Course Number: EVNT:3154:0002

Instructor: Heather Spangler
The University of Iowa
School of Journalism & Mass Communication

Location: 3083 LIB
Time: 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays

Office Drop-in Hours: 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and by appointment

Contact:
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E346C AJB
*Email is the best way to reach me

Course Overview:
Event planning is a growing, changing industry that allows professionals to employ their communication, marketing, social media, project management skills and more. 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.

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 & Professionalism:** Your presence, participation, and professionalism are essential to your success in this classroom and in the event planning field. At two points throughout the semester you will submit a self-evaluation about your performance in these three areas worth up to 15 points. I also reserve the right to conduct unannounced attendance quizzes for up to 5 points each at any point during the semester. Missed attendance quizzes cannot be made up for any reason. (30+ points)

• **Class Project Participation:** We will plan a real-world event as a class. There will be action steps that need to be taken outside of class. Students can earn up to 100 points by completing one or more of these tasks and successfully completing it/them. You will document your completion by submitting a description of your tasks and any relevant tangibles to the ICON dropbox. You are also responsible for sharing any tangibles and updates to our event’s Trello board in a timely manner. (100 points)

• **BizBash Daily Reports:** Students will monitor BizBash Daily, an e-newsletter from an industry leader, and will present a highlight on their assigned day. Please submit your presentation and a link to your highlight via the ICON dropbox by the start of the class period you’ll present. Please see the assignment sheet for an alternate option. Please also plan to share which article you will highlight via the ICON discussion board to help us avoid duplications. (10 points)

• **Speaker preparation:** You will submit a 3-paragraph bio and 3 questions for each guest speaker by the start of the class period before their visit via ICON. (10 points each)

• **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 document. (75 points)

• **Individual 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. We will complete portions of this project as smaller assignments throughout the semester and culminate with a polished, professional PDF document and PowerPoint presentation. Please see the assignment sheet for assignment breakdown and due dates. (150 points total)

**Grading:**

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<td>80-83% B-</td>
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**Course Objectives:**
Students in this course will gain a broad understanding of the event-panning field, especially through the lenses of law & ethics, writing & storytelling, and multiculturalism.

**Law & Ethics Learning Goal**

Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in real space and cyberspace, and demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and their historical development.

✓ Students will demonstrate an ability to anticipate and recognize ethical issues when they arise and to reason through them taking multiple perspectives and contexts into account.

✓ Students will demonstrate an ability to explain their ethical approaches and reasoning about a particular dilemma in terms that can be understood by a diverse group of people.

**Writing and Storytelling Learning Goal**

Understand that clear, concise, correct writing is at the heart of journalistic expression and that reporting and communicating it effectively requires a knowledge and achievement of the highest, professionally-accepted standards in all work.

✓ Students will demonstrate the ability to gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media and audiences.

✓ Students will display the ability to access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards.

✓ Students will demonstrate the ability to apply above concepts in a manner that is sensitive to audiences across all media.

**Multiculturalism Learning Goal**

To demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups (including communities defined by gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion and sexual orientation) in a global society in relationship to communications.

✓ Students will demonstrate an ability to produce media that serve the needs and interests of diverse communities and reflect their voices and experiences.

✓ Students will demonstrate sensitivity to and understanding of the cultures, histories, perspectives, and socio-economic and political situations of diverse groups.

✓ Students will demonstrate an ability to work with members of diverse groups to engage publicly over issues of community interest.
Course Policies:

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 (or in the event planning industry) 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 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, including attendance quizzes, 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. 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. Unexcused late work will be docked 10% per day and will not be accepted more than 5 days late.

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.

Workload & In-class work time
The UI College of Liberal Arts guidelines state that each semester hour of class time should entail around two hours per week of outside homework and class preparation for the average student. For example, in our 3 semester hour course, students should expect (on average) 6 additional hours of outside work per week or a total of around 9 hours per course per week if classroom time is included.

Although spending time outside of class is expected and important, we will reserve time in class for working on your project and major assignments. Students are expected to make the most of this time and come prepared to be productive.

Collaboration
Like event planning in the professional world, a lot of what you’ll do in our class is collaborative. You will have a chance to describe your individual efforts as well as reflect on your teammates’ efforts throughout the semester. Each student should contribute an equal amount to group projects.
Failure to do so will result in a lower grade. Misrepresenting your efforts and allowing others to do the work while you take credit is considered academic fraud and could be reported to CLAS. It is your responsibility to be in touch if you have any questions or concerns about collaboration.

**Professionalism**
Professionalism is key in event planning. Students are expected to behave in a professional manner in the classroom and when representing the class in any way. This includes using proper email etiquette, arriving on time, being respectful and attentive, and more. Examples of unprofessional behavior include misusing in-class work time, showing up for client presentations in sweatpants, disrespectful communication with your client or teammates, arriving late or leaving class early without good cause, talking or using your electronics during class, etc.

**The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Policies:**

**Administrative Home**
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other policies. These policies vary by college ([https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook)).

**Electronic Communication**
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

**Accommodations for Disabilities**
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student should then discuss accommodations with the course instructor ([https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/](https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/)).

**Nondiscrimination in the Classroom**
UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity at diversity@uiowa.edu or diversity.uiowa.edu.

**Academic Integrity**
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address.

**CLAS Final Examination Policies**
The final exam schedule for each semester is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this final exam information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals. ([https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-examination-policies](https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-examination-policies))
Making a Complaint
Students with a complaint should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the departmental executive officer (DEO), also known as the Chair. Students may then bring the concern to CLAS (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities).

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 must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, definitions, and the full University policy, see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.

Schedule:

Week 1:
**Tuesday, August 27:** Course and classmate introductions. Discussion: Event Planning Qualifications, Field Overview, and Job Outlook. Identify class interests for guest speakers.
**Thursday, August 29:** Primary assignment explanations and sign up. DUE: Welcome Survey (online).

Week 2:
**Tuesday, Sept. 3:** Class Event client visit and cohort meetings. Reading: Event Sponsorship Guide (ICON).
**Thursday, Sept. 5:** Discussion: Event Planning Timeline, Budgets, Sponsors, Date selection. DUE: BizBash signup via Doodle Poll. Failure to meet this deadlines could result in a lowered PPP grade.

Week 3:
**Tuesday, Sept. 10:** DUE: Add one potential sponsor to our sponsor request list (no duplicates!) and begin sponsor communications. Discussion: Venues, Vendors, Contracts. Reading: The Ultimate Event Planner’s Design Handbook (ICON)
**Thursday, Sept. 12:** Discussion: Design & Marketing. DUE: Individual Event Plan client Identified.

Week 4:
*Tuesday, Sept. 17:** FIELD TRIP! Meet in IMU Iowa Theater to speak with catering managers. The Iowa Theater is located on the ground level near the information desk and the box office.
**Thursday, Sept. 19:** DUE: Event Volunteering signup via ICON discussion board. Failure to meet this deadline could result in a lowered PPP grade. NO CLASS.
9/19-20: Certificate Field Trip to Minneapolis. Watch for details and sign up to join us!

Week 5:
**Tuesday, Sept. 24:** DUE: Individual Event overview and venue selection. Presentations.
Thursday, Sept. 26: FIELD TRIP! Class event venue visit. Meet at MERGE in the conference room.

Week 6:
Tuesday, Oct. 1: Discussion: Green Events.
Thursday, Oct. 3: Class event work time.
Thursday, Oct. 3: Event Management Internship Networking Fair, 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the AJB Rotunda.

Week 7:
Tuesday, Oct. 8: Guest Speaker (TBD)

Week 8:
Tuesday, Oct. 15: Guest Speaker (TBD)
Friday, Oct. 18: Pre-parade tailgate to celebrate our 5-year anniversary. Watch for RSVP link!

Week 9:
Tuesday, Oct. 22 and Wednesday, Oct. 23: Iowa Festivals and Events Conference in Coralville. Watch the listserv for details.
Tuesday, Oct. 22: DUE: Marketing, social media, and event design assignment. Class event work time outside of class.
Thursday, Oct. 24: Discussion: Crisis Management, Legal/Ethical Elements of event planning.

Week 10:
Tuesday, Oct. 29: Discussion: SWOT Analyses and post-event steps
Thursday, Oct. 31: No class. Happy Halloween!

Week 11:
Tuesday, Nov. 5: DUE: Event Volunteering Experience. Presentations.
Thursday, Nov. 7: Discussion: Volunteer management best practices. Class event work time.

Week 12:
Tuesday, Nov. 12: Class event work time.
Thursday, Nov. 14: Class event work time.
Friday, Nov. 15: CLASS EVENT DAY!

Week 13:
Tuesday, Nov. 19: Class Event SWOT Analysis. DUE: Class Event Contribution to ICON dropbox.
Thursday, Nov. 21: SWOT Analysis continued, Client Visit.
**Week 14: THANKSGIVING BREAK. Please be safe and enjoy.**

**Week 15:**

**Tuesday, Dec. 3:** Guest Speaker: TBD

**Thursday, Dec. 5:** End of course game show. Final course evaluations.

**Week 16:**

**Tuesday, Dec. 10:** Individual Event Plan presentations.

DUE: Final Event Plan.

**Thursday, Dec. 12:** Individual Event Plan presentations. DUE: Final self-evaluation

**Sunday, Dec. 15:** Certificate graduation celebration

**Week 17:**

Finals Week. We will not meet. I will miss you!

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

**Assignment Details:**

**PPP Self Evaluations**

15 points each/30 total

Your presence, participation, and professionalism are essential to your success in our classroom and essential to your success as an event planner.

At two points this semester, you will be asked to reflect on your performance in these three areas. Your reflection should be brief—less than one page—and include the number of points out of 15 you think you deserve for your efforts to date. Failure to include a specific number and justification will result in a lower grade.

**Class Project participation**

100 points

We will put course concepts into practice by planning and pulling off an actual event as a class. To do so will require several action steps outside of class. Students will be responsible for meeting individual deadlines on these action steps. Failure to complete your action step in a timely, thorough, or professional manner will result in a lower grade.
To help determine your participation score, you will submit a description of your work to ICON along with an evaluation of your classmates’ contributions. Your evaluation should answer the following questions: How many points do you believe you have earned out of 50? What letter grade would you give to your cohort members and why? Are others outside of your cohort that you think deserve praise, or who you saw neglect their responsibilities?

**Event: The Moth-inspired live storytelling event to support IowaWatch.org.**

Cohorts & Areas of Responsibility:

- **Leadership (3)**
  - Trello and task/time management
  - Research
  - Legal expertise
  - Client Communications
  - Budget & financial goal management
  - Crisis planning
  - Big & little picture understanding
  - SWOT analysis

- **Fundraising & Budget (9)**
  - Fundraising goal setting
  - Sponsorship recruitment
  - Sponsorship recognition
  - Additional fundraising concept development
  - Income/Spending tracking & reporting
  - Post-event financial wrap up and reporting

- **Activities (9)**
  - Storyteller recruitment and training
  - Quiz/other in-event activity management
  - Script/event timeline
  - VIP guest/participant management

- **Venue & Catering (10)**
  - Venue contract expert
  - Guest experience expert
  - Catering
  - Sustainability
  - Technology
  - Lighting
  - Decorations
  - Space layout
  - Event signage

- **Marketing (10)**
  - Invitations
  - Audience building
  - Social Media
  - Media liaison
  - Ticket sales

**BizBash Report**

10 points

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](http://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), but you should put together a visual PowerPoint presentation 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. To receive credit, you will submit your presentation and a link to the item you discuss to the ICON dropbox.

*Alternate assignment: Many students bring with them rich events experience to the classroom. If you have planned an event and want to present on an event from your insider perspective, you may do so rather than focus on a BizBash article. No need to clear this in advance. It will be a fun surprise!

Speaker Preparation
10 points each

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.

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. Please see our weekly schedule for speaker dates and plan accordingly. Speaker names and info will be provided by in-class and ICON announcement.

Event Volunteering Experience
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. I will offer suggestions and opportunities in class and via ICON, but it is your responsibility to select and line up an event.

Step 2: Post to the ICON discussion board by the announced due date 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 5 hours before, during, or after the event. If your selected event doesn’t need volunteers or it doesn’t work out for any reason, be prepared to move quickly to a plan B and C. There are no extensions for switching events.

Step 4: As you are completing your volunteering 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 and submit your presentation file and additional notes via ICON. As time permits, all students will share their presentations with the class.

*Please note that you will be graded on the document you submit, not the presentation, so don’t leave anything out!

*Missing your presentation will result in an automatic 10% deduction on your assignment grade.

Final Event Plan
150 points TOTAL

Throughout the semester we will talk about the event planning process and will plan an event as a group. This is your chance to call all the shots! Identify a client, 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 during our final week together.

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

Client & Event Parameters:
1) 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 is too complicated.
2) This should be a new event, not a revamping of an existing event.

Details:
This project will build over the semester and will culminate with a final document and presentation.
Individual Event Plan

Event Overview & Venue Selection
(25 points)

At the start of the semester you selected a project client and communicated with the client about his or her event needs. In this Word or PDF Document, please describe:

1) An introduction to your client.
2) Notes/bullet points from your client interview about event goals and preferences.
3) An initial vision for your event—who, what, where, when, why?
4) Venue details
   a. A description of where the event should take place and why.
   b. Venue photos and descriptions specific to your event.
   c. Information about venue cost and contract details.
   d. Two alternative sites in case your client prefers other options.
   e. If you’re planning an outdoor event, a back-up plan for inclement weather.
5) Information about similar events from which you can draw inspiration.

Format: A detailed outline or bullet format is preferred for easy scanning. Please include visuals and links to build a rich, specific resource.

Individual Event Plan
Marketing, Design & Social Media
(25 points)

You know the who, what, where, when, and why of your event, and now you need to get the word out about what you’re putting together. For this assignment, please describe:

1) Guests
   a. Who is the target audience for this event?
   b. How many people are you planning for and how did you arrive at that number?
2) Marketing
   a. How will you reach out to potential guests?
   b. Draft invitation/marketing content
   c. How will you collect RSVP information or anticipate guest numbers?
3) Social Media
   a. What role will social media play leading up to your event?
   b. How will social media be incorporated in your event?
   c. Post-event?
   d. 3 or more pieces of example content including visuals

Final Event Plan
(100 Points)
Your FINAL ICON submission will continue to build on your two previous submissions and should include two files:

1) A PowerPoint presentation that gives highlights of your plan. This would be a top-level presentation to a client to pique their interest in your more specific ideas. It should take no more than 5 minutes to present and should include links and rich visual content. You will present it to our class during our final week together. (15 points)

2) A thorough PDF document with links to at least 6 references, an embedded budget spreadsheet, and links to 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. This report should be specific, in depth and a go-to document to actually make this event happen. (85 points)

The PDF should include:

6) Background information on your client.
7) Notes/bullet points from your client interview about event goals and preferences.
8) Information about competitors’ events or similar events.
9) Specific event plans including:
   a. Venue
      i. A description of where the event should take place and why.
         1. Contact information for venue representatives.
         2. Details for guests about whatever 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 (Embedded Excel spreadsheet)
      i. This should be as detailed and accurate as possible.
      ii. Include options for shaving costs whenever possible, to allow flexibility.
   f. Marketing
i. How will you reach out to potential guests?
ii. How will you collect RSVP information or anticipate guest numbers?

g. Social Media
   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?
   iv. Example content

h. Sustainability
   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) Budget Spreadsheet: Please use Excel to create a detailed, itemized budget as discussed and demonstrated in class.

2) Trello: Please provide links to two Trello boards or a combination of lists in one board.
   a. Detailed task list for planning the event.
   b. Detailed task list for the day of the event.
   *To ensure that I can see your board(s), please set it/them to public, invite me to join, AND attach to your assignment submission a screen shot of your board(s).

3) 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.

*Please note that you will be graded on the document(s) you submit, not the presentation, so don’t leave anything out! Missing your presentation day is grounds for an automatic 10% deduction on your TOTAL grade for this assignment.