Event Planning Workshop

EVNT:3260:0002

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

**Location:** 212 Phillips Hall

**Time:** 5:00P – 6:15P Mondays and Wednesdays

**Office Hours:** By appointment.

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Office: E320 AJB  
319-541-1606  
*Email or text message 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, 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 attendance confirmation by submitting to ICON a faux tweet featuring a highlight or takeaway message of the day. You are encouraged to include hashtags, images and links. Up to one student each class period can earn an extra credit point and have their tweet published @UIEventPlanning. Missed tweets cannot be made up. (Up to 29+ 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 and should plan to ask at least one question, time permitting, during the speaker’s visit. (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 organizations 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)

• **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 2-3-page description of the event from your perspective including a SWOT analysis and an analysis of your own performance. You will also answer questions reviewing your teammates’ performances. You must complete the questions to receive credit for your reflection. (20 points)

**Grading:**

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**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 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. 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 casual attire (e.g. sweatpants, etc.), disrespectful communication with your client or 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. 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 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.

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, 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, Aug. 20: Course and classmate intro. Primary assignment explanation and sign up.
Wednesday, Aug. 22: Event teams assigned. Teams meet and review basic event information, establish preliminary roles.

Week 2:
Monday, Aug. 27: Clients visit for project introductions.
Wednesday, Aug. 29: Discussion: So You Want to be an Event Planner Assigned: Observation.

Week 3:
Monday, Sept. 3: LABOR DAY – NO CLASS
Wednesday, Sept. 5: Discussion: Budget, Sponsorships and Event Marketing. Work Day.

Week 4:
Monday, Sept. 10: Team 1 & 2 presents to client. All teams: Written Update #1 due.
Wednesday, Sept. 12: Discussion: Risk Management. Work day.

Week 5:
Wednesday, Sept. 19: Discussion: Venue Negotiation

Week 6:
Monday, Sept. 24: Guest Speaker
Thursday, Sept. 27: Internship Networking Fair, 3:30 – 5:00P (optional). Location TBD.

Week 7:
Monday, Oct. 1: Team 1 presents to client. All teams: Written Update #2 due.
Wednesday, Oct. 3: Team 2 presents to client

Week 8:
Monday, Oct. 8: Discussion: Future of Event Technology
Wednesday, Oct. 10: Discussion: Crisis Management

Week 9:
Monday, Oct. 15: Due: Event Observation. Event Observation Presentations
Wednesday, Oct. 17: Event Observation Presentations

Week 10:
Monday, Oct. 22: Team 1 & 2 Present to client. All teams;

Week 11:
Wednesday, Oct. 31: Discussion: Speaker panel prep. Post-event actions, SWOT analyses.

Week 12:
Monday, Nov. 5: Guest Speaker
Wednesday, Nov. 7: Work Day

**Week 13:**
Monday, Nov. 12: Guest Speaker
Wednesday, Nov. 14: Discussion, career interests.

**Week 14:**
THANKSGIVING BREAK. Be safe and enjoy your week.

**Week 15:**
Monday, Nov. 26: Teams 1 & 2 present Event Reports & SWOT Analyses
Wednesday, Nov. 28: Open Discussion of Event for both teams

**Week 16:**
Monday, Dec. 3: **Due: Dream Job Report.** Dream Job presentations.
Wednesday, Dec. 5: Dream Job Presentations. End of course evaluations.

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

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

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**Daily Attendance**
**Up to 29 Points (plus extra credit opportunity!)**

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.

I’ll peruse the tweets and could choose one or more to publish on Twitter @UIEventPlanning. If your tweet is selected, you will earn 1 extra credit point, with a maximum of 4 extra credit points over the course of the semester.

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: 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.

For the Speaker Panel: Write a three-paragraph bio about the speaker who you are most looking forward to hearing from, along with one question for each speaker on the panel.

For the Networking Event, write a bio about the event planner you are most looking forward to meeting along with setting three personal goals for the networking event.

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.

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.

Observation
Assignment Due Oct. 16
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 or Prezi 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 Due Dec. 4
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 150 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. Teams will have the opportunity to “fire” a team member at mid-term should the team determine that team member is not working diligently on the group task. An alternate assignment will be created and assigned to the “fired” team member with an automatic 20% deduction in the total available points.

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 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. 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.

20 Points: Final Reflection

Due within 72 hours of your event, please submit to ICON a 3-5 page reflection that includes a SWOT (Strengths, 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?
Day 1 Survey

Name & pronunciation:

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: 100+ Women Who Care Event

Team 2: Table to Table Volunteer Appreciation Event, November 7.

1) Is there any reason why you absolutely CAN 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) Are there other roles that you’re really hoping to tackle? Why?