Event Planning Workshop

EVNT:3260:0001

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

**Location:** 8 EPB

**Time:** 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays

**Office Drop-In Hours:** 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays and by appointment

**Contact:**  
heather-spangler@uiowa.edu  
E346C AJB  
*Email is the best way to reach me.

**Course Overview:**  
Gain hands-on experience in event planning through working with clients, conceptualizing events, lining up small and large details, practicing event marketing, carrying out events, and reflecting on outcomes. Meet with event planning professionals and complete individual and group projects.

**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 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:** Students will register their presence and engagement by submitting to ICON (NOT Twitter!) a faux tweet featuring a highlight or takeaway message of the day. Missed “tweets” cannot be made up for any reason, but each student is granted one freebie. (30+ points)

• **Observation:** Each student will attend a medium or large-scale event to observe and report on successes and failures of the event. (40 points)

• **Dream Job Report:** Identify a person working in what you feel is a dream job in event planning. Interview that person and prepare a written report. (30 points)

• **Networking Event Prep and Attendance:** Write a three-paragraph biography about the employer you most look forward to meeting and identify three personal goals for our event professionals networking event. Students will sign in to receive attendance credit at the event. Students who cannot attend should look on ICON for an alternate assignment. (10 points total—5 for prep, 5 for attendance)

• **Speaker Preparation:** In the event that we have a guest speaker, you will submit via ICON a brief bio and 3 questions for each guest speaker by the start of the class period before their visit. Please note that there are no speaker preps required before client visits. (5 points each)

• **Team Event:** We will divide the class into teams. Each group will take the lead on planning and carrying out an event. I have made arrangements with entities willing to let our class be involved in their events and will connect you with your clients. You will be graded on the event’s success based on a written report you will complete as well as my observations and feedback from your classmates and clients. (100 points)

• **Client and Event Background Research:** To be sure that you have a thorough understanding of your client’s needs and goals, you will submit a report with three parts: 1) 3-paragraph biography of your client, 2) 3-paragraph description of their organization, 3) A description of an event from which you can draw inspiration. Your description should include links to relevant content, 1-3 photos representing the event, and at least three specific tips or ideas you’re pulling from this event. (15 points)

• **Team Event Individual Initial Report:** Each student will be assigned an area of responsibility for their team event. Each student will submit a file describing the initial concept for their responsibility as well as setting a timeline for task completion leading up to event day. Note that you will need to work collaboratively with your team to identify a working timeline. This document should be thorough and include links or images relevant to your role. Each role’s report will be different; you should work with Team Leaders to define any specialized content. Team leaders’ reports will include a description of your team’s communication plan, a description of your leadership style, an overall event timeline, and a link to the team’s Trello board, which you should invite me to join via heather-spangler@uiowa.edu. (20 points)

• **Team Event Updates:** At three points throughout the semester, teams will present plans and updates to the class and/or client. While not every member of the team will likely present each time, each member will submit via ICON a written update detailing tasks completed, tasks to do before the next update, and overall feedback about the team planning process. An absence on your team’s presentation day to your client is an automatic 5-point deduction. (10 points each = 30 points)

• **Team Event Individual Final Report Contribution:** Each team member will put together a fact sheet detailing the choices you made and tasks you accomplished within your role. This document should include images and relevant charts, spreadsheets, or other deliverables that will help us understand your outcomes and will benefit your clients. Team leaders will compile these reports and pull from them to create a PowerPoint presentation detailing your event.
Leaders will turn in the compiled report and presentation to me as well as share them with your client. (20 points)

- **Final Reflection:** After your event is complete, it’s time to reflect on how it went. You will submit to ICON a 2-3-page description of the event from your perspective including a SWOT analysis and an analysis of your teammates’ and your own performance. What grade would you give yourself and why? What grade would you give your teammates and why? (15 points)

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101% A+</td>
<td>88-89% B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-100% A</td>
<td>84-87% B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93% A-</td>
<td>80-83% B-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 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.

Professionalism:
Professionalism is key in event planning and is key in building a positive relationship with your client. 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, showing up for client presentations in inappropriate attire, disrespectful communication with your client or teammates, arriving late or leaving class early without good cause, talking or using your electronics during class discussions, etc.

Late Work & Early Work
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. Any unexcused late work will lose 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. 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.

**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](https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/)).

**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.)

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, Jan 15: Course and classmate intro.
Thursday, Jan 17: Clients visit for project introductions. Due by 9 p.m.: Surveys

Week 2:
Thursday, Jan 24: DUE: Client & Event Background Reports. Team work time.

Week 3:
Tuesday, Jan. 29: Discussion: Budgeting & Sponsorships. Role Cohort meetings.
Thursday, Jan. 31: DUE: Individual Initial Reports. Teams present Trello boards and initial vision for feedback.

Week 4:
Tuesday, Feb. 5: DUE: Written Update 1 (all teams). Teams 1 & 2 present to client.
Thursday, Feb. 7: Teams 3 & 4 present plans to client.
*12 to 1 p.m. IFEA Webinar, “Mayhem at Events and How to Prevent (Some of) It”

Week 5:
Tuesday, Feb. 12: Discussion: Working with clients. Discussion: Design & Marketing.
Thursday, Feb. 14: No Class. XOXO

Week 6:
Tuesday, Feb. 19: Discussion: Professionalism and landing a job.
Thursday, Feb. 21: Work Day.

Week 7:
Tuesday, Feb. 26: DUE: Written Update 2 (all teams). Teams 1 & 2 present to client.
*11 to 12:15: Panel Discussion about the Iowa Arena in the Iowa Senate Chamber.
Thursday, Feb. 28: Teams 3 & 4 present plans to client

Week 8:
Tuesday, March 5: Teams present updates to class for feedback
*Wednesday, March 6: Event Industry Internship Networking event presented by HYPE. 3:30 to 5 p.m., AJB Rotunda.
Thursday, March 7: Role cohort meetings

Week 9:
Tuesday, March 12: Work Day.
Thursday, March 14: Work Day.

Week 10: SPRING BREAK. Be safe and have fun!

Week 11:
Tuesday, March 26: Discussion: Post-event actions, SWOT analyses.
Thursday, March 28: DUE: Written Update 2 (all teams). Teams 3 & 4 present plans to client

Week 12:
Tuesday, April 2: Teams 1 & 2 present to client.
Thursday, April 4: Work Day (outside of the classroom)
*April 4-6: Nashville Field Trip! Stay tuned for signup details!

Week 13:
Tuesday, April 9: Field Trip report & Work Day
Thursday, April 11: Work Day

Week 14:
Tuesday, April 16: Team 1 presents Event Report
Thursday, April 18: Team 2 presents Event Report

Week 15:
Tuesday, April 23: Team 3 presents Event Report
Thursday, April 25: Team 4 presents Event Report

Week 16:
Tuesday, April 30: Due: Dream Job Report. Dream Job presentations. End of course evaluations.
Thursday, May 2: Dream Job presentations.

*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:

Daily Attendance
Up to 30+ 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.

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 and *does not* need to be actually tweeted.

Your submission must adhere to Twitter formatting rules.

Missed Tweets cannot be made up for any reason, but there will be opportunities to earn back missed points by attending Event Planning Certificate events.

Students also will earn 5 attendance points for their participation in our networking event Sept. 27.
Observation Assignment
40 Points

If you are a human being, chances are you’ve attended several events in your life that involved professional planning. However, unless something was particularly awful or terrific, you probably didn’t give much thought to the work that went into planning and carrying out these events. That is about to change.

Event planners attend events with their eyes open to detail. They notice choices that planners made from the way the event was promoted, how people flow through the event, the vendors the event utilizes, how the event is staffed, decorations, how the event engages participants, and more. They do this in order to store ideas of what to do and what not to do at their own events.

With this in mind, each student will attend a medium or large-scale event and observe it as an event planner. There should be at least 50 participants at your event.

I prefer that we have a wide variety of events to discuss, rather than 30 people all attending the UI Job Fair… To help make this possible, I’ve set up an ICON discussion board where you should post the name and date of the event you will attend. If more than 4 people have posted that they plan to attend an event, consider that event closed and choose another.

You will:
1) Attend the event to observe successes and failures of the event. Take copious notes and even photos if appropriate, so that you can give a vivid description of the event.
2) At the event, interview three attendees about their experiences.
3) Identify takeaways: What would you change about the event, what ideas would you borrow for a future event?

You will organize your findings into a PowerPoint and submit your presentation file (with your event name as the title) and additional notes via ICON. You will be graded based on the file(s) you submit, not the in-class presentation, so be sure all of the information you want me to have is submitted to ICON!

Dream Job Report
30 Points

Our event planning field overview discussion introduced you to many career choices in event planning. Now is your chance to dig into the area of the field that most appeals to you and to make a professional contact in the process. This assignment has three steps:

1) Identify a person working in what you feel is a dream job in the event planning field.
2) Interview that person about his or her work and how he or she came to be in such a great position.
3) Prepare a minimum 2-page written report about your interviewee and his or her fantastic job. Submit this to ICON.

Helpful Hint: Event planners are busy people. It would be wise for you to contact your top choice early and have a Plan B and even Plan C ready in case you don’t hear back in a timely manner. Your deadline is firm. Please also be sensitive of your planner’s time and personal preferences in the way you request information. Some planners might appreciate a list of questions via email to answer at their convenience. Others might find this burdensome and prefer a face to face or phone conversation.

Group Event Assignment
145 Points

Each member of our course will also be a member of a smaller team. Each team will be responsible for carrying out one major event.

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. It is in your best interest to put forth your best effort and support your teammates.

Milestones and Points breakdown:

15 Points: Client and Event Background Research

To be sure that you have a thorough understanding of your client’s needs and goals, you will submit a report with three parts: 1) 3-paragraph biography of your client, 2) 3-paragraph description of their organization, 3) A description of an event from which you can draw inspiration. Your description should include links to relevant content, 1-3 photos representing the event, and at least three specific tips or ideas you’re pulling from this event.

20 Points: Team Event Individual Initial Report

Each student will be assigned an area of responsibility for their team event. Each student will submit a file describing the initial concept for their responsibility as well as setting a timeline for task completion leading up to event day. Since you are not working in a vacuum and each task impacts others, you will work collaboratively with your team mates to make this task timeline.

This document should be thorough and include links or images relevant to your role. Each role’s report will be different; you should work with Team Leaders to define any specialized content. Team leaders’ reports will include a description of your leadership style and strategies, a description of your team’s communication plan, an overall event timeline, and a link to the team’s Trello board, which you should invite me to join via heather-spangler@uiowa.edu. (20 points)
30 points: Written Updates and In-Class Presentations

At two points throughout the semester teams will present plans and updates to the client. While not every member of the team will likely present each time, each member will submit via ICON a 1-2 page written update detailing tasks completed, tasks to do before the next update, and overall feedback about the team planning process, and the letter grade you’d give yourself for your efforts in this update period. (10 points each = 30 points). While your grade is based on your written report, an unexcused absence on a client presentation day is an automatic 5-point deduction.

100 points: Event Execution

It’s the big moment! You will be graded based on your ability to work successfully with your team and please your client as well as the professional, organized manner in which I observe you completing your work leading up to the event, during the event, and post event as well as be part of a successful event effort. Your teammates and clients will help me fill in details and determine an appropriate grade. To be successful, you must be an excellent teammate who is engaged and helpful throughout the semester and must work as a team to meet your event goals in a professional manner.

20 Points: Team Event Individual Final Report Contribution

Due at a date TBD by team leaders but turned in to ICON no later than your final event report presentation in class.

Each team member will put together a fact sheet detailing the choices you made and tasks you accomplished within your role. This document should include images and relevant charts, spreadsheets, or other deliverables that will help us understand your outcomes.

Team leaders will compile these reports into one polished, professionally formatted document and pull from them to create a PowerPoint presentation detailing your event. Leaders will turn in the compiled report and presentation to me as well as share them with your client.

15 Points: Final Reflection

Due within 72 hours of your event, please submit to ICON a 3-5 page reflection that includes a SWOT (Successes, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis as discussed in class and answering the following questions:

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?
Event Planning Workshop Survey

Name & pronunciation:

Preferred pronoun:

Major:

Have you signed up or do you plan to sign up for the Event Planning Certificate?

Hometown:

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

Please rank these events in order of your preference with 1 being the team you’d most like to join:

Team 1: Iowa Writers’ House B&B/Andrea Wilson/TBD, Early April evening
Team 2: Makers Loft/Simeon Talley/TBD
Team 3: Riverside Theater fundraiser/TBD
Team 4: Suit up/Pomerantz Career Center/TBD Sunday evening in April

1) Is there any specific reason why you prefer NOT do any of these events?

2) Is there any reason why you would particularly love to do your top choice?
3) What special skills and areas of expertise do you bring to your team?

4) Are you interested in being a team leader? What do you think would make you a good choice for this role?

5) Which other roles would you love to tackle? Why?