you planning to earn your Certificate in Event Planning?

Hometown:

Hobbies:

Is there anything else you’d like me to know about you?