Event Planning Workshop
EVNT:3260:0002

Instructor: Emily McMahon
The University of Iowa
School of Journalism & Mass Communication

Location: 246 AJB

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:15 PM Mondays & Wednesdays

Office Hours: 6:15 PM - 7:15 PM Mondays, Wednesdays, & by appointment
Office hours location will be at Sculpt 105 E College Street Iowa City, IA 52317

Contact:
emily-m-mcmahon@uiowa.edu
Email is the best way to reach me. Please give me 24 hours response time on the weekdays, and until end of day Monday if you email over the weekend.
For emergencies & time sensitive issues, my cell is listed on my website www.soireeia.com

Course Overview:
Gain hands-on experience in event planning through working with clients, conceptualizing events, lining up small and large details, promoting events via social media and other means, 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 & Participation: Students will register their participation via unannounced attendance “quizzes” by submitting to ICON a sample tweet featuring a highlight or takeaway message of the day. You are encouraged to include images or links. Missed tweets cannot be made up. (up to 32+ 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)
- Speaker preparation: You will submit a bio and questions for each guest speaker by the start of the class period before their visit via ICON. (10 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 surveys to be completed by your classmates and clients. (75 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 unexcused absence on your team’s presentation day to your client is an automatic 5-point deduction. (10 points each = 30 points)
- Final Reflection: After your event is complete, it’s time to reflect on how it went. You will submit to ICON a 3-4-page description of the event from your perspective including a SWOT analysis and an analysis of your own performance. You will also review your individual teammates’ performances. (50 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-
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 unprofessional attire (like sweatpants), 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 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).

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.

Course Objectives

Students in this course will gain a broad understanding of the event-planning 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.

Schedule:

Week 1:

Wednesday, January 17:
First day of class!
Course and classmate introductions
Primary assignment explanation and sign up.
Discussion: Event Planning Overview

Week 2:

Monday, January 22:
Discussion: Professionalism in event planning
Teams meet and review basic event information and establish preliminary roles.
Brainstorm Event Ideas and put together initial plans to present next class. Event teams assigned. The clients are:

- UI Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies Department
- Friends of the Animal Center Foundation
- Johnson County Crisis Center

Wednesday, January 24:
Clients visit for project introductions.
Reminder: You are expected to dress & act professionally at all times you are interacting with a client.

Week 3:

Monday, January 29:
Assigned: Observation Assignment.
Discussion: Event Planning Tools, Sponsorship, & Budgets

Wednesday, January 31:
Discussion: Working with Clients and Marketing Your Events

Week 4:

Monday, February 5:
Work day for all teams.

Wednesday, February 7:
All Teams present plans to class for feedback.

Week 5:

Monday, February 12:
Work day for all teams using classmate’s feedback from previous class.

Wednesday, February 14:
All teams: Written Update 1 due.
Client Presentation Schedule:
5 pm: GWSS Team presents to client
5:25 pm: FACF Team presents to client
5:50 pm: JCCC Team presents to client

Week 6:
Monday, February 19:
  Speaker Preparation Assignment due by 5 pm.
  Speaker: Caitlin Stark, University Catering

Wednesday, February 21:
  Assignment Due: Internship/Volunteer Opportunities Event
  Spring Internship Networking Event: from 4 to 5:30 in the AJB Rotunda
  We'll have 10+ employers, LinkedIn headshots opportunity, and resume editors from the
career center.
  You are required to stop by and to network and take advantage of any opportunities. I'll
be there to check attendance - so please see me before you leave.

Week 7:

Monday, February 26:
  Event Observation Assignment Due for All Students
  Event Observation Assignment Presentations Part 1

Wednesday, February 28:
  Event Observation Assignment Presentations Part 2

Thursday, March 1 at 12 noon:
  Webinar - Plan the Work. Work the Plan. Seven Steps to a Successful Marketing Plan
  Location: TBD

Week 8:

Monday, March 5:
  Work day for all teams

Wednesday, March 7:
  No class. Please come to the:

Thursday, March 8: 2 pm - 3:15 pm - in Old Capitol Senate Chamber
  Kaylee Williams, founder of volunteerlocal.org, to discuss her entrepreneurial story, her
company, and best practices in volunteer management. 5 points extra credit for those who
attend. Be sure to check in with me so I know you were there!
  Alternative assignment for those who can’t make the speaker due to other conflicts.
  Answer the following questions, and turn in on ICON by 3:15 pm on 3/8:
  - In your own words, what is volunteer management?
- How should you recruit volunteers for an event or a cause?
- How does one retain the volunteers they recruit for future needs?
- What surprised you about your research?
- Please cite the sources you used to conduct your research.

Week 9:

***Spring Break! Have fun and be safe!***

Week 10:

Monday, March 19:
- All teams: Written Update 2 due.
- In Class Work Day

Wednesday, March 21:
- Client Presentation Schedule:
  - 5 pm: GWSS Team presents to client
  - 5:25 pm: FACF Team presents to client
  - 5:50 pm: JCCC Team presents to client

Week 11:

Monday, March 26:
- GWSS Team: Written Update 3 due.
- Assigned: Dream Job Assignment.
- Discussion: Career Overview; professionalism and landing a job.

Wednesday, March 28:
- NO CLASS - GWSS Event

Week 12:

Monday, April 2:
- TBD

Wednesday, April 4:
- Work day for all teams.
Week 13:

Monday, April 9:
   In Class Work Day

Wednesday, April 11:
   FACF & JCCC teams: Written Update 3 due.
   Client Presentation Schedule:
      5 pm: GWSS Team presents to client
      5:25 pm: FACF Team presents to client
      5:50 pm: JCCC Team presents to client.

Week 14:

Monday, April 16:
   TBD

Wednesday, April 18:
   NO CLASS - JCCC Event

Week 15:

Monday, April 23:
   Review of Events and SWOT analysis

Wednesday, April 25:
   Review of Events and SWOT analysis

Week 16:

Tuesday, May 2:
   Assignment Due: Dream Job Paper.
   Dream Job Presentations.

Thursday, May 4:
   Dream Job Presentations.
   End of course evaluations.

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

**It’s important to be flexible! Please note that this is a tentative schedule. Unplanned opportunities and challenges may require changes.**
Daily Attendance  
Up to 32 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 unannounced 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 assignment. Some days though, I'll do a surprise announcement that we are submitting tweets on paper. You'll never know when I'll decide to do this.

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.
Speaker Preparation
10 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.

Speaker Dates:
- Monday, February 19: Caitlin Stark, University Catering

*Additional speakers may be added throughout the semester if the need/opportunity arises.

Internship/Volunteer Opportunities Event: Due Wednesday, February 21 by 4 pm
Write a bio about the event planner you are most looking forward to meeting along with setting three personal goals for the networking event. The assignment is due prior to the start of this event.

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.
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 all of you attending Brr Fest... 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 3 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.
2) Take copious notes and even photos if appropriate, so that you can give a vivid description of the event in your presentation.
3) At the event, interview three attendees about their experiences and share what they told you.
4) Identify takeaways:
   a. What would you change about the event?
   b. What ideas would you borrow for a future event?

You will organize your findings into a PowerPoint or Prezi and submit your presentation file 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  
Due Monday, May 2 at 5 pm  
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 four 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) You must share your findings in an in-class presentation scheduled on the syllabus.

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
155 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:

30 points: Written Updates and In-Class Presentations
At three points throughout the semester teams will present plans and updates to the class. 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.

75 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. 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.

50 Points: Final Reflection
Due within 72 hours of your event, please submit to ICON a 3-4 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 and why?
7. What grades would you give each of your teammates and why?
8. What else would you like to share?
Day 1 Survey

Full Name & pronunciation: 

Major: 

Have you signed up or do you plan to sign up for the Event Planning Certificate? Yes  No

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:

UI Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies Department, March 28-30  1  2  3
Friends of the Animal Center Foundation, Date TBD  1  2  3
Johnson County Crisis Center April 18  1  2  3

1) Is there any reason why you absolutely CANNOT 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) Are there other roles that you’re really hoping to tackle? Why?

6) Are you 21 years or older? Circle: Yes  No

(please use the back if necessary or another sheet of paper for this assignment)