Topics in Event Planning,
Corporate Event Planning
EVNT: 3185:0002

Instructor: Nick Arnold
The University of Iowa
School of Journalism & Mass Communication

Location: 212 EPB

Time: 5:00P – 6:15P Mondays and Wednesdays
Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Overview:
Effective corporate meetings professionals wear many hats. They know their audience, create a meeting
experience specific to their audience’s needs and expectations, negotiate with venues and vendors,
prepare and manage budgets, design physical environments in line with a meeting’s purpose, work with
multiple internal and external clients, and provide value to their employer and stakeholders. This course
will examine the world of corporate event planning, including meetings large and small, conferences,
conventions, trade shows – and what makes a professional successful in the field.

Prerequisite and requirements:
Students must be willing and able to put in time outside of class to carry out events.

Readings:
This course does not use a required text. Supplementary readings and resources may 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.

Grading:
101% A+  88-89% B+  78-79% C+  68-69% D+
94-100% A  84-87% B  74-77% C  63-67% D
90-93% A-  80-83% B-  70-73% C-  60-62% D-

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 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 may not be made up and attendance “tweets” will not be accepted from any student not in class.

Please note it may be necessary to hold class via Skype on a rare occasion due to my work travel schedule. If this should arise, I will advise the class well in advance. It is suggested that each team meet together during the scheduled class time.

Professionalism:
Professionalism is key in event planning and is key in building a positive relationship with your client/employer. 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. I reserve the right to lower your final grade by up to 5 percent for each instance of unprofessional behavior. Examples of unprofessional behavior include misusing in-class work time, disrespectful communication with your teammates, arriving late or leaving class early without good cause, talking or using electronics during class discussions, etc.

Late Work & Early Work
It’s essential that you meet deadlines with no exceptions. 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. Any unexcused late work will lose 10% per day and will not be accepted more than three 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. 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.

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.
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 Academic Policies Handbook at https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Electronic Communication
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences (Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11).

Accommodations for Disabilities
The University of Iowa is committed to providing an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (which includes but is not limited to mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related conditions). A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between the student, instructor, and SDS. See https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/ for information.

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
The University of Iowa 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, diversity@uiowa.edu, or visit diversity.uiowa.edu.

Academic Honesty
All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).
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 Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator 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. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.

Schedule
(Please note this schedule is subject to change as the semester progresses)

Week 1:
Monday, January 15: NO CLASS. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Wednesday, January 17: Course Introductions, syllabus review.

Week 2:
Monday, January 22: Introduction to Corporate Events, conferences, tradeshows
Wednesday, January 24: Planning Program Content/Evaluations

Week 3:
Monday, January 29: Strategic Planning and Goals & Objectives
Wednesday, January 31: Budget, Accounting, ROI

Week 4:
Monday, February 5: Sponsorships and Event Marketing.
Wednesday, February 7: QUIZ #1.

Week 5:
Monday, February 12: Destination Selection, Negotiation and Contracting
Wednesday, February 14: Team Project groups assigned. Develop Team roles.

Week 6:
Monday, February 19: Planning Program Content/Evaluations
Wednesday, February 21: Discussion: Working with Clients & Stakeholders

Week 7:
Monday, February 26: Team 1 & 2 Present project concept and initial plan
Wednesday, February 28: Team 3 & 4 Present project concept and initial plan

Week 8:
Monday, March 5: NO CLASS
Wednesday, March 7: QUIZ #2

Week 9:
SPRING BREAK – BE SAFE AND ENJOY THE WEEK!

Week 10:
Monday, March 19: SWOT Analysis
Wednesday, March 21: Risk Management in Corporate Events
Week 11:
Wednesday, March 28: Green Initiatives

Week 12:
Monday, April 2: Team Project Work Day
Wednesday, April 4: QUIZ #3

Week 13:
Monday, April 9: Guest Speaker: Shannon Arnold, Coralville Marriott Hotel & Conference Center
Wednesday, April 11: Guest Speaker: Suzanne Conquest, ACT

Week 14:
Monday, April 16: Teams 1 & 2 present Event Strategic Plans
Wednesday, April 18: Teams 3 & 4 present Event Strategic Plans

Week 15:
Monday, April 23: Final Reflections Due. Discussion.
Wednesday, April 25: Guest Speaker: Liz Conlon, ACT

Week 16:
Monday, April 30: QUIZ #4

*Week 17:
FINALS WEEK. We will not meet in class. Good luck!

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

Daily Attendance
28 Points

Event planners are skilled social media users and have a clear vision of the messaging they want to come out of their event for social media audiences. We’ll practice those skills as a way of taking attendance this semester through attendance “quizzes.”

Students will earn one point per class period by submitting a “tweet” to represent a takeaway or highlight from that day’s meeting. The “tweet” will be submitted to an ICON drop box.

Your submission must adhere to Twitter formatting rules for extra credit consideration. Preference will be given to “tweets” with strategic hashtags, photos, links, and rich media elements.

Missed Tweets cannot be made up for any reason and all tweets must be submitted no more than 24 hours following the class session.

Speaker Preparation: 15 points (5 points each)
We are lucky to have some interesting, successful professionals 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 do a little work to prepare for their visits.

For individual speakers: Please submit a 3-paragraph bio (including one paragraph about the speaker’s company or position) and 3 questions for each guest speaker by the start of the class period before their visit via ICON. I will likely browse through the posts 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.

**Speakers:**
Shannon Arnold, Director of Event Operations, Coralville Marriott
Liz Conlon, Sr. Manager, Corporate Event Planning, ACT
Suzanne Conquest, Sr. Director, ACT

**Extra Credit Opportunity:** We will need a volunteer to send a thank you note to each guest speaker. This person will receive 2 points of extra credit for composing and sending this note. Please BCC me so that I will receive a copy of the thank you. Each student may volunteer for this opportunity only once.

**Quizzes**
**100 Points**

We will cover plenty of ground this semester when it comes to what goes in to creating a successful corporate event and it’s important that knowledge is retained. To gauge your understanding of the subject matter, there will be four quizzes given throughout the semester. Each will cover information that has been presented up to that point through lectures (and potentially some assigned outside reading). The quizzes will consist of 15 multiple choice questions and two five point short-answer questions for a total of 25 points per quiz. If you will be absent on the date a quiz is given, you must notify me ahead of time to schedule a make-up time. Unexcused missed quizzes will result in a zero for that quiz.

**Team Event**
**Assignment 100 Points**

Each member of our course will also be a member of a smaller team. Each team will be responsible for all aspects of a major corporate/industry event – from initial conception of the event, through strategic planning, budgeting, program formatting, marketing, evaluation and etc. The sky is the limit with this event. . . . since you’ll stop short of actually hosting the event. Use this assignment to think around every corner of a major industry event. What is the event’s purpose? Who are the stakeholders in it? What will make them happy? Who should attend? How will you reach them? What components will make a great event? More requirements will be provided during the semester prior to the assignment of the teams.

You will collaborate on the overall event, but each team member will have individual responsibilities and will meet individual requirements and milestones for points along the way. Each teammate will receive an individual grade based on their work within the group, the level of detail provided in their
component of the final plan and the input from their teammates. It is in your best interest to put forth your best effort and support your teammates.

Points breakdown:

**20 points: Initial Concept Report and Presentation**

Shortly after teams are assigned, each team will present their initial concept for their project to the class. The team should submit one 3 page paper clearly outlining the goals and objectives of their planned event, the audience it intends to reach, who their stakeholders will be, what components will make up the event, how they intend to market the event, and a detailed preliminary budget for the event. The team should be prepared to answer questions from the class regarding their proposal.

**70 points: Event Strategic Plan Report and Presentation**

After receiving feedback from the initial presentation, the team should revise their plan based on relevant information. Teams will present a detailed and comprehensive review of their event. This review should cover EVERY aspect, leaving no stone unturned. Below are just some of the areas you will have to cover:

- Goals and Objectives
- Stakeholders
- Detailed Budget
- ROI
- Tradeshow
- Conference Content
- SWOT Analysis
- Overhead Costs
- Venue Rental
- Travel costs for VIP/Speakers
- Sponsorship
- Marketing Avenues
- Risk Management Plan
- Green Initiatives
- Conference Theme
- Leisure Activities
- Educational Activities

**10 Points: Final Reflection**

Submit to ICON a 3 page reflection that includes:

1. How did this project go from your perspective?
2. What tasks did you complete for your team?
3. What did you gain from the assignment?
4. What would you change about your participation?
5. How would you improve the event if you could do it over again or without specific constraints?
6. What grade would you give yourself in this project? What grades would you give your teammates? Why?
7. What else would you like to share?

30 Points: Career Interest Paper

Submit to ICON a 3-5 page paper discussing a career in corporate event planning that interest you, why it interests you, what skills you will need to develop to successfully enter this field. What will be your greatest challenge entering this field? What strengths can you leverage to be successful? This career can include corporate event planning, venue management, contract negotiation, and more. If you have questions about whether your career interest is relevant to this paper, please reach out.