

Professional Booksellers School 2026 Event Management Course



Event Management 2026

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Course Meeting Days: Mondays

Course Meeting Times: 8 pm ET / 7 pm CT / 5 pm PT

Course Length: 1/26/26 - 6/15/26

Course Description

The Professional Booksellers School Event Management Course provides booksellers with the the skills and tools to:

- Create a balanced and successful event program
- Understand how to use metrics to create a strategic plan for your event program
- Create effective data management systems
- Understand planning, hosting, and marketing needs for a variety of events including author, non-author, live, virtual, on-site and off-site
- Build and use partnerships to expand your event program
- Plan and manage school-focused events
- Build a publicity kit and learn to pitch your store to publishers
- Strengthen management skills to create events that are welcoming to authors, guests, customers, and staff

Course Components

- 16 live online classes
- Twice-weekly course emails with links, recordings, and homework
- Discussions, chat, and office hours via Discord
- Weekly homework assignments uploaded to Discord
- 3 live, online student presentations of projects in small groups
- Live, online Publicity Speed Dating

Instructor Information

Dean Elliott batTzedek, Main Point Books, Wayne, PA

Instructor Kit Little, Little Extra LLC, Barre, VT

Instructor Molly Olivo, Barefoot Books

Instructor Julie Stravinsky, Warwicks, La Jolla, CA

Instructor Julia Davis, The Book Worm, Powder Springs, GA

Guest Instructors

Candice Huber, Tubby & Co's Traveling Bookshop, New Orleans, LA
Kym Havens, formerly of An Unlikely Story, Plainfield, MA

2026 Event Management Course Schedule

Classes are Monday nights, 8 pm ET / 7 pm CT / 5 pm PT

01/26 Class 01: Overview of a Successful Event Program

02/02 Class 02: Measuring Success: ROIs & Metrics

02/09 Class 03: Using Data to Strengthen Your Program

02/16 - 02/28 Office Hours: Help with Events Capacity Presentation

03/02 Class 04: Live Presentation: Events Capacity Analysis

03/09 Class 05: Managing Event Program Data

03/16 Class 06: Author Events

03/23 Class 07: Building Partnerships

03/30 Class 08: Community Events

04/06 - 04/12 Office Hours: Present Your Event Management System

04/13 Class 09: School-Facing Events

04/20 Class 10: Marketing & Analytics

04/27 Class 11: Partnering with Publishers

05/04 Class 12: Create a Publicity Kit & Pitch

05/11 - 05/15 Office Hours: Help with your Publicity Kit

05/18 Class 13: Live Presentation: Publicity Kit & Pitch

05/19 - 05/26 Office Hours: Preparing for Publicity Speed Dating

05/27 WEDNESDAY Class 14: Live online Publicity Speed Dating

6/01 Class 15: Make Your Program Stand Out

06/08 - 06/13 Office Hours: Preparing your final project

06/15 Class 16: Live Presentation: The Future of Your Program

06/22: Make-up Date

07/06: Final deadline for all work

Course Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, you will have the knowledge to:

- Understand all the elements of a successful bookstore events program
- Learn to use ROIs and metrics to track and measure the success of your store's events
- Know what data to gather in order to evaluate your store's current event program capacity to help shape an effective growth plan
- Understand the best tools and channels/platforms to market your events and how to use analytics to evaluate which promotions are working
- Know how to run a successful author and community events from proposal through after-report, including best practices for scheduling, planning, ticketing, and hosting all types of events
- Establish a system to effectively manage event program planning and data, including making information available to key stakeholders such as buyers, frontline staff, and partners
- Understand how to identify and use social media metrics to build event audience
- Understand how to build effective and rewarding relationships with publishers/publicists
- Create a Publicity Kit and pitch that will highlight your store's personality, customer base, marketing, and event programming
- Know how to use a Publicity Kit to pitch the store's event program quickly and efficiently through participating in Publicity Speed Dating
- Identify and evaluate community partners to increase options for event space, event partnerships, and/or promotion
- Know best practices for working with school-focused events, including author visits and book fairs
- Understand how to use events to make your store stand out in your community
- Understand how to make your event program stand in the industry
- Build a strategic plan to help you meet your event goals, including data-driven, actionable goals and including all stakeholders

Homework

Homework is assigned each week. For regular homework, plan to spend 1 - 2 hours a week on the assignments. For the five major projects, plan to spend 3 - 6 hours. The homework is structured to be cumulative, so the weekly assignments create the information you'll need for the major assignments.

Students who are taking the course to audit, not to become certified, may choose to turn in homework or not.

Weekly homework will be uploaded into Discord, where instructors will review and comment on it. The major projects will be presented live in small groups with other students and an instructor. Each project description will include a checklist of criteria to pass. Students will be given one opportunity to re-do each homework assignment to improve their score.

Students are expected to stay on top of their homework deadlines and assignments. At each round of office hours, instructors and students will review any missing work. Students who fall significantly behind, or who miss live presentation dates, will automatically be moved to audit status.

Certification Criteria

Homework is evaluated on a point scale of 0 - 2:

0 - not turned in

1 - Turned in, but missing major parts of the assignment

2 - Meets criteria, shows understanding of concepts/skills

To be certified, students are required to score a 2 on the five major projects: Event Capacity Analysis; Data Management System; Publicity Kit & Pitch; Publicity Speed Dating, and Moving Forward Strategic Plan. For Publicity Speed Dating, we don't evaluate the presentation, so the score is either 0 for not presenting or 2 for presenting. Attendance at each live class is worth 1 point, and attending one mandatory office hour is worth 1 additional point.

To receive a certification in Event Management, you'll need:

13 out of the possible 16 points for attendance

1 point from an office hour

2 points from live Publicity Speed Dating

20 out the possible 24 points for homework

For a total of 36 out of a possible 43 points

Major Project Deliverables for Certification

Due 03/02 Event Capacity Analysis Live Presentation

Using data gathered from their stores, students will create an analysis of their current event program and of their current capacity to grow. This is both small detail (how many chairs do you have) to big picture (what is your store mission statement, and can your event program serve that statement). The live presentation will consist of a slide deck with photos and other evidence accompanied by a 7-10 minute spoken analysis of the data. Students will receive a list of information to include in their presentation.

Due 04/06 - 04/12 Event Data Management System

Students will develop a system to track and share event program data. This must have: a system to track each step of an event from pitch to after-report, a clear way for how information is shared with coworkers, and methods for tracking multiple events at the same time. The system presented must be scalable. Students will meet with instructors one-on-one during office hours to present and talk through their systems. Students will receive a list of criteria their systems must meet to pass.

Due 05/12 Publicity Kit & Pitch Live Presentation

Students will be creating a Publicity Kit, which is a single page, double sided, organized marketing tool. It can be distributed as print or .pdf to publicists and partners to showcase your store's location, specialties, demographics, partnerships, and event program. Along with the kit they will develop a scripted, rehearsed presentation of their store's event program and event capacity geared towards publicists.

Due 05/18 Publicity Speed Dating Live Presentation

Using the final versions of their Publicity Kit and pitch presented in class, students will present their store's event program to publicists. This will happen live online, to an audience of publicists from large, Indie, and small publishers. The event happens on a Wednesday and students sign up for time slots across the day to accommodate all time zones. The time slot includes a brief q&a so you can share your store's unique strengths and author/event wishlist.

Due 06/15 The Future of Your Program Live Presentation

Building on all prior homework assignments, students will review what changes they've put in place during the semester, then create a data-driven plan for the next six months of their store's event program. This will include event capacity data, a marketing plan, a data management system, community partner and school information, publisher/sales rep/event grid connections, and publicity kits. Students will create a slide deck with photos and other evidence, along with an oral presentation no longer than 10 minutes based on a list of required criteria.

Office Hours

The course includes 3 rounds of optional office hours:

02/16 - 02/28	For support creating the Events Capacity Analysis
05/11 - 05/15	For support creating the Publicity Kit & Pitch
06/08 - 06/13	For support creating the Future of Your Program

During these time slots, the instructor will review your progress in the course. If you have a draft of your project, or questions about it, you are welcome to bring that work to discuss. You are also welcome to bring other event program questions.

Office hours are scheduled in 30 minute segments. Students may meet with more than one instructor if schedules allow. For each round of office hours, each instructor will provide their days and times that are available, as well as their areas of focus/skills. Students can find this information in the Office Hour Info channel on Discord. Students will direct message an instructor via Discord to request one of those times. Instructors will confirm the time by replying to the message.

Office hours take place in the instructor's office channel on Discord. Office hour conversations are private and protected, as sensitive store information may be shared.

In addition, there is one required round of office hours from 04/06 - 04/12. This is a required meeting for certification in which students will share and explain their Event Data Management System. For this meeting, instructors will provide blocks of time, with slots being first come/first served. We will provide options that are accessible in all time zones.