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Fall 2023

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### ENG 4765-001 Professional Editing

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# Course syllabus

## Professional Editing

Fall 2023 | (3 credits)

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### Course Description

What is the job of an editor in the age of ChatGPT, Grammarly, and other AI writing programs? What skills will editors need to compete with and/or to accompany the work of automated programs? We are in a moment where we will certainly begin to see the editor's job begin to change, but the need to edit AI-generated writing may make this work even more important.

In this class, we'll explore the range of skills, activities, and ways of thinking about writing that make up what is known as editing. Throughout the course, we will carry out several different types of editing. Both copyediting and proofreading involve line-by-line editing for consistency, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and (sometimes) style. Comprehensive editing, on the other hand, involves editing for global issues such as content, organization, style, and design. In all cases, professional editors must be aware of a basic paradox affecting their work. On the one hand, editing is based not on intuition about language, but on specific expertise in the areas of grammar, punctuation, spelling, style, and organization. For this reason, we will learn and use professional terminology; field-specific copyediting marks; and conventions of grammar, style, and organization in this course. On the other hand, the most effective editing addresses the rhetorical situation, even when those needs violate "rules." Several times during the semester, you will be asked to edit for specific purposes and audiences.

A second challenge is that editors and teachers work with texts they have not written. Initially, working with another writer's text (or an AI-generated text) may be challenging for those of you who are used to the individual model of writing typically associated with higher education. Editors and teachers must learn how to affect positive, and often significant, changes to

a document, while respecting the writer's or organization's continued "ownership" of that document.

By the end of the semester, you will be expected to meet the following objectives:

- Use professional language for discussing editing
- Copyedit effectively for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and consistency
- Edit documents globally for organization, content, style, and design
- Adapt editing to specific rhetorical situations
- Implement effective strategies for working with writers and clients
- Successfully balance multiple projects and deadlines

A note to graduate students and those enrolled in the Z section of the course: As graduate students in a cross-listed course, you are expected to meet a higher standard of both theory and practice. Your requirements will differ from those of the undergrads in two ways: (1) your final project will have a supplementary scholarly portion and (2) you will be asked to read several theory/research articles related to editing and then provide summaries of that information to the class in the form of presentations and/or written materials.

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## Required Course Materials

- Cunningham et al. *Technical Editing: An Introduction to Editing in the Workplace* (provided by TRS)
- *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition (provided by TRS)
- Individual articles as assigned (available as PDFs on D2L)
- [optional] A quality dictionary (note: for exams, you will not have internet access)

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## Course Requirements

The best way to learn editing is to practice it--a lot. For that reason, you can expect this class to be largely hands-on. While the reading load will be

relatively light for a 4000-level class, you should expect to have multiple activities and/or assignments to complete each week. (Federal credit hour guidelines state that one credit hour is equivalent to three hours of work per week, so for this three-credit course, you should expect to invest up to nine hours per week, including time spent in class.) If you're interested in more information on how credit hours are defined, check out this website: <http://policy.hlcommission.org/Federal-Regulation/assignment-of-credits-program-length-and-tuition.html>)

**Homework/Quizzes:** Throughout the semester, you will complete practice exercises, which we will then go over in class. They will not be graded, but will receive points for completeness. We may also have unannounced quizzes over the assigned reading. Graduate students [only]: As part of your homework, you will read and report out on several theoretical or research-based articles that may be of interest to the class.

**Copyediting and Proofreading assignments:** You will do line-by-line copyediting/proofreading of several documents. These assignments will apply the skills from our readings, and exercises and will receive individual grades. Evaluation criteria: correct use of markup symbols; ability to identify and correct errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling; ability to edit for consistency and style; legibility and clarity of editing.

**Comprehensive editing assignments:** You will comprehensively edit multiple documents for content, organization, style, and design. Evaluation criteria: ability to adapt to rhetorical situation, ability to identify and edit for comprehensive issues, ability to work effectively with writers and fellow editors, professionalism, clarity and correctness in writing.

**Exams (2).**

**Client project:** You will copyedit or comprehensively edit a major document or a series of smaller documents on behalf of a client. Evaluation criteria: ability to work with clients and colleagues, comprehensive editing, copyediting, adaptation to audience and purpose, proposal writing

**Scholarly component [grad students only]:** Drawing on scholarly sources, you will write a 5–8 page paper connected to a topic or issue that arose in your client project. Evaluation criteria: ability to identify and synthesize sources, coherence of argument, command of scholarly writing, effective self-editing

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## Assessment

Each assignment will include specific assessment criteria.

Students have the option to ask questions related to editing assignments prior to the submission deadline. While I will not go through the text and point out errors you have missed or edited incorrectly, I will answer specific questions you have about the text or your corrections. Students who have questions should bring the assignment in during office hours.

The grade breakdown for assignments is below. Note: I reserve the right to make additions and alterations to this assessment breakdown should the need arise. Students will be informed in class and in writing prior to any changes being made.

Assignment	% grade
Homework exercises / participation	15
Copyediting and proofreading assignments	15
Comprehensive #1 (developing editing plan)	5
Comprehensive #2 (editing for style/organization)	10
Comprehensive #3: TEAM project (major edit)	15
Comprehensive #4: TEAM (prepping for translation)	5
Client project	15
Exam #1: Copyediting and terminology	10

## Exam #2: Copyediting, Proofreading, & style editing

10

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

90–100	A
80–89.9	B
70–79.9	C
60–69.9	D
59.9 and below	F

In some cases, a student may receive a "redo" on an individual assignment if that assignment does not meet the minimum requirements for that assignment. The student must then complete the assignment by an assigned deadline to receive a number grade on the assignment.

### Rounding grades up

At the end of the semester, if a student's grade is within 0.9% of the next highest letter grade, I will use the following to determine whether the grade will be rounded up:

- Student missed no more than four class periods. Student had no more than one instance of significant tardiness or early departure.
- Student attended all team meetings for group projects, including those meetings that took place during class.
- Student met all homework and assignment deadlines. All assignments were complete at the time of submission.
- Student took advantage of optional opportunities to revise or submit drafts for feedback.
- Student received positive feedback from client and/or peers regarding the *process* of collaboration (e.g., meeting deadlines, communicating frequently, participating in meetings, helping to minimize conflict)

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### Attendance

The many facets of editing can be difficult to get right on the first try. While you will

practice editing independently, the practice we will complete together as a class are essential to your success as an editor.

- If you must miss class, you are still responsible for completing assignments, homework, and in-class exercises. Submit assignments via email or dropbox, as appropriate.
- Missing a class that has been designated a "team meeting" will result in the penalty that the team has established in the team contract.
- Should you be forced to miss class for health or transportation reasons, contact me as soon as you can, so we can create alternative plans, such as adding you to the class via Zoom, scheduling alternate work from home activities, etc.
- If you are experiencing any symptoms associated with COVID-19, please stay home and arrange to get a COVID test (yes, even if you've been vaccinated!). Contact me, and I'll help you join class via Zoom until your test results have returned.

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## Deadlines

Due dates for homework and assignments are available in the course modules on D2L.

- Daily homework (work described as **Read, Complete, or Bring**) must be submitted by the beginning of class time on the date listed. Most homework assignments will receive full points if they are complete by the deadline.
- **Projects** must be submitted by the date and time listed for that assignment. Late projects will be docked 5% or 2 points, whichever is greater, each day until they are turned in.

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## Expected Conduct

This class focuses on communicating in professional settings. Just as in a workplace setting, certain types of conduct are expected. In addition to the policies pertaining to attendance and deadlines, pay attention to the following course policies:

- Class correspondence (i.e., emails you send to someone in the class, including me) should be written professionally and according to the expectations of the business world. Expect to receive feedback from me on the style, content, and organization

of your emails.

- In this course, you may need to use advanced features of common software such as Microsoft Word, web editing technologies, and other programs that may be new to you. I am always happy to give you advice and out-of-class assistance at your request, but I expect you to be willing to develop the software skills you need to complete projects effectively.
- Keep copies of all work you produce for this class, including handwritten work, as they may be useful preparation for later graded assignments. Do not store your work only on a single flash drive. If I have given you a hand-written evaluation on an assignment or activity, save that evaluation until you have received your final grade in the course. You will be allowed to consult handouts, graded assignments, and textbooks during the midterm and final exams, so keep your course materials well organized in anticipation of using them later.
- Class time is for doing work related to the course. Limit your use of email, the internet, cell phones, etc. to course-related work during class time.
- All major assignments listed on this course policy sheet must be completed in order to pass the course.
- Moving ahead into the future, professional writers and editors will need to learn to work alongside ChatGPT and other AI writing and editing programs. In order to be successful, writers and editors will need to understand AI's strengths and weakness in composing and revising text as well as much of the basic information that AI uses to compose and revise successfully. Many of those assignments are the type of public-facing texts you would use to seek a job or apply to graduate school. Given that context, the use of ChatGPT or any other AI or human ghostwriters is not appropriate for this class. Your classes are your opportunities to learn how to compete with and complete the work done by AI. For this reason, it is appropriate to use ChatGPT and other AI programs only in dialogue with the instructor. Using any AI text-generating or editing software without first consulting the instructor will be considered plagiarism.

As with any course, scholarly integrity and ethics--students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct. Violations would be reported to the Office of Student Accountability and Support. If you are in doubt of the appropriate way to identify a source, check with me before turning in the assignment. If you have any questions regarding

appropriate handling of sources, collaboration, or past work, talk with me before turning in an assignment.

If circumstances arise that may impact your ability to maintain our course policies, address the situation as you would in the workplace—professionally, courteously, and in advance.

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## Contact Information

Available on D2L under content.

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## Information for Students with Disabilities

Most accommodations may be easily met in this class. If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1210, or call (217) 581-6583 to make an appointment.

## The Student Success Center / Writing Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call (217) 581-6696, or go to McAfee Gym, Room 1336.

Students who would like assistance with writing assignments from this or any other course may go to the Writing Center. The Writing Center works with students from all disciplines, majors, and academic backgrounds at any stage of the writing process. To make an appointment, call (217) 581-5929, or go to Coleman Hall, Room 3110.

## Information for Students who May Be Struggling

If I see you struggling in the course (especially if you miss two or more classes or assignments in a row without communicating with me), I will try to contact you in person or by email to see if I can help. If I don't hear back from you, I will use the University's Early Alert system, which means your RA (if you live on campus) or someone from the Academic Success Center will try to contact you to offer help. This isn't meant to "get you in trouble," but to help you avoid trouble.

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## Writing Intensive Course

Any individual written text-based assignment of 750 words or more may be

submitted from this class to the Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP). If you choose to submit an assignment from this class to the EWP, you must do so by Thursday, December 07.