

FACULTY of LIBERAL ARTS and PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Writing Department

Professional Writing Program

Course: PRWR 2006 — Fundamentals of Editing [3 credits]

Term: Fall 2023 // Location: Online

Prerequisite / Co-requisite: None

Course Instructor: Dr. Matt Bucemi [mbucemi@yorku.ca]

Time: Fridays, 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Office Hours: Please email me and we can make an appointment to chat!

Office Location: Ross S309

Expanded Course Description

The course is designed to introduce students to the task of editing as it relates to publications of all kinds: research, essays, books, etc. Students will learn how the three Cs—correctness, consistency, and clarity—apply to editing, and how to be effective editors of meaningful content. As part of this process, they will refine their knowledge of grammar, punctuation, and usage.

Students will also be introduced to professional standards in the industry and will learn how to get paid for their skills. In addition, students will discover the importance of editorial style, how to give and receive feedback, and how to apply what they know about editing to their own work.

Organization of the Course

The course involves a combination of formal lectures, discussion, and practice. The lectures are designed to foster language analysis and to familiarize students with the tools, guidelines, standards, and issues that will be central to their work as editors. The discussion and practice components provide students with an opportunity to apply and examine the material.

Course Learning Objectives

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the task of editing by enabling them to identify foundational and more complex problems of grammar, punctuation, usage, style, and mechanics and then to apply professional editorial standards in the correction of such problems.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- identify problems in grammar, punctuation, and usage in preparation for the task of professional copy editing;
- apply knowledge of grammar, punctuation, and usage to create correct, concise, and print-ready copy in the task of professional editing;
- select the appropriate reference resources for resolving typical editorial problems;

- develop a style sheet for recording variable rules and decisions in the editing process; and
- discuss basic concepts of typography and layout as they relate to key editorial issues and standards.

Recommended Course Texts/Readings

These books are free downloads from our eClass page:

- *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, 4th Edition, by Amy Einsohn and Marilyn Schwartz
- *The Canadian Style* by Dundurn Press

Some additional readings will be assigned or recommended during the course.

Late Policy

I will accept late work from students without a penalty, with an important condition: let me know about any issues that you have with an assignment at least five days in advance. We will plan out an alternate day and time to turn in your work. Otherwise, late assignments will receive a deduction of 10% for each day that the assignment is late.

Accessibility at York

I'm 100% committed to making sure that the course is accessible for all students. York's goal is to provide an accessible and welcoming environment for faculty, staff, students, and visitors, both on campus and online. Please visit <https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/> for more information on York's diversity policies. Please let me know if there's anything that I can do to assist you or if there is any important information that I need to know.

Evaluation

The final grade for the course will be based on the following items, weighted as indicated:

Editing Practice (3 at 5% each) — 15%

In-Class Exercises — 10%

Bias Review — 10%

Social Media Rewrite — 10%

Style Sheet Project — 15%

Full Chapter Edit — 20%

Final Project — 20%

Note: All assignments and tests will be returned to students **one to two weeks** after due dates and/or submission dates.

Drop deadline (last date to drop a course without receiving a grade): November 8

SCHEDULE

Week 1 (September 8)

Welcome!

- Introduction
- Syllabus review
- What is editing and what does an editor do?

Copy Editing

- The basics of copy editing
- Watching out for typos and mistakes
- Canadian spelling, permissions, other duties
- You're the last line of defense!

In-class exercise: Copy editing practice

Recommended Readings

CEH, Ch. 1, What Copy Editors Do

Week 2 (September 15)

Editing Mechanics: Part 1

- Standard punctuation + terminal punctuation
- Clauses
- Run-on sentences

Queries

- How and why to ask questions
- Tone and meaning
- Understanding and interrogating style choices

In-class exercise: *Guns, Germs & Steel* + *Ulysses*

Editing Practice 1: Canadian spelling due

Recommended Readings

CEH, Ch. 4, from Conventions to Function 2

CEH, Ch. 5, Spelling and Hyphenation

Week 3 (September 22)

Editing Mechanics: Part 2

- Capitalization, abbreviations, measurements
- Dates, names, places
- Sources and references

Biased Language

- Word usage
- The need for inclusivity
- When to push back and when to leave as-is

In-class exercise: Begin Editing Practice 2 in class and review first paragraph

Recommended Readings

CEH, Ch. 6, Capitalization

CEH, Ch. 3, Reference Books and Resources

CEH, Ch. 15, Beyond Grammar (just read the Bias-Free Language section)

["How We Talk About Homelessness Is Finally Changing"](#)

Week 4 (September 29)

Deep Editing

- The basics of deep editing
- Helping someone build an argument
- Sense and structure

Feedback

- Giving feedback/receiving feedback
- Receiving feedback
- How to do a helpful critique

In-class exercise: *Miss World 1970* deep editing

Editing Practice 2: Copy editing due

Week 5 (October 6)

Style Guides and Style Sheets

- Why you need to follow your client's house style
- How to edit a document by using a style guide
- Preparing a style sheet

- Crafting an editorial letter

In-class exercise: Canadian Press Style Guide practice

Student check-in

Editing Practice 3: Argument feedback due

Recommended Readings

CEH, Ch. 2, Basic Procedures (just read the Style Sheets and Cleanup section)

Week 6 (October 13)

Fall reading week: have a good break!

Week 7 (October 20)

Editing for Wide Publication

- The publishing industry
- Fiction and non-fiction
- Audience and context

Social Media

- Engagement and audience
- Efficiency and excitement
- Going viral

In-class exercise: Social media rewrite

Bias Review project due

Week 8 (October 27)

Publication Focus: Magazines and Newspapers

- Editing as a team
- House style
- Keeping content relevant and current
- Headlines

In-class exercise: Headline editing

Work on homework projects in class

Week 9 (November 3)

Publication Focus: Fiction

- Thinking outside the box: how fiction breaks the rules
- Acquiring manuscripts
- Trade fiction
- Literary fiction

In-class exercise: Acquisitions/editorial pitches

Work on homework projects in class

Style Sheet Project due

Week 10 (November 10)

Beyond Grammar

- The cadence and rhythm of words
- Word variety
- Monotony and redundancy

Design and Style

- Typesetting
- Fonts
- Graphs and charts

In-class exercise: Typeset manuscript corrections

Recommended Readings

CEH, Ch. 15, Beyond Grammar (just read the Organization and Expository Style sections)

Week 11 (November 17)

Student check-in and conferences

Social Media Rewrite due

Week 12 (November 24)

Getting Paid

- Finding a gig
- Editorial standards
- Certifications

Editing and the Law

- Libel and obscenity
- Privacy
- Copyright

In-class exercise: Job application/resume review

Recommended Readings

CEH, Ch. 15, Beyond Grammar (just read the Publishing Law section)

Full Chapter Edit due

Week 13 (December 1)

Final Project review and presentation

Final Project due