

NEWS *editing*

MCOM358

Fall 2005

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Course description

Practice in editing and headline writing for print and online media. Prerequisite: MCOM255.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course the student should be able to:

- 1) edit copy accurately according to accepted editing principles and practices.
- 2) write effective headlines.
- 3) select news and feature stories for publication by objective standards.
- 4) apply ethical criteria to newsworthy information.
- 5) examine articles for legal problems and correct such problems.

Class Meetings

This class meets Monday and Wednesday from 11 a.m. until 12:15 (section 001) and 2 to 3:15 p.m (section 002). Attendance is expected. An editing assignment may be given on any day, with no prior warning.

Homework assignments are due at the BEGINNING of class. An assignment handed in after that is LATE! Late homework assignments and missed in-class assignments will be accepted ONLY when the following two conditions are met:

- 1) The material was missed or late because of a verifiable medical problem. It is your responsibility to produce written verification of the medical problem (e.g., receipt from doctor's visit). One exception: For short-term medical problems that do not result in a visit to a doctor, you must alert me BEFORE the class you will miss, via e-mail or telephone. **PLEASE DO NOT come to class sick.** A family emergency is NOT considered a medical problem.
- 2) All missed homework must be handed in no later than the beginning of the first class period after the absence, and all missed in-class assignments must be made up BEFORE the

next class period. The progression of assignments in this class makes this condition an absolute.

Keep copies of all homework assignments. Except for copyediting assignments, homework **MUST** be typed. All classwork must be done in PENCIL.

All in-class and homework assignments are to be done individually. **Any collaboration will result in failure of this course.**

There is no extra credit work available in this class, but I will be happy to provide extra practice exercises.

Course Content

This class will typically consist of lecture and lab. You are free to use your stylebook and dictionary on all in-class assignments, as well as to ask questions of the instructor **ONLY**.

Grading

Assignments in this class are not graded. Instead, you will receive a numerical score on each assignment corresponding to how many errors you missed or created in editing it. Assignments early in the semester count for fewer points than those later in the semester.

Your final grade is based on the total number of points you earn on all the assignments versus the total class average. To help students get the highest grade possible, for each exercise I calculate both the ideal average (75 percent of total possible points) and the actual class average. In determining the total class average, I add the lower of the two average scores for each assignment.

Required Resources

Editing for Clear Communication (second edition) Make sure you get a NEW copy! Used copies may not have all the pages we will be using. If you don't have the pages, you won't be able to do the work – and **you'll get a zero.**

AP Stylebook;

Dictionary (Webster's New World is best);

One USB thumb drive (128 megabyte or more)

Pencils and a LARGE eraser.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK OF

- 8/29 Introduction to the course
Chapter 1: Editing in the Age of Information
Grammar School: Using a Stylebook
- 9/5 Using a Stylebook part 2 (no class 9/5)
- 9/12 Chapter 2: Tailoring Your Material
Grammar School: Spelling
- 9/19 Chapter 3: Looking for Holes and Other Problems
Grammar School: Sentences, Phrases and Clauses
- 9/26 Chapter 4: Checking Facts
Grammar School: Misplaced Modifiers
- 10/3 Chapter 5: Legal Issues
Grammar School: Punctuation
- 10/10 Legal problems part 2
- 10/17 Chapter 6: Establishing an Ethical Foundation
Grammar School: Making Words Match
- 10/24 Chapter 7: Sensitivity and Taste
Grammar School: Using Quotes
- 10/31 Chapter 9: Handling Headlines
Grammar School: Verbosity
- 11/7 Headlines part 2
Grammar School: Clarity
- 11/14 Chapter 10: Graphics and Media Design
- 11/21 Graphics and Media Design (part 2) (no class 11/23)
- 11/28 Web Publishing
- 12/5 Web Publishing (part 2)

