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

**Location:** E146 Adler Journalism Building  
**Time:** 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. Monday/Wednesday

**Office Drop-In Hours:** By appointment only.

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

**Course Overview:**  
Gain hands-on experience in event planning through working with real clients, conceptualizing events, lining up small and large details, practicing event marketing, carrying out events, and measuring and reflecting on outcomes. Prepare for the professional world through networking, building a digital portfolio, and more.

**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)

• **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. (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 nicholas-s-arnold@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:
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 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:**

**Absences and Attendance**

Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing their course absence policies, which will vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, or University authorized activities ([https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences)). Students may use this absence form to aid communication; the instructor will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused ([https://clas.uiowa.edu/sites/default/files/ABSENCE%20EXPLANATION%20FORM2019.pdf](https://clas.uiowa.edu/sites/default/files/ABSENCE%20EXPLANATION%20FORM2019.pdf)).

**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/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code). Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address ([https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code)).

**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 is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at [https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/](https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/).

**Administrative Home of the Course**

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 related policies. Other colleges may have different policies. CLAS policies may be found here: [https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

**Communication and the Required Use of UI Email**

Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI ([Operations Manual, III.15.2](https://uiowa.edu/operations-manual/)).

**Complaints**

Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course
supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. For more information, see https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities.

Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule 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 information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals.
Visit https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

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 (diversity.uiowa.edu).

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, please see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/

Schedule:

Week 1:
Monday, August 26: Course and classmate intro. Syllabus review.
Wednesday, August 28: Client visit for project introductions. Due by 9 p.m.: Surveys: https://forms.gle/jhQfwyWBSbaH7zUy6

Week 2:
Monday, Sept. 2: NO CLASS – LABOR DAY
Wednesday, Sept. 4: DUE: Client & Event Background Reports. Team work time.

Week 3:
Monday, Sept. 9: Role Cohort meetings.
Wednesday, Sept. 11: Due: Individual Initial Reports. Teams present Trello boards and initial vision for feedback.

Week 4:
Monday, Sept. 16: DUE: Written Update 1 (all teams). Teams 1 & 2 present to client.
Wednesday, Sept. 18: Discussion: Working with clients
9/19-20: Certificate Field Trip to Minneapolis. Watch for details and sign up to join us!

Week 5:
Monday, Sept. 23: Discussion: Maximizing your event space
Wednesday, Sept. 25: Work Day

Week 6:
Wednesday, Oct. 1: Discussion: Venue Negotiation & Contracting

Week 7:
Monday, Oct. 7: DUE: Written Update 2 (all teams). Teams 1 & 2 present to client.
Wednesday, Oct. 9: Risk Management & Crisis Communication

Week 8:
Monday, Oct. 14: Teams present updates to class for feedback.
Wednesday, Oct. 16: Due: Dream Job Report. Discussion: Event Sponsorship & Marketing
Friday, Oct. 18: Pre-parade tailgate to celebrate the Event Management Certificate’s 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.
Monday, Oct. 21: NO CLASS. Work Day outside of classroom
Wednesday, Oct. 23: Event surveys, SWOT analyses.

Week 10:
Monday, Oct. 28: Discussion: Future of Event Technology
Wednesday, Oct. 30: Work Day

Week 11:
Monday, Nov. 4: DUE: Written Update 3 (all teams). Teams 1 & 2 present to client.
Wednesday, Nov. 6: GUEST SPEAKER - TBD

Week 12:
Monday, Nov. 11: Work Day
Tuesday, Nov. 13: Work Day

Week 13:
Monday, Nov. 18: Team 1 presents Event Report *Please note that event report dates will wiggle once event dates are set.
Wednesday, Nov. 20: Discussion: Career Interests. Work Day.

Week 14: THANKSGIVING BREAK. Please be safe and enjoy.

Week 15:
Monday, Dec. 2: GUEST Speaker - TBD
Wednesday, Dec. 4: Portfolio workshop day.

Week 16:
Monday, Dec. 9: Portfolio workshop day. End of course evaluations.
Sunday, Dec. 15: Certificate graduation celebration

*Week 17: FINALS WEEK. We will not meet. STUDY AND SLEEP!

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.

Networking Prep + Event Attendance
10 Points
Due Sept. 30 & October 1

Write a three-paragraph biography about the employer you most look forward to meeting at our Internship Networking Fair (5 points) and register your attendance at the event during class time Oct. 3 by signing in at the welcome table (5 points).

Dream Job Report
30 Points
Due Oct. 16

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.
4) Prepare a photo of your interview subject and link to either a website or LinkedIn profile for use in a class discussion.

Helpful Hint: Event professionals 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 professional’s time and personal preferences in the way you request information. Some 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. Be sure to express that you are grateful for their time and expertise no matter how you communicate.

Team 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—Due 9/4
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—Due 9/11
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 three 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 to 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: Final Reflection (Due within 72 hours of your event)
Due while the event details are fresh in your mind, please submit to ICON an approximately 4-6 page reflection that includes:

- A SWOT (Successes, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis as discussed in class. The analysis should draw from your experiences and observations as well as, when possible, guest surveys.

- Answers to the following questions:
  1. How did this project go from your perspective?
  2. What tasks did you complete for your team? Please be specific and include images, links, other relevant artifacts to demonstrate you personal outcomes.
  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?
  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?

Classmate Event Attendance
20 Points
Each student will attend or volunteer at a classmate’s event. You will observe the event’s execution and submit via ICON a 1-2 page SWOT analysis describing your experience. SWOT analyses will be shared anonymously with the teams to add to their ability to analyze their event using an outsider’s perspective.

Please remember that although it can feel uncomfortable to offer critical feedback to your peers, this is an important part of our industry and our learning process. We must be open to sharing and receiving ideas for improvement.
I have created a discussion board listing each team in a post. Please comment on the post for the event you’ll attend. Team leaders can monitor the posts and let me know ASAP if we need to set a cap on the number of students who can attend or volunteer.

**Professional Portfolio + LinkedIn Profile**

*50 Points*

*Due Dec. 11*

The event management field is one that values experience and communication skills. This assignment will allow you to showcase both as well as arm you with a tool to help you land a future events job or internship.

Each student will create a digital portfolio that includes the following elements:

- A personal brand logo
- An About Me section describing who you are and your objectives (think about your language here and how it relates to the personal brand you’re trying to exhibit)
- At least one example of event planning work (our class project, for example!) that includes a photo and description
- A link to your LinkedIn profile optimized based on our in-class discussion

There are many services and platforms for creating a digital portfolio. I recommend Wix.com because it’s relatively simple to use and offers a free plan so long as you don’t use a custom URL. You are welcome to use any service or platform that you prefer, keeping in mind that you should be the one to build the site yourself and that while I’m happy to troubleshoot and brainstorm, I’m not a tech support team.

You will be graded on:

- The professional and cohesive look of your site, including your logo
- Spelling, grammar, and language choices
- The appropriateness of your About Me section to introduce yourself and appeal to future clients/employers
- The quality of your experience example(s)—I’m looking for excellent photo(s) and a compelling and polished description
- The thoroughness and polish of your LinkedIn Profile