Editing – Summer 2013
Journalism 61-224
Online

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Introduction:

Welcome to your summer editing class. This will likely be different than most other journalism courses you've taken to this point for two reasons. First, you will be writing less and working more to improve other people's writing. Second, this will be a course presented entirely online, so we will have no face-to-face contact. (Those of you who have taken courses from me before can figure out for yourselves if this is a blessing or a curse.) All of the lectures, material, assignments and discussions will be online.

One of the things I'd like to stress is that this is likely a new experience for most of you, thus, we'll be working together to improve the course over the next four weeks. If something is working well, I need to know that. If something is failing horribly, I need to know that too. If you can't get something to work or you can't find something online or something is broken, I really need to know that. In order to make sure that you get the most out of this experience, you need to let me know what is going on with you. The quieter you are, the worse things are going to be.

Required materials:

- "The Journalist's Handbook for Online Editing" by Kenneth L. Rosenauer
- Associated Press Style Book , 2012 or 2013 edition (If you'd like, you can get an online subscription, which includes search functions and "ask the editor" options for about the same cost. Check out http://www.apstylebook.com/ for more details)
- Access to Adobe InDesign (If you don't own the program, you can get a free month trial here: http://www.adobe.com/downloads/ and that should cover you for the class. Otherwise, the labs on campus are open during the summer.)
- Access to the Internet on at least a weekly basis

Purpose of the course:

Editing has several purposes. Small bits of cleaning for style and consistency can help readers feel more comfortable with the material they read. Larger bits of analysis can help you find and plug holes, check facts and make sure the piece is fair and valuable. Sharing thoughts with a writer and coaching him or her can help a story develop and grow. In addition, you might be asked to cut stories, design pages, write headlines, provide captions and more. The role you take in a media operation will determine to what degree you'll be doing these things or different tasks.

For this class, you'll be doing medley of tasks with the idea that there isn't a perfect way to edit. Absolutists who abide by the stylebook, the dictionary and the rules of grammar have the potential to sap a story of all of its voice and feel. However, more liberal editors who attempt to let emotion and flow rule a story will likely see the piece felled by a series of costly errors that chip away at the writer's credibility. To that end, editing is a mix of classical music and jazz, the combination of structure and feel.

Many of the examples for this class will come from newspapers or from news websites. However, you need to realize that this is not a course for newspaper editors only. The skills you attain here can be applied to almost any field in which writing, communicating, evaluating material and critical thinking are valued. Don't miss an opportunity to learn something of value because you think it doesn't apply to you.

By the time you're done with this class you should be able to:

* Make efficient use of the Associated Press Stylebook and other important reference works.
* Demonstrate an ability to evaluate and improve the copy of others by examining it for inaccuracies, missing content, poor word choice, spelling errors, grammar trouble, structure problems and other issues.
* Rewrite leads to improve flow, structure and news value
* Rework and trim copy to improve flow, structure and news value
* Recognize potentially libelous, unsubstantiated or imbalanced stories
* Craft accurate, strong and interesting headlines
* Make informed choices regarding photo selection, sizing and cropping
* Write photo captions, graphic chatter, refer boxes and other minor text elements
* Address issues of multiculturalism and understand the value of diversity in news coverage
* Understand the rudiments of design and demonstrate some basic design skills
* Work in various media, including newspaper, magazine and online

Grading

The grades in this class aren't nearly as important as what you learn and how you progress as a writer and reporter. If you make this all about the grades, you will deprive yourself of a great opportunity to learn these skills and you will be kicking yourself later in life. As for getting out of here alive, the department and the university set the standards. **Students must earn at least a "C" to continue in the major or the minor.**

Don't panic about bombing out. I have found that students who operate that way often find themselves the victims of self-fulfilling prophecies.

Official course grades:

A	**100-91**	**C**	**78-71**
A-	**90-89**	**C-**	**70**
B+	**88**	**D+**	**69**
B	**87-81**	**D**	**68-61**
B-	**80**	**D-**	**60**
C+	**79**	**F**	**59-0**

Assignments:

Here's the breakdown of what you'll be doing and what you'll be graded on:

Quizzes: 10 percent
These will mostly involve micro-editing issues such as grammar, style and punctuation. These also will draw from the material you are expected to read. Over the four weeks, expect one to two of these each week.

Exams: 45 percent
These will be a mix of macro editing and micro editing. They could include short answers, essays or other various items as well. The material in these will come from the lectures, texts and "discussions" we will have. Expect one of these in each of the first three weeks.

Assignments: 20 percent
These assignments will include various homework items based on the material we will be going through. Things such as headline writing, cutline writing, photo selection, story trimming and more will go into this. Over the four weeks, expect one to two of these per week.

Final Project: 15 percent
This project will require you to combine the skills of this class into one large project. This will be the majority of the work in your final week. We'll talk more about this nearer to the start of the third week.

Participation: 10 percent
In order to keep you attuned to the issues that your colleagues might be having with the course or with the material, we will host a discussion board via D2L. Each week, you will be expected to make one post of your own and respond to one other person's post. The completion of this task with a post and response of some quality (as in not just saying, "Yeah, I agree with this post.") will help all of us feel connected to the course and each other. It's also a slam-dunk way to get 10 percent of an "A" in the class, so don't blow it.

How this class will work:

The question of how best to run an online course is one that has been the topic of many discussions by academics. If you meter out the course too slowly, it's just as inconvenient as if you had to show up for a daily meeting. If you let it all out too quickly, some people will tear through the course and fail miserably while others will wait until the last minute and try to wedge it all in at the end.

To make this course something we can all learn from and to allow us to all work at a decent pace, the course will be released in four modules, one for each week. The module will consist of lectures, notes, examples, quizzes, assignments and tests for that week. The material will be available on the first day of that week (Monday, possibly Sunday if I'm ahead of the game). You are then expected to complete the tasks at hand no later than the end of that week (Friday at noon, so I can use Saturday to grade and get you some feedback). Then, on Sunday or Monday, the next chunk of material will be released to you and we start the process all over again. The only time this won't be the case is with the final project, which will be released to you earlier.

If things feel like they're running you over or if you feel that something isn't working right, make sure you get in touch with me right away and we'll see what we can do to fix that. The goal here is to get you a valuable experience and important information while still allowing you flexibility in how and when you learn. If that's not happening, I need to know.

Statement for Students With Special Needs

The university's policies regarding disability will be followed here. Contact the dean of students at 424-3100 or head to the web at: http://www.uwosh.edu/dean/disabilities.htm for information. The university and I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate students with disabilities.

Policy on Academic Misconduct

Cheating and plagiarism are prohibited. Whatever you do for this class must be done on your own, unless expressly noted by your instructor. You'll note that journalistic credibility has taken a beating over the past few years and that trust isn't a boomerang: once you throw it away, it doesn't come back. The best place to start holding yourself to a decent ethical code is right here and right now. Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarizing and cheating, is a death knell for your program and your career as a journalist. The best way to make sure you aren't messing up is to ask me in advance of doing whatever it is you think might be problematic. If you don't and you get caught, the university will deal with you and that can range from probation to expulsion. The university website contains a list of procedures regarding dishonesty. I will follow those procedures.

Schedule:

Here is a breakdown of what you'll be getting each week so that you can better prepare. Some of these sections will account for more than one lecture.

REMEMBER: DEADLINES FOR YOUR HOMEWORK, QUIZZES AND TESTS ARE SET FOR NOON ON FRIDAY OF EACH WEEK.

Week 1

Introduction: Welcome to the course
Readings: Chapter 1- Online Storytelling
Lecture: Intro

Why do we edit?
- The changing role of editors
- The inherent value of editing
- What do editors do?
- Various editing positions
- Understanding the underlying assumptions of editing

Readings: Chapters 2 and 3 (Online Editors, Online Audiences)
Lecture: Why edit?
Quiz: Chapters 1, 2 & 3 plus lectures

Editing as management
- Process integration
- Assigning stories
- Preparing reporters
- Working with writers
- Leading a newsroom focus
Lecture: Edit Process

Micro-Editing
- Grammar rules
- AP Style issues
- Tightening
- Sentence clarity and sentence structure
Readings: Chapters 10 & 11 (Punctuation and Usage; Style)
Lectures: Micro Editing 1, Micro Editing 2, Micro Editing 3
Quiz: Grammar Quiz 1
Assignment: AP Style fixes
Assignment: Tightening, clarity and redundancies

EXAM: Test 1, Part 1 is in the "Quizzes" section. Test 1, Part 2 is in the "Content" section under tests. A study guide is also in the "Content" section of your D2L.

Week 2
Fact checking
- Errors of commission
- Errors of omission
- Errors of common sense
- Internal errors
- Folklore and myth
Lecture: Fact Check
Quiz: Grammar Quiz 2

Macro-Editing
- Working on leads
- Organization, pace and flow
- Filling holes in stories
- Story value
- Cutting stories
Readings: Chapters 8 & 9 (Making Copy Right; Making Copy Sing)
Lecture: Macro Editing
Assignment: The macro edit.

Legal and Ethical issues
- Accuracy

- Objectivity
- Libel issues
- Obscenity
- Anonymous sources
- Sensitivity

Quiz: Law and Ethics
Readings: Chapters 16 & 17 (Law and the Online Editor; Online Ethics)
Lectures: Law; Ethics
Assignment: Accident Photos

EXAM: Test 2, Part 1 is in the "Quizzes" section. Test 2, Part 2 is in the "Content" section under tests. A study guide is also in the "Content" section of your D2L.

Week 3

Headlines, cutlines, blurbs and more
- Headlines for print, web and magazine
- Writing cutlines
- Graphics chatter
- Bocas
- Blurbs
Quiz: Headlines
Readings: Chapter 12 (Headlines)
Assignment: Headlines, cutlines and more

Visual aspects of editing
- Photos
- Graphics
- Boxes
- Illustrations
- Type attacks
- Typefaces and type terms
Readings: Chapters 5 & 6 (Photographs, Galleries, Slideshows and Captions; Graphics, Blurbs and Boxes)
Lecture: Visual Editing

Week 3 (cont.)
Design and various media
- Intro to InDesign
- Show, don't tell
- Modular design
- Designs with flair
Quiz: Visuals Quiz
Readings: Chapter 14 (Design for the Web)
Assignment: Design Assignment

EXAM: Test 3, Part 1 is in the "Quizzes" section. Test 3, Part 2 is in the "Content" section under tests. A study guide is also in the "Content" section of your D2L.

Week 4
Web Editing and Social Media
- Links and layers
- Issues of credibility
- Understanding various story types on the web
- Editing for length and substance
- Visuals and video
Readings: Chapter 13 (Social Media and Linked Material)
Lecture: Web Edit
Quiz: All about the web

A final look at editing
- Editors as coaches
- Editors as collaborators
- More on editing and editors
Lecture: NONE

Wrap up: What else do you want to know?
(This will be a podcast lecture and such based on what you would like to see.)
Readings: NONE
Lecture: You Pick Podcast
Assignment: Essay
Assignment: Final Project