FACULTY of LIBERAL ARTS and PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Writing Department

Professional Writing Program

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

Term: Winter 2024 // Location: Stong College 303

Prerequisite / Co-requisite: None

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

Time: Tuesdays, 2:30 PM to 5:30 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 and apply knowledge of grammar, punctuation, and usage in preparation for the task of professional copy 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**

**This book is a free download from our eClass page:**

• *The Copyeditor’s Handbook*, 4th Edition, by Amy Einsohn and Marilyn Schwartz

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 1 — 5%

Editing Practice 2 — 5%

Editing Practice 3 — 10%

Bias Review and Edit — 10%

Social Media Review and Edit — 10%

Style Sheet/Style Guide Project — 20%

Full Chapter Edit — 20%

*Dungeons & Dragons* Team Edit – 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): March 11**

**SCHEDULE**

Week 1 (January 9)

**Welcome!**

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

**Introduction to Copy Editing**

* What is the copy edit stage and what do you need to do?

**Copy Editing: Details**

* Spelling style
* Correct usage for headings/numbers
* Logical issues (history, cohesion, etc.)

In-class exercise: Logic and inconsistencies

**Recommended Readings**

*CEH*, Ch. 1, What Copy Editors Do

*CEH*, Ch. 4, from Conventions to Function 2

*CEH*, Ch. 5, Spelling and Hyphenation

Week 2 (January 16)

**Copy Editing: Mechanics**

* Correct usage for specific punctuation marks
* Correct usage for capitalization, numbers, brand names
* How punctuation and conjunctions improve readerly flow

**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. 6, Capitalization

*CEH*, Ch. 8, Numbers and Numerals

*CEH*, Ch. 5, Quotations

*CEH*, Ch. 9, Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols

Week 3 (January 23)

**Copy Editing: Legal**

* Libel and obscenity
* Privacy
* Copyright

**Biased Language**

* What does bias mean in an editorial context?
* Inclusivity and how to avoid alienating readers
* When to push back, when to leave as-is

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

**Recommended Readings**

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

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

[“How We Talk About Homelessness Is Finally Changing"](https://archive.curbed.com/2020/6/11/21273455/homeless-people-definition-copy-editing)

Week 4 (January 30)

**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

**Giving Feedback**

* What does your client need to hear?
* Tone and approach
* How to accept feedback as an editor and writer

In-class exercise: Canadian Press Style Guide practice

**Editing Practice 2: Copy editing mechanics due**

**Recommended Readings**

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

*CEH*, Ch. 3, Reference Books and Resources

Week 5 (February 6)

**Proofreading**

* Checking that copy edits have been made correctly
* Comparing typeset manuscript to original document
* Correcting/querying errors in the layout and presentation

**Structural Editing**

* Making sense of a project’s “story”, fictional or otherwise
* Reorganizing a table of contents
* Advising for cuts or expansions to material

In-class exercise: Editing team revision of non-fiction ToC

*CEH*, Ch. 13, Typecoding

Week 6 (February 13)

**Introduction to Publication Editing**

* How is publication editing different from other editing contexts?

**Publication Editing: Social Media**

* Engagement and audience
* Efficiency and excitement
* Going viral

**Stylistic Considerations**

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

In-class exercise: Social media rewrites

**Editing Practice 3: *Miss World 1970* feedback due**

Week 7 (February 20)

**Winter reading week: have a good break!**

Week 8 (February 27)

**Publication Editing: Fiction**

* Thinking outside the box: how fiction breaks the rules
* Acquiring manuscripts
* How much writing can an editor add to a text?

In-class exercise: Acquisitions/editorial pitches

**Student Conferences**

**Bias Review and Edit due**

Week 9 (March 5)

On March 6th **at 6 PM**, Dr. Matt Bucemi and York's Book Publishing program will hold the next edition of our publishing speaker series. Our guests are **Hilary Lo**, Editorial Assistant at Knopf Canada, and **Leslie Ahenda**, Editorial Assistant at House of Anansi Press.

Their talk will be followed by a Q&A and a reception with food and drinks. The event will be held in **McLaughlin College 001.**

This event is open to the public, but students in PRWR 2006 and 4004 will **meet earlier at 4 PM** for a private workshop and discussion.

**This means that we won’t meet at our usual time on March 5th. Meet on March 6th instead!**

**Social Media Review and Edit due**

Week 10 (March 12)

**Publication Editing: Magazines and Newspapers**

* What is the difference between editing for books and periodicals?
* The right headline for the right audience
* Keeping content relevant and current

In-class exercise: Headline editing

**Student Conferences**

Week 11 (March 19)

**Grammar Pitfalls**

* Troublesome verbs
* Dangling participles and modifiers
* Other common problems and traps

***Dungeons & Dragons* workshop time + Matt feedback**

**Recommended Readings**

*CEH*, Ch. 14, Grammar

**Style Sheet/Style Guide Project due**

Week 12 (March 26)

**Getting Paid**

* Finding a gig
* Editorial standards
* Certifications

***Dungeons & Dragons* workshop time + Matt final review**

**Recommended Readings**

Editors.ca

**Full Chapter Edit due**

Week 13 (April 2)

***Dungeons & Dragons* Team Edit due**

***Dungeons & Dragons* presentations**