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ENG 4765-001: Professional Editing

Tim Taylor
Eastern Illinois University

Recommended Citation

ENG 4765/4765Z-001 Course Policy
Professional Editing
11 am MWF, 3210 & 3130 Coleman Hall

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"Great writing is created in revision—rethinking, rewriting, adding, subtracting, repositioning, editing. In effect, fine writing is born in change."
-Ralph Wahlstrom, The Tao of Writing

"Having to say something is a very different matter from having something to say."
-John Dewey, How We Think

Texts
- *Technical Editing*, 5th edition, Rude & Eaton
- Materials distributed via email and D2L
- A quality dictionary
- A writing handbook

Course Description
Advanced practice and theory in professional editing, including copyediting and comprehensive editing. Focus on working effectively with writers, publishers, and audiences. Discussion of the production process and the role of technology in editing and information design.

Student Learning Objectives
Editing refers to the range of tasks you may be asked to complete in your professional career (even if you work primarily as a writer rather than editor). We will practice two types of editing in this course:
- **Copyediting** involves 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.

Professional editors must be aware that editing is not based on intuition. Strong editing is a result of expertise in the areas of grammar, punctuation, spelling, style, and organization. For this reason, we will use professional terminology; field-specific copyediting marks; and conventions of grammar, style, and organization in this course. In addition, the most effective editing addresses a rhetorical situation even when those needs violate the "rules." Several times during the semester, you be asked to edit for specific purposes and audiences.

A second challenge is that editors work with texts they have not written. Initially, working with another writer's text may be challenging for those used to the individual model of writing typically associated with higher education. Editors must learn how to create positive and significant changes to a document while respecting and sustaining the writer's sense of ownership.

The specific objectives for the course are as follows:
- Develop 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
- Develop effective strategies for working with writers and clients

Success in this course includes (1) finding your own creative ways to make topics and assignments personally interesting—especially if your first instinct is to label them "boring" or "too hard," (2) believing that you have something worthwhile to say, and (3) expressing it after you've debated/ pondered/ listened/ read/ explored beyond the surface.

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:
- You will write a scholarly research paper at the end of the semester
- You will be asked to work with a more complex website during the website analysis assignment.

Course Requirements
This course involves a great deal of daily work to give you practice as an editor. Besides the mid-term and final exams, here are the course's other major components and course assignments.

Participation, Homework, & Quizzes
Throughout the semester, you will complete textbook exercises, which we will then go over in class. They will not be graded, but you will receive points for completeness. You should also expect unannounced quizzes over reading material.

Précis—Response Memos
Over the semester, you will be asked to read two academic or theoretical articles about editing. For each, you will write a detailed summary of the article followed by informed commentary and critical questions about the article. The memos should reflect critical thinking and a questioning mind. Evaluation criteria: ability to summarize sources, quality of critical thinking and/or argument, command of scholarly writing, effective self-editing

Copyediting/Style Editing Assignments
You will do line-by-line editing of four 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 two documents for content, organization, style, and design. *Evaluation criteria*: ability to identify and edit for comprehensive issues, ability to work effectively with writers, professionalism, clarity and correctness in writing.

Website Analysis Memo
You will be assigned to analyze a website for content, organization, style, and design. You will write a memo to the organization suggesting revisions. *Evaluation criteria*: ability to identify and edit websites effectively, clarity and correctness in writing, professionalism.

Client Project
You will 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

Research Paper [grad students only]
Drawing on scholarly sources, you will write a 5–8 page academic paper on a topic in the field of editing or publishing. *Evaluation criteria*: ability to identify and synthesize sources, quality and coherence of argument, command of scholarly writing, effective self-editing

Your Instructor
If you are having any trouble with the material covered in this course, or if you simply want reassurance that you are on the right track, please do not hesitate to talk with me. Many times a short visit to go over a paper or to clarify a concept can save you time in the long run and improve your chances of success in this course. In addition to being in my office during posted hours, I can also make arrangements to meet at other times to better accommodate your schedule.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Attendance, Late Work Policy, and Expectations
Students are expected to attend every class. However, as detailed in the EIU Undergraduate Catalog, "properly verified absences due to illness, emergency, or participation in an official University activity" are recognized. When an absence is unavoidable, students are responsible for acquiring missed course materials and the information supplied in class (sickness or emergency), submitting an assignment at a time in accordance with the instructor (University activity), or using one of their late assignment opportunities (sickness, emergency, or University activity).

However, lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part.

You have the opportunity to use one extension in order to submit a late assignment of your choosing. If you want an extension to be granted, you must communicate with me about your situation prior to the class time that the assignment is due. This can be done by a phone conversation, an exchange of emails, or talking with me in his office. Unless it's an extreme situation, I will typically grant an extension of a day or two for late assignments.

I do not have an attendance policy that reduces students' overall grades based on absences. But keep in mind that this course is a class about professional editing, one where students "learn by doing" (see John Dewey's educational philosophy), so if excessive absences happen (five or more absences is excessive to me), those days missed are usually reflected in the quality of work produced by a student, and they also affect a student's participation grade.

Using the Writing Center
I encourage you to use EIU's Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free service provides one-to-one conferences with writing center consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, and documenting your papers. The writing center is open to help any student from any major at any stage of his or her writing process, and its system of one-to-one conferences demonstrates value and respect for individual writers, all of whom can benefit from feedback about their works in progress.

To schedule an appointment, you can drop by the center (3110 Coleman Hall) or you can call 581-5929. The writing center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. On Friday hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Consulting sessions last anywhere from 10 to 40 minutes.

A Note about Professionalism
Unless otherwise indicated, all class work must be typed. If an assignment isn't typed, we will not accept it.

Email Policy
I welcome emails if you have questions or concerns about your work in this class. However, I expect you to write emails in a professional manner—not like you are texting a friend. Emailing in a professional manner will help you with other professors and also give you practice in effective communication.

If you want to send either of us an email, follow the guidelines below. Emails should:
- Have a clear and concise subject line that provides gist of the email, such "Absent This Friday" or "Question about Revision" or "Availability for a Meeting?"
- Begin with a formal address, such as "Dr. Taylor:" or "Dear Dr. Taylor:"
- Use a respectful tone
- Provide questions or information in an succinct manner
- Use paragraph breaks for reading ease and strong organization

- Be edited and proofread effectively so as not to cause confusion
- Refrain from using abbreviations or "text-prose"
- Close with a short statement followed by a comma and your name, such as "Thanks for your time," or "Sincerely," or "Have a good weekend,"

If an email does not follow these guidelines, I will simply reply to the email with this message: "Please resend this email once it's been revised to fit the standards of a professional email. See pages 4-5 of my course policy."

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Here is the official statement on plagiarism by the EIU English Department: "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources."

In this class, if a student is found to have plagiarized in a paper, the paper will earn a zero for the assignment, and I will report the occurrence to the EIU Office of Student Standards.

Generally, if you have to have a source before your eyes as you write, you need to copy it accurately, put quotation marks around it, and acknowledge your source. If you are paraphrasing information from a source, you need to use an introductory phrase and properly cite what page or paragraph (if it's online) the information is located.

For further clarification, on the next page is an explanation of plagiarism from my previous department that details this important concept:

Plagiarism

To present someone else's work or ideas as one's own is plagiarism. A student can commit in these ways:
- Copying, word for word, someone else's writing without putting that passage in quotation marks and identifying the source.
- Taking someone else's writing, changing some of the words, and not identifying the source;
- Taking someone else's ideas or organization of ideas, putting them into his/her own words and not identifying the source;
- Having someone else change the student's writing—a tutor, friend, or relative, for instance—and creating the impression that this is the student's own work; or
- Purchasing or downloading papers or passages from the Web.

A Social Contract of Honesty
In this class, there is a social contract between the instructor and students that the work submitted will be the students' own documents, not someone else's work. To put it simply, do your own writing.

Class Conduct
Our classroom community demands good manners, careful listening, respect for diverse backgrounds and opinions, and equal time for everyone who wants to share his or her perspective.

I expect students to act in a mature and collegial manner. You should come to class having read the material, eager to participate, and ready to write.

Guidelines to Abide by in Any College Course:
1. Come to class on time and stay the entire period.
2. Bring texts, paper, and writing utensils.
3. When we discuss a reading or writing assignment, have the materials in front of you.
4. When we are doing in-class writing, be prepared to actively brainstorm, draft, and compose your ideas.
5. Have opinions and ideas and support your opinions and ideas with details and examples.
6. Play well with others by respecting others' opinions and being open to them.
7. Actively help your peers in collaborative activities like peer review.
8 When working in a group, stay on assigned tasks.
9. Do not carry on side conversations with other students when the instructor or a student has the floor during class.
10. General rudeness and disrespect is not tolerated.
11. Cell phones need to be turned off and put away.
12. Text messaging is not tolerated.
13. No profanity.
14. No sleeping. If you do, I will ask you to leave.
15. Unless it's an emergency, use the restroom before or after class.

If you have concerns about this list or any other aspect of the class, please arrange to discuss the matter with us during office hours. Similarly, if circumstances arise that will impact your performance in this class, let us know as soon as possible.

Academic integrity
Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Students with Disabilities
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

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) 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 1301.

Composition of the Overall Grade
(all assignments and point totals are *tentative*)

Participation & Exercises 100 points
  Participation: Discussion, in-class writing, small group work, informal
  presentations, homework exercises due and checked during class time

Quizzes tbd

Writing Assignments 120 (240)
        Memo of Introduction 10
        Précis—Response Memos 2 x 20
        Website Analysis Memo 50
        Project Proposal 20
        Research Paper Prospectus (grad only) 20
        Research Paper (grad only) 100

Editing Assignments 500
        Copyediting/Style Editing Assignments 300
        Comprehensive Editing Assignments 200

Mid-Term Exam 100

Client Project 100

Final Exam 100

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                                              1020 (1140) points + tbd

Overall Grading Scale:
                100-90% = A   69-60 = D
                89-80 = B   59 and below = F
                79-70 = C

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All assignments and due dates are *tentative*

= Article

Week 1

M 8/23	Introductions and Introduction to the Course
W 8/25	Ch. 1 & 4
	Do Ch. 4, Ex. 2
	Memo of Introduction due
F 8/27	Ch. 2 & 7
	Ch. 7 exercises

Week 2

M 8/30	Ch. 8 & 9
	Copyediting/Style Editing Assignment 1 due
W 9/1	Ch. 3
	#Rosenberg, "Editing Effectively"
F 9/3	Ch. 10
	#Kolln, Chapter 1: The Structure of Sentences & Chapter 11: Word Classes
	Ch. 10 exercises

Week 3

M 9/6	Labor Day—No Class
W 9/8	Ch. 11
	Ch. 11 exercises
F 9/10	#Leonard & Gilsdorf, "Language in Change"
	#Cook, "Loose, Baggy Sentences"
	Ch. 11 exercises

Week 4

M 9/13	More Ch. 11
	Copyediting/Style Editing Assignment 2 due
W 9/15	Ch. 5 (66-71) & 6
F 9/17	Work on Assignment 11.1

Week 5

M 9/20	More Ch. 11
	Ch. 12
	Ch. 12 exercises
W 9/22	TBD
	Copyediting/Style Editing Assignment 3 due
F 9/24	TBD

Week 6

M 9/27	Mid-Term Exam

W 9/29	Mid-Term Exam
F 10/1	TBD

Week 7
M 10/4	Ch. 14 & 15
W 10/6	Ch. 15 exercises
	Précis—Response Memo 1 due
F 10/8	Exercises

Week 8
M 10/11	Ch. 16
	Ch. 16 exercises
W 10/13	More on Style
	Ch. 16 exercises
	Anonymous Mid-Term Feedback
F 10/15	Fall Break—No Class

Week 9
M 10/18	TBD
W 10/20	Intro of Comprehensive Editing Assignment
F 10/22	TBD
	Précis—Response Memo 2 due

Week 10
M 10/25	Ch. 17
	Ch. 17 exercises
W 10/27	More on Organization
	Ch. 17 exercises
F 10/29	Ch. 18
	Ch. 18 exercises

Week 11
M 11/1	Work on Client Project
	Copyediting/Style Assignment 4 due
W 11/3	Ch. 19
	Ch. 19 exercises
	Project Editing Plan due
F 11/5	TBD
	Research Paper Prospectus due (grad students only)

Week 12
M 11/8	Conferences
W 11/10	Work on Client Project
	Website Analysis Memo due
F 11/12	Work on Client Project

Week 13
M 11/15   TBD
W 11/17   Work on Client Project
F 11/19   **Comprehensive Editing Assignment 1 due**

Thanksgiving Break

Week 14
M 11/29   Work on Client Project
W 12/1   Ch. 13
               Ch. 13 exercises
               Client Project due
F 12/3   Review for Final Exam

Week 15
M 12/6   Review for Final Exam
W 12/8   Review for Final Exam
               Comprehensive Editing Assignment 2 due
F 12/10   Review for Final Exam

W 12/15—10:15am-12:15 pm: Final Exam & Research Paper due (grad students only)