Topics: Venue Management

JMC/EVNT: 3185:0001
The University of Iowa
School of Journalism & Mass Communication

Instructor: Tracy Hufford

Location: E254 AJB

Time: 11:00-12:15 p.m. Monday & Wednesday

Office Hours: 1:00 to 3:15 p.m. Mondays & Wednesdays and by appointment

Contact: tracy-hufford@uiowa.edu
E 346B Adler Journalism Building
319-335-3482- office
*Email is the best way to reach me

Course Overview:
Public venue management can be found in the sports, entertainment, meeting, and convention industries. With the construction of new arenas, stadiums, theaters, convention centers, and other venues, there are numerous job opportunities for properly trained individuals. This course will review and examine the principles and practices associated with managing a public assembly venue and the nature of the venue business. This course is designed to assist in understanding the concepts related to this professional field. In this course we will explore the venue management 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 10 points each. (60+ points)

- **Venue View Reports**: Students will monitor online media and select a venue of interest and will present a highlight on their assigned day. (15 points)

- **Venue Field Trip**: As a class, we will tour event venues to gain the viewpoint of a venue manager. Our host will be the venue manager and will share job details and responsibilities as we tour their facility. One week prior to our visit you will prepare a 2 page report with an overview of the facility (25 points)

- **Speaker preparation and response**: 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)

- **Topic Seminar**: Each week we will have assigned reading that is posted to ICON. (Expect pop quizzes on the assigned reading).

  You will work in teams of 2 students and sign up for a date and topic that you will be responsible for. You will be in charge of presenting a summary of that assigned reading to the class and lead discussion. (60 points)

- **Venue Event Analysis**: Each student will attend a medium or large-scale event. You will observe and report on successes and failures of the event in terms of venue and event management. (50 points)

- **Final Venue Profile and Analysis**: You will work in teams of 4 students and will select a local venue of any type. (Venue must be approved by the instructor). You will research and report on all aspects of how this venue is managed and present to the class. Presentations must include a written report (6-8 pages) and electronic visual aid (such as Power Point). (100 points)

Grading:

100% A  88-89% B+  78-79% C+  68-69% D+
94-99% A  84-87% B  74-77% C  63-67% D
90-93% A-  80-83% B-  70-73% C-  60-62% D-

**Attendance and Participation:**
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.

**Participation**

In-class contribution is a significant part of your grade and an important part of our shared learning experience. Your active participation helps me to evaluate your overall performance. You can excel in this area if you come to class on time and contribute to the course by:

- Providing strong evidence of having thought through the material.
- Advancing the discussion by contributing insightful comments and questions.
- Listening attentively in class.
- Demonstrating interest in your peers' comments, questions, and presentations.
- Giving constructive feedback to your peers when appropriate.

**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.

**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).

**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.
The student should then discuss accommodations with the course instructor (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](https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-examination-policies). 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](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/](https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/).
Course Objectives:

Students in this course will gain a broad understanding of the venue management field, especially through the lenses of law & ethics, writing & storytelling, and multiculturalism. This course will review and examine the principles and practices associated with managing a public assembly venue and the nature of the venue business. This course is designed to assist in understanding the concepts related to this professional field.

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.
Schedule:

Week 1:
Monday, August 20: Course and classmate introductions. Primary assignment explanations and sign up. field trips introduced.

Wednesday, August 22: Discussion: History/Types of Venues, Venue Manager Qualifications, Field Overview, and Job Outlook

Week 2:
Monday, August 27: Discussion: Core functions of VM's, Venue Ownership & Mgmt. All sign ups due.
Wednesday, August 29: Discussion: Financial Management. Due: Big Grove venue visit

Week 3:
Monday, Sept. 3: Labor Day No Class
Wednesday, Sept. 5: FIELD TRIP: Big Grove IC

Week 4:
Monday, Sept. 10: Speaker: Big Grove Brewery Management
Wednesday, Sept. 12: Discussion: Event Contracts. Due: Englert venue visit

Week 5:
Monday, Sept. 17: Discussion: Booking the Venue.
Wednesday, Sept. 19: Englert visit

Week 6:
Monday, Sept. 24: Discussion: Venue Marketing- venue, event marketing, commercial rights
Wednesday, Sept. 26: Speaker: Josh Schaumberg- Iowa Arena
Thursday, Sept. 27: 4:00- Event Planning Internship fair AJB Rotunda

Week 7:
Monday, Oct. 1: Discussion: Ticketing and Access management.
Wednesday, Oct. 3: Speaker: Bridgett Crossett, U of Iowa Ticketing
Friday, Oct. 5: Event Planning Certificate Field Trip- DSM

Week 8:
Monday, Oct. 8: Discussion: Event and ancillary revenue sources. Due: US Cell venue visit
Wednesday, Oct. 10: Discussion: Venue Operations
Week 9:
Monday, Oct. 15: **Field Trip**: Kinnick
Wednesday, Oct. 17: Due: Venue event analysis. Venue event analysis presentations.
Midterm course evaluations.

Week 10:
Monday, Oct. 22: Venue event analysis presentations
Wednesday, Oct. 24: Speaker: Jessica Carney- Coe College/US Cellular Management

Week 11:
Monday, Oct. 29: Group conferences and work day for final venue analysis
Wednesday, Oct. 31: Group conferences and work day for final venue analysis

Week 12:
Monday, Nov. 5: Discussion: Back of the House Management
Wednesday, Nov. 7: Discussion: Front of the House Event Management

Week 13:
Monday, Nov. 12: **Field Trip: Hancher**
Wednesday, Nov. 14: Guest Speaker: Mark North- Hancher

Week 14 - Nov. 19: **THANKSGIVING BREAK** - Have fun and be safe

Week 15:
Monday, Nov. 26: Discussion: Event Services
Wednesday, Nov. 28: Discussion: Venue and Event Safety and Security.
End of course evaluations.

Week 16:
Wednesday, Dec. 5: Final Venue Analysis presentations.

Week 17:
**Finals Week**  We will not meet and we do NOT have a final.

{{PS: It’s important to be flexible! Please note that this is a tentative schedule. Unplanned opportunities and challenges may require changes. }}
A successful venue manager is innovative, on top of industry trends, and keeps an eye on the “competition.” Top venue managers have a keen eye on the pulse of local and national venues and their offerings.

To get you in the habit, I’m asking each student to sign up for a class period to verbally report to the class about a venue. (One–two student presentations per class)

This venue can be any type, any location, and you can present any aspect of it that you find interesting and want to share with the class. Please be sure to include information about

Who owns and manages the venue

type of venue,
capacity

event spaces in the venue

what services/amenities are offered

types of events hosted there.

You may use online resources or even make an in person visit to a venue to tell us about something that is new, interesting or worth some class discussion. 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 (5-10 minutes) and informal, but you should plan to pull up a visual to help foster understanding and discussion. Venue 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 venue managers 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 on our assignment tab, 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.

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

**Speakers/Tour Guides:**

Sept. 11: Backpocket Brewery-Aaron Vargas

Sept. 27: Iowa Arena- Josh Schaumberg

Oct. 4: Ticketing

Oct. 23: U.S. Cellular Center - Jessica Carney

Nov. 15: Hancher- Mark North

Kinnick: TBD
Venue Field Trip Assignment  
25 Points

At the start of our course, I will have discussed that we will be utilizing some local venue managers as a resource in this class. To better understand this profession, we will be visiting some of these facilities, as we are able.

These venues host diverse events and functions. To be fully prepared for our visit, you will prepare a brief report (2 pages) about that venue.

In your report you will cover the following topics:

Name and type of venue
Brief history of the venue
Owned/managed by whom
Types of events hosted
Event spaces offered
Available layout/diagrams
Capacity of the venue
Services/amenities offered at the site

You are welcome to include in your report any other tidbits or facts that you discover about the venue.

Venue visit reports are due at the start of class 1 week before our venue visit. Please upload your report to ICON in the proper assignment tab in a Word document format.

We will tour the venue to learn about the management of the venue, the events hosted, how events are planned at the venue, and details of the day to day operations.

During our tour, we will be sure to ask about the person giving 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?

As time permits, I may ask a student to share their report with the class prior to our visit.
Present a reading topic. Each week we will have assigned reading that is posted to ICON in the assignment tab. At the beginning of the semester you will sign up in teams of 2 students for a date and topic that you will be responsible for.

You will be in charge of presenting a summary of that assigned reading to the class. You will highlight the main points of the reading and lead the class discussion.

To aid in our class discussion you may cite some examples from online research about the topic. It would be helpful to have some real world examples of that topic in practice. You will design a list of at least 3 questions/topics/game quizzes that the class will discuss and answer together.

You will upload an outline of your topic summary to ICON under the assignment tab- each student will need to turn in an outline to ICON to get credit. Your assignment is due at the start of the class day prior to your assigned day. You will be graded on the outline and your in class presentation/discussion. Good preparation and organization is the key to a successful outcome.

I will also supplement the discussion with additional materials and information about the topic at hand. I will send each team some supplemental resources that can be used in class, if desired. Also, each team is invited to meet with me in my office 30 minutes prior to class on the in class presentation day.
Venue Event Analysis  
Due: Oct. 17  
50 Points

**Event Analysis:** Each student will be required to attend and report on an event held at a public assembly, analyzing the event based on factors such as its marketing plan, financial and partnership arrangements, ticket sales and attendance, event production, patron or guest evaluation, and suggestions for improvement.

You will observe and report on successes and failures of the event in terms of venue and event management. Your report will be made up of both written notes about the venue and a Power Point (or other electronic visual aid). You will submit both items to ICON under the assignments tab.

Topics you will want to cover come from our course syllabus:

- Type of venue
- Type of event
- Marketing of the venue
- Marketing of the event
- Ticketing of the event
- Ancillary revenue sources at the event
- Venue/Event atmosphere
- Staffing
- Guest engagement
- Overall functioning and experience
- Safety/security
- Recommended improvements- both for the venue and the event

As time permits, each student will present their event to the class for discussion.

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Final Venue Profile & Analysis  
Due: December 4
To demonstrate your understanding of all of the facets of venue management you will be responsible for an intensive venue profile and analysis.

At the beginning of the semester, you will sign up in teams of 4 students and will select a local venue to report on. The venue must be approved by the instructor and cannot be one we toured as a class nor the same venue as any other group in class. Please sign up under our discussion post on ICON.

Your group will research and tour the selected venue. You are expected to meet in person with the venue general manager (or designee) and many lead staff. You will report on all facets of how the venue is managed and you will cover the topics we have discussed/listed on our course syllabus:

- Type of venue
- Owned by whom
- Managed by whom, management structure
- Marketing of the venue
- Event booking, marketing and contracts
- Ticketing of the event
- Ancillary revenue sources at the venue (restaurants, concessions, merchandise, catering)
- Event Service- Venue/Event atmosphere
- Venue Operations and BOH & FOH management- who is responsible for what?
- Guest engagement
- Overall functioning and experience
- Safety/security- both venue and event
- Recommended improvements- for the venue

You are free to add any additional information you deem relevant to your report. The paper must include everything you learned during your visit and should be 6-8 pages in length. The paper must contain no grammatical or spelling errors and include your group member names. This paper will serve as your final exam for the course. Each group member will upload a copy of the paper to ICON under the assignment tab.

Each group will give a 30 minute presentation to the class regarding all aspects of how that venue is managed. Presentations should include electronic visual aids such as Power Point, Prezi, supplemental documentation, graphics, venue layouts and design, etc.

Venue possibilities:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMU</th>
<th>Riverside Casino</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marriot- IRL</td>
<td>Czech Slovak Museum- CR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Hotel/Vetro</td>
<td>New Bo City Market</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hampton/Holiday Inn</td>
<td>Indian Creek Nature Center- CR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarion Hotel Highlander</td>
<td>Wilson’s Apple Orchard &amp; Rapid Creek Cidery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hilton Garden Inn</td>
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**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:

What are the reasons that you enrolled in this course?

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