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ENG 4765-600: Professional Editing

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Overview

Professional Editing

Spring 2020 | (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. Those of you who are teachers may find that some of the specific techniques editors use would not work well with the students you teach, but the knowledge you develop as an editor will improve your ability to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses in your students’ writing.

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 may be asked to complete more complex comprehensive editing.

Middle/high school teachers (and future teachers) will have the option to replace a couple of assignments with projects and reflections related to teaching.

Required Course Materials

Course texts:

- 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)
- A quality dictionary of your choice

Technology needs:

To complete this course successfully, you will need to have access to the following:

- **Regular access to a computer with reliable internet and speakers.**
- **D2L.** We will use a range of features, including email, discussion boards, content, and dropbox.
- **Microsoft Word--the full version:** We will use reviewing tools (e.g., track changes, compare documents), table tools, and the chart wizard.
- **Adobe Reader or Adobe Acrobat.** You will need to open and read PDFs.
- **A scanner, digital camera, or Smartphone camera.** Some assignments will have to be completed by hand to demonstrate that you can make correct print-based copyediting marks. You can then scan or photograph your completed work and send the file to me as a .PDF or .JPG.

- **A Google/Gmail Account.** We will use Google Drive to complete some team-based assignments; I will also offer video conferencing through Google Hangouts. This collaborative writing and editing software (and others like it) is increasingly used in professional and educational settings. If you do not have a Google account or do not prefer to use your regular Google/Gmail address for school-related material, you may create one specifically for this course.
- **Headphones or speakers** that can be plugged into your computer.

For some of the resources above, I will provide tutorials to help you complete tasks. Because I assume some technologies are familiar and because versions of software differ, for some tasks, you may want to use help menus and internet resources. I am happy to provide assistance in using any technologies that you struggle with. Because providing help and resources takes time, you should make requests for tutorials well in advance of assignment deadlines.

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 invest several hours per week on practice exercises and to submit 1–4 homework assignments or graded projects 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. 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 assignments: While you will work most of the practice exercises on your own, there will be some homework assignments that you will turn in for correction and/or feedback. Homework assignments will not be graded, but will receive points for completeness.

Copyediting/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, professionalism, clarity and correctness in writing.

Collaboration: Two graded assignments and several homework assignments will be completed in groups. In addition, clients will be providing feedback on students' work process as well as on the quality of the students' work. Throughout the semester, you will keep a collaboration journal (viewable only by you and the instructor) in which you will complete assigned reflections related to your collaboration. At the end of the semester, you will receive an overall grade for your collaboration based on your self-reflection, peers' and clients' evaluations, and my observations of your contributions to teamwork.

Final project: For most students, the final project will consist of work done on behalf of a client. ELA students and current teachers may choose between a client project and teaching unit:

- *Client project:* You will comprehensively edit a major document or a series of smaller documents on behalf of an assigned 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.
- *Teaching unit (ELA students and teachers only):* You will design a unit or series of activities that retools concepts from the editing course to be taught in a grade-level class of your choice. The teaching unit must align with appropriate CCSS or other relevant standards

Assessment

Copyediting and proofreading assignments will be graded based on your ability to correctly identify and correct errors and inconsistencies using standard copyediting marks. As the semester progresses, you will also be graded on your ability to avoid hypercorrection (seeing "errors" that are not actually there).

Comprehensive editing assignments will be graded holistically based on the areas of editing covered in that assignment (e.g., style, content, organization, layout/visual impact) as adapted to the audience, purpose, and context for which you are communicating. 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. To do so, students should schedule an appointment to meet with me online.

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 assignments	15
Copyediting #1 (covers Ch 4)	3
Copyediting #2 (covers Ch 4, 7–9)	6
Copyediting #3 (covers Ch 5–11)	8
Comprehensive #1 (developing editing plan)	6
Comprehensive #2 (editing for style/organization)	10
Comprehensive #3: TEAM project (major edit) [alternate project available for teachers]	15
Comprehensive #4: TEAM (prepping for translation)	2
Collaboration	10
Client project [alternate project available for teachers]	15
Final exam	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

Graded assignments earn late penalties of 5% or 2 points (whichever is greater) for every day they are late.

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 the assigned deadline to receive a number grade on the assignment.

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 met all deadlines for graded assignments. All assignments were complete at the time of submission.
- Student submitted all homework assignments.
- Student took advantage of optional opportunities to revise or submit drafts for feedback.
- Student took regular, timely advantage of opportunities for additional practice (e.g., practice exercises, optional self-assessments posted to D2L, office hour sessions with Dr. F).
- 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)

Deadlines

Homework and graded assignments will typically be due on **Sundays** at 11:59 pm. (Exceptions will be noted on each week's D2L module.) The homework assignments build on one another, and it's important that you have time to review the answers for one homework assignment before trying the next homework or a graded assignment. For this reason, please try to meet all deadlines for homework assignments, so I can evaluate the whole class at once. If you are going to be a day or so behind on a homework assignment, send me a message to let me know when to expect it and then again when you actually submit it, so I can go into the dropbox to evaluate it and/or send you the answer key.

Late projects will be docked 5% or 2 points, whichever is greater, per day until they are submitted. Remember that all graded assignments must be submitted in order to pass the course.

Expected Conduct

This class focuses on communicating effectively in professional settings. Communication within many organizations now takes place online, and this class will offer you plenty

of opportunity to practice. Participation looks different in an online environment than a face-to-face environment, but active, positive interaction remains an important part of successful classes and professional organizations. To that end, I direct your attention to the following course policies:

- Meet deadlines established for the course, by your client, and by your team.
- Log into D2L at regular intervals (at least four times per week) to see if there are emails, discussion board posts, or assignment feedback that you should respond to. (You may also choose to have email notifications sent to your regular email every time someone contacts you through D2L mail.)
- Write all class correspondence (e.g., emails, discussion posts, text messages) professionally according to the expectations of the business world. Expect to receive feedback from me on the style, tone, content, and organization of your emails, texts, discussion board posts, etc.
- Communicate regularly with teammates, clients, and me. When receiving a message that you cannot address substantively at this time, send an acknowledgment that you have received the message and indicating when you will respond substantively.
- In this course, you may need to use advanced features of common software such as Microsoft Word and Google Drive, and you may be asked to use programs that are new to you. I will provide links to tutorials 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.
- All major assignments listed in the table above 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.

Contact Information

My contact information is available on the front page of our course under News.

Writing-Centered Course

[Undergraduates only] 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, April 25.

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 meet online or face-to-face with a Writing Center consultant. The Writing Center works with students from all disciplines, majors, and academic backgrounds at any stage of the writing process. To make an appointment for a face-to-face or Skype session, call (217) 581-5929, or go to Coleman Hall, Room 3110.
