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ENG 4765-001: Professional Editing

Terri Fredrick
Eastern Illinois University

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Professional Editing

Fall 2018 | (3 credits)

Course Description

The term “editing” encompasses a range of skills, activities, and ways of thinking about writing that many professionals use in their careers. Some of you may be preparing for work as professional editors, while others may be preparing for professional careers in which being able to write and edit well will be an important part of your success.

In this 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 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 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: 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.

Required Course Materials

- Rude, Carolyn. *Technical Editing*, 5th edition (provided by TRS)
- Chicago Manual of Style, 16th 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)
- [optional] A handbook of grammar and usage--the more comprehensive, the better

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. Midway through the semester, you will submit a proposal outlining the project you plan to complete. 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

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
Practice Exercises	15
Copyediting #1 (covers Ch 4)	3
Copyediting #2 (covers Ch 4, 7–9)	5
Copyediting #3 (covers Ch 5–12)	9
Comprehensive #1 (developing editing plan)	6
Comprehensive #2 (editing for style/organization)	10
Comprehensive #3: TEAM project (major edit)	15
Comprehensive #4: TEAM (prepping for translation)	4
Exam #1: Copyediting exam	8
Client project	15
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 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)

Attendance

According to the *Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills* published by the Department of Labor, the number one reason employers cite for firing employees in their first post-collegiate jobs is absence and tardiness. Your classes, therefore, offer you an excellent opportunity to practice the professional skill of prompt attendance.

- You may use up to four days of vacation and sick time as needed. Each additional absence will reduce your semester grade by 2%.
- If you must miss a class, you are still responsible for completing homework activities, meeting assignment deadlines, and completing in-class writing assignments. Submit assignments via D2L email or dropbox, as appropriate.
- Missing a class that has been designated a "team meeting" will result in the penalty established by the team in its contract for missed meetings.
- Assignment sheets and most handouts will be available on D2L. Consult with a classmate for notes you may have missed. If there is material from the handouts or notes that you do not understand, please come to my office hours to ask questions. (Pro tip: "Can you tell me what I missed in class?" is not a good question.)

Deadlines

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

- Homework (work described as **Read, Complete, or Bring**) must be submitted by the beginning of class time on the date listed. Late work will not be accepted.
- **Projects** must be submitted by 11:59 pm on the date listed. Late projects will be docked 5% or 2 points, whichever is greater, each day until they are turned in.

Expected Conduct

This class focuses on communicating in professional settings. 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 (e.g., emails, discussion posts, text messages) should be written professionally according to the expectations of the business world. Expect to receive feedback from me on the style, content, and organization of your emails, texts, etc.
- In this course, you will need to use advanced features of common software such as Microsoft Word, and you may be asked to use programs that are new to you. I will 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. Do not store assignments 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.
- Scholarly integrity and ethics--students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. If you are in doubt of the appropriate way to identify your 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.

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.

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 Ninth Street Hall, Room 206, 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 Ninth Street Hall, Room 1302.

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.