Spring 2021

Instructor: Heather Spangler

The University of Iowa

School of Journalism & Mass Communication

Event Management Certificate

Delivery Method: Synchronous via Zoom—we will meet each Tuesday and Thursday unless otherwise instructed in advance.

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

Office Drop-In Hours: 3:30 to 4:30 Tuesdays and Thursdays or by appointment. Meetings will be conducted via Zoom

Contact:
heather-spangler@uiowa.edu

E346C AJB
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 as needed.

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 following my prompt. Missed “tweets” cannot be made up for any reason. (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. (15 points total—5 for prep, 10 for attendance). Students who are not able to attend the networking event can complete an alternate assignment. More details in the dropbox on ICON.
- **Portfolio + LinkedIn Profile:** Students will prepare for their professional futures by creating an online professional portfolio site as well as LinkedIn profile (50 points)
- **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. (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 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 (when appropriate), 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. (10 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 detailed individual task list. 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 utilizing your teammates’ task lists, and a link to the team’s Trello board, which you should invite me to join via heather-spangler@uiowa.edu. (10 points)

- **Customized Client/Team Contract**: As a team, you will collaborate to create a document to serve as a contract between your team and your client. The document should include communication expectations, at least three measurable SMART goals you’ll work toward with your event, anticipated deliverables, details about how your team will access funding if needed, how your team will interact with the client’s social media if needed for marketing, and more. Each team’s contract will be customized to suit your project. You’ll discuss and sign electronically this document with your client in your first meeting. (10 points)

- **Team Event Updates**: At three points scheduled throughout the semester, teams will present plans and updates to the class and/or client. Each member will submit individually via ICON a written update detailing tasks completed, tasks to do before the next update, and overall feedback about the team planning process. Team leaders will also upload their group’s client-facing presentation. An absence on your team’s presentation day to your client is an automatic 5-point deduction. (10 points each = 30 points)

- **Post-Event Survey**: To help your team better understand your event’s strengths and weaknesses from another perspective, each team will create, administer, and study the results of a post-event survey. (10 points)

- **Final Reflection**: After your event is complete, it’s time to reflect on how it went. You will submit to ICON a 3-page description of the event from your perspective including a detailed 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:

A+: 101+
A: 94-100
A-:90-93
B+: 88-89
B: 84-87
B-:80-83
C+: 78-79
C: 74-77
C-: 70-73
D+: 68-69
D: 64-67
D-:60-63

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.

Zoom Etiquette:

Our coursework is collaborative and interactive. To give this work your best effort, I ask you to please turn on your cameras whenever possible and to make your best effort to attend class in a location that allows you to focus and participate without worrying about distractions for yourself or others. When in our large group sessions, please mute your microphone to reduce the risk of accidental interruptions.

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 course absence policies, which 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, and University authorized activities ([https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences)). Students may use the CLAS absence form to aid communication with the instructor who will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused; the form is located on ICON within the top banner under "Student Tools."
Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have in essence agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Academic misconduct affects a student's related grade and is reported to the College which applies an additional sanction including suspension. Outcomes about misconduct are communicated through UI email (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 a mental health, attention, learning, vision, and a 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/.

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 UI colleges may have different policies for courses offered by that college. CLAS policies may be found here: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Classroom Expectations
Students are expected to comply with University policies regarding appropriate classroom behavior as outlined in the Code of Student Life (https://dos.uiowa.edu/policies/code-of-student-life/). This includes related UI policies and procedures that all students have agreed to regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, each student must wear a face mask when in a UI building, including a classroom. The density of seats in classrooms has been reduced, and in some instances, this will allow 6 feet or more of distance while other cases, it may be less. Regardless, wearing a face mask and maintaining as much distance as is possible are vital to slowing the spread of COVID-19. In the event that a student disrupts the classroom environment through the failure to comply with a reasonable directive of an instructor or of the University, the instructor has the authority to ask that the student to leave the space immediately for the remainder of the class period. Additionally, the instructor is asked to report the incident to the UI Office of Student Accountability, with the possibility of additional follow-up with the student. Students who need temporary alternative learning arrangements (TALA) for a future semester related to COVID-19 should visit this website for more

Class Recordings: Privacy and Sharing
Some sessions of a course could be recorded or live-streamed. Such a recording or streaming will only be available to students registered for the course. These recordings are the intellectual property of the faculty, and they may not be shared or reproduced without the explicit written consent of the faculty member. Students may not share these sessions with those who are not enrolled in the course; likewise, students may not upload recordings to any other online environment. Doing so is a breach of the Code of Student Conduct and in some cases is a violation of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

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 or with UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

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. See this page for more information: 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 with a few exceptions made for particular types of courses such as labs or off-cycle courses: https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for people of all gender, sexual, racial, religious, and other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited in MyUI to optionally share the names and pronouns they would like their instructors and advisors to use to address them. 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 (https://diversity.uiowa.edu/eod; +1 319 335-0705 or 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:**

Tuesday, Jan. 26: Course and classmate intro.

Thursday, Jan. 28: Project introductions.

DUE by 9 p.m.: Surveys (online here: https://forms.gle/TqVQSCfn5NCqSvHy7)

**Week 2:**


Team building activity.

Thursday, Feb. 4: DUE: Client & Event Background Reports.

DUE: Networking Prep.

Discussion: Working with clients.

**Week 3:**

Tuesday, Feb. 9: Internship Networking Event via Zoom

Thursday, Feb. 11: DUE: Individual Initial Reports.

Teams present Trello boards and initial vision to class for feedback.

**Week 4:**

Tuesday, Feb. 16: DUE: Written Update 1 (all teams). Teams 1, 2 & 3 present to client.
Thursday, Feb. 18: Teams 4, 5 & 6 present to client.

Week 5:
Tuesday, Feb. 23: DUE: Contracts signed by team and client.

Week 6:
Tuesday, March 2: NO CLASS (University Holiday)
Thursday, March 4: Work Day.

Week 7:
Tuesday, March 9: DUE: Written Update 2 (all teams).
Teams 1, 2 & 3 present to client.
Thursday, March 11: Teams 4, 5 & 6 present to client.

Week 8: “SPRING BREAK” Week!
Please stay tuned for updates about how we’ll spend our “spring break staycation” as a certificate!

Week 9:
Tuesday, March 23: Work Day.
Thursday, March 25: Teams present updates to class for feedback. Role cohort meetings. Discussion: Event surveys, SWOT analyses.

Week 10:
Tuesday, March 30: DUE: Written Update 3 (all teams). Teams 1, 2 & 3 present to client.
Thursday, April 1: Teams 4, 5 & 6 present to client.
Week 11:
Tuesday, April 6: Discussion: Dream Job Reports.
Thursday, April 8: Discussion: Portfolios and Personal Brands

Week 12:
Tuesday, April 13: Team 1 presents Event Report to class
Thursday, April 15: Team 2 presents Event Report to class

Week 13:
Tuesday, April 20: Team 3 presents Event Report to class
Thursday, April 22: Team 4 presents Event Report to class

Week 14:
Tuesday, April 27: Team 5 presents Event Report to class
Thursday, April 29: Team 6 presents Event Report to class

Week 15:
Tuesday, May 4: DUE: Dream Job Report
Thursday, May 6: Due: Portfolio and LinkedIn

FINALS WEEK. We will not meet. Your portfolio projects take the place of a final exam.

{{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 should 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 Management Certificate events.

Networking Prep + Event Attendance

10 Points

Write a three-paragraph biography about the employer you most look forward to meeting at our Event Management Internship Networking Fair (5 points) and register your attendance at the event by signing in. (5 points). Please see the dropbox for an alternate assignment if your schedule doesn’t allow you to attend the event.

Team Event Assignment

185 Points Total

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.

Deliverables and Points breakdown:

10 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.

**10 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 creating a detailed task list for their individual role. Since you are not working in a vacuum and each task impacts others, you will work collaboratively with your team mates to make sure your combined task lists will get the whole job done.

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.

**10 Points: Customized Client/Team Contract**

As a team, you will collaborate to create a document to serve as a contract between your team and your client.

The document should include:

- The names of those involved in the project and their roles
- Communication expectations
- Brief event description
- Event budget
- At least three measurable SMART goals you’ll aim to achieve with your event
- A list of anticipated deliverables
- Description of how your team will access funding if needed
- Description of how your team will interact with the client’s social media if needed for marketing
- Description of your team’s promise to represent the client in a professional manner
- Explanation of what will happen if contract expectations are not met.

Each team’s contract will be customized to suit your project and may include additional elements. Some aspects of the contract will need to be finalized in conversation with your client. You’ll discuss and sign electronically this document with your client in your first meeting and turn in the signed, final document by the class period following your initial meeting.

**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.

10 Points: Post-Event Survey

To help your team better understand your event’s strengths and weaknesses from another perspective, each team will create, administer, and study the results of a post-event survey. Your team can determine the best way to distribute the survey (Google Form, Survey Monkey, etc.) and the best audience for the survey (attendees, vendors, etc.) depending on the unique circumstances of your event. Team leaders will upload a survey results report to the drop box for a team score. You will be graded on the relevance of your survey in terms of questions asked and audience reached, the success of your survey administration (timing, process, etc.) and the polish of your survey report.

15 Points: Final Reflection

Due within 72 hours of your event day, 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 guest surveys. Please include at least three bullet points under each element of the acronym and a description of each bullet point.
- 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 your 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? (Helpful hint: be realistic here. “Everybody should get an A+!” is nice but not helpful.)

7. What else would you like to share?

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:

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

Professional Portfolio + LinkedIn Profile

50 Points

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 (not a designer? Try Canva.com!)
- 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 at least one photo and a 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 utilizing class content