

Event Planning for Public Relations

PBRL 4230-001/6230-001

Fall 2024

Class Meeting: T/Th 11:20 am - 12:40 pm MJ 112

Prof. Taylor Ackerman, APR, MA

She/Her

Office: Meeman 332

Office hours: Tuesday, 10am-11am, 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

Wednesday, 10:30 am - 1:30 pm

Thursday, 1pm - 2pm

If you'd like to meet for the office hours listed, please reach out via text or email prior to dropping by so I can make sure I'm in my office and not in another meeting.

I'm also available via Zoom outside of the listed office hours upon request.

Email: tckerman@memphis.edu

Phone: 731-225-7656 (Text only please)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Development, execution and evaluation of events that support strategic communication practices; special attention will be given to the needs of the public relations industry as well as advertising and public relations tactics for non-profit, for profit, and community-based initiatives and organizations. Hands-on experience will be integrated into the curriculum.

Prerequisites

60 hours of completed coursework

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

Manus, L., Verni, S., & Rouse, M.E. *Event Planning: Communicating Theory and Practice (2nd ed.)*. Dubuque, IA. Kendall Hunt Publishing. ISBN: 9781792408885

Classroom format

Our class will meet in room 112 in the Meeman Journalism building twice a week. Attending class is imperative and will be necessary for your success in this course. In addition to learning the concepts and skills affiliated with event planning, our class will be assisting with the planning and execution of the annual J+SM Alumni Awards event. Not only will this course give you hands-on event planning experience you'll be able to add to your resume, it will also allow you to build connections with alumni that could help you as you build your careers.

Part of your grade in this class will be helping with the event Thursday, November 14. Both attending the event and helping with set up/tear down will be mandatory. Any concerns about this course

requirement should be taken up with myself the first week of class. Go ahead and add this to your calendar and request off work.

A good event requires a group of people with a unified goal putting their heads together to plan and solve problems, and that's what we'll be doing this semester. Attending class is imperative as many of the important event decisions will be made during our class time. Staying up to date with plans and moving parts of the event is your responsibility and should be taken seriously. We'll often be working as a team, and I expect each person in the class to respect each other's ideas, thoughts and perspectives as well as support their teammates. While at times we may have differing approaches and we'll debate that out, all course discussions and brainstorming must remain respectful and professional.

In addition to planning and helping with this year's awards, we'll be pitching a change of plan and venue for next year's awards ceremony. This will give you experience working on an event at different stages and understanding how logistics and goals can be adjusted. We will also have lectures, slide decks, special guests, in class activities and individual assignments to fulfill learning outcomes. Work will be submitted through our Canvas course shell.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis online learning home page: <http://memphis.instructure.com>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. Click on the link for STRM 4230/6230 to enter our course

Course Requirements

This course will require access to technology for assignments, diligence in engaging with each week's course content, attending class, organization, participation and strong communication. Occasionally you will need to contact outside vendors/event spaces to gather information relevant to our events. The coursework will often require you to work with your classmates, think critically, and approach situations creatively and with a problem solving attitude.

All students will be **required** to attend the event we plan this semester, as well as complete a few tasks for the event outside of class time.

Course & Campus Resources

Students with disabilities & accommodations

If you will need accommodations through [Disability Resources](#) to meet any of the requirements of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. I'm happy to work with you to make sure you are able to be successful in this course.

Support: If at any point in the semester you are struggling with the course load or a specific assignment, please reach out to me for a meeting so we can work to get you back on track. I'm happy to help in any way I'm able, but you must be an advocate for yourself by communicating with me and making me aware of any problems. It's impossible for me to help if I don't know

there's a problem.

School in general can be stressful, and so can event planning. I am here to help make sure that you have what you need to succeed. However, this requires open communication from you as early on in the semester as possible. I am happy to meet with you outside of class, hop on a Zoom call, or provide support over email. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you find yourself falling behind, feeling overwhelmed, or struggling. Please remember that the earlier I'm aware of the problem, the more likely it is that we'll be able to get things turned around.

Meeman Lab Availability: Open labs 9:30-4:30 Monday-Friday. In addition to Meeman, labs are available in the Tech Hub and the Library. We also have equipment rental available. Check your university email for details.

Campus and Community Resources: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/>

Resources specific to physical health and wellness:

[Mental health Services](#)

[UofM Student Health Center](#)

[Sexual, domestic, and intimate partner violence resources](#)

If you are affected financially because of COVID-19:

There are many resources available through the Dean of Students including:

[Dr. Rosie Phillips Bingham Student Emergency Fund](#)

[Emergency Food Resources](#), which includes [Tiger Pantry](#)

Academic Services:

[Writing Center](#)

[Tutoring](#)

Communities & Inclusion:

[Multicultural Affairs](#)

[LGBTQ+](#)

Grading

There are 1,000 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class points will be calculated and rounded up to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below. If additional points are added or subtracted from this possible point total, the letter scale will be adjusted.

A+ = 967 – 1,000 points, **A** = 934 – 966, **A-** = 900 – 933 points

B+ = 867 – 899 points, **B** = 834 – 866 points, **B-** = 800 – 833 points

C+ = 767 – 799 points, **C** = 734 – 766 points, **C-** = 700 – 733 points

D = 667 – 600 points

F = 600 and fewer points

Grading Philosophy. A=Professional quality work that could be use with little or no modification
B=Good to excellent work and exceeds requirement, but would require revision to be used professionally

C=Satisfactory work and adequately meets requirement, but would need significant revision
D=Barely satisfies minimum requirement and below average quality
F=Unsatisfactory work and does not meet minimum requirements

Assignments

Attendance & In Class Activities	150 points
Event	325 points
Event Pitch	175 points
Quizzes	150 points
Individual Assignments	200 points
Total:	1,000 points

Assignment Breakdown

More in-depth guidelines posted to Canvas.

Attendance & In Class Activities: We will be working on many different event tasks during class time throughout the semester. In addition to planning meetings, we'll have brainstorms, group discussions, client interviews, team building activities and break out group responsibilities. These different tasks and activities will be graded through the semester and cannot be made up outside of class.

Each student will get three "freebie" absences from me over the course of the semester and these are no questions asked absences. Rather you're sick, have a family situation or just need a mental health day - that's your prerogative. However, every absence over three will count against your grade, so use them wisely. I wouldn't recommend using them all at the start as life can happen later. Keep in mind that if this were your job, missing three client meetings or team meetings would reflect poorly on you as a professional - so offering you three within this short 15 week semester is generous.

Event: This class is centered around planning the J+SM Alumni Awards. Together as a class we will plan and execute each detail of the event plan.

Worth 125 points: Tasks and responsibilities leading up to the event (will be completed both individually and as a committee)

Worth 75 points: Contribution to problem solving, creativity, recommendations and participation in class decision making for event (Peer and professor reviews included)

Worth 125 points: Day of event - working both the actual event and participating in set up and tear down. Points will only be awarded if you are there to help with the event.

Event Pitch: In addition to the 2024 J+SM Alumni Awards, we will also pitch a new plan for the 2025 awards ceremony to the alumni committee. Based on what we learn from this year's experience and

the goals of our key stakeholders, we'll develop a logistics and promotion plan. There will be group and individual tasks affiliated with this category.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be given throughout the semester to test your understanding of course concepts. Quizzes will be given on Canvas with a time limit. You will have two attempts for each quiz with the highest grade taken. You are welcome to use your notes or book to help assist you on the quiz, but working with another student is prohibited.

Individual Assignments: Students will work independently on assignments in order to demonstrate understanding of course concepts and event purpose. Additional details will be provided in class and on Canvas.

Miscellaneous Policies

Late Work: In event planning as well as the broader field of public relations and journalism, deadlines are imperative. As such, any assignments associated directly with the event and the tasks it requires will not be accepted late, nor will quizzes. Individual assignments will be accepted with the following policy:

<24 hours late: 5% off

<48 hours late: 10% off

<One week late: 20% off

One to three weeks late: 30% off

Over three weeks late: No credit

In Class Activities & Attendance: Keeping up with the event will be impossible without regular attendance. Each student will have an allotted three absences to use as they need. Each absence over three will be 15 points off their attendance grade. Coming to class more than 15 minutes late will result in a ½ absence (more than 30 minutes late will count as a full absence.)

In class activities cannot be made up outside of class, as most of them will require collaboration and/or specific instructions from the class.

Virtual Meetings: On the off chance that we decide to have any of our class meetings over Teams this semester, you will be required to attend with your camera on. Failure to attend the class, or having your camera off for more than half of the call, will count against your allotted absences for the course. While virtual meetings can be fantastic for flexibility, it doesn't discount the importance of the class nor permit you to attend while going through a drive-thru, grocery shopping, driving a boat, etc.

Course Schedule

[Week 1, August 26 - September 1: What makes a good event + initial ideas](#)

Readings/Media: See Canvas for article

Assignments: Survey

Alumni awards inspo

[Week 2, September 2-8: Intro to events, team building & listening](#)

Readings/Media: Chapters one, two and 15

Assignments: In class activity

Refection

Week 3, September 9-15: Roadmap to success + client relationships

Readings/Media: Chapter four

See Canvas for article

Assignments: Submit client questions (independent)

Initial team review

Week 4, September 16-22: Client interview + negotiations

Readings/Media: Chapter six

Assignments: Reflection

In class activity

Week 5: September 23-29: Client interview + promotion

Readings/Media: Chapter 14

Check Canvas for article

Assignments: Reflection

Responsibilities

Week 6: September 30-October 6: Creativity, setting the stage & key elements

Readings/Media: Chapters eight and nine

Check Canvas for article

Assignments: Run of show pitches

Promotion

Pins

In class activity

Week 7: October 7-11: Initial pitch + Decor

Readings/Media: None

Assignments: Quiz

Formalized plan

In class activity

Promotions

Fall break begins Saturday, October 12.

Week 8, October 16-20: Budgeting

We are on fall break through Tuesday, October 15.

Readings/Media: Chapter five

Assignments: Committee tasks

Week 9, October 21-27: Hospitality + expect the unexpected

Readings/Media: Chapters 11 & 13

Check Canvas for article

Assignments: In class activity

Group tasks

Crisis plan

Reflection

Week 10, October 28 - November 3: Finalizing & beginning

Readings/Media: Chapters 10 & 12

Assignments: Finalize plans

Begin new pitch

Living document

Promotion

Week 11, November 4 - 10: The lock ins

Readings/Media: See Canvas for articles

Assignments: Group tasks

Location scout
Systems approach
In class activity

Week 12, November 11-17: Event Week!!!

Readings/Media: None
Assignments: Final tasks
Work event, set up, tear down
Post-event survey
Reflection

Week 13, November 18-24: Looking forward

Readings/Media: None
Assignments: In class activity
Narrow in options
Complete pitch

Week 14, November 25 - December 1: Focus on pitch

Readings/Media: None
Assignments: Finalize & prepare presentation

Thanksgiving break begins November 27 - December 1.

Week 15: December 2 - 8: End of semester wrap up

Readings/Media: None
Assignments: Final Pitch
Survey

Please note this schedule will be evolving based on event needs. Updates will be provided in class. Check Canvas for due dates.

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Professional Values and Competencies in STRM 4230

- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
 - Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
 - Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
 - Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
 - Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

How professional values and competencies will be met

Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)

- Provide a conceptual overview and a systematic study of event planning, management, marketing, logistics, risk assessment and practical applications.
- Understand the importance of considering diversity, accessibility, and inclusiveness when planning events.
- Interpret and apply principles of leadership and event management to the special needs of event organizations.
- Foster professionalism in event management, covering the knowledge base, theory, methodologies and ethics.

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)

- Select and apply appropriate research and project management tools in support of event planning.
- Evaluate and critique events.
- Plan and execute a special event.
- Identify appropriate marketing strategies for different events.
- Work effectively in a group.
- Communicate the evaluation of special event in a final report/presentation.

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Learn about the important role of event planning in public relations.

Understanding

- Understand leadership management and the role event planning plays in public relations practice.
- Learn the basics of event finance and budget management.
- Recognize some of the different types of events and the variety of needs that come with each type.
- Appreciate that event attendees want to have an experience at an event, and understand appropriate ways to provide this based on type of event.
- Study effective promotion of events. Application
- Attend and evaluate campus and community events submitting an assessment assignment for each event.
- Network with professionals in public relations and greater community.
- Improve written and oral communication skills through written briefs, assessments, and presentations or reports.
- Complete project researching, planning, promoting, executing and evaluating a special event.
- Gain experience creating effective event/organization goals and timelines.
- Learn about personal leadership style and determine areas of potential growth.
- Enhance leadership and organizational skills within an event management role.
- Develop a presentation or report about the special event project that describes the experiential learning that took place during the process.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or SquareSpace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)

A current résumé

A personal profile

Contact information/means of contact

Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

AI/Chat GPT

The use of artificial intelligence software, such as Chat GPT, is prohibited in some courses and required in others in Journalism & Strategic Media. Please refer to specific guidelines for this course in the course-specific part of the syllabus.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

Online SETEs

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. You are responsible for learning these rules and checking your work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Diversity and inclusivity

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

Weather policy

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather.

Student support

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.