

Editing & Layout

COMM 2305 – Spring 2021

Instructor: Charles L. Ehrenfeld
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Class Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., CM 156.
Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 9-9:30 a.m., 2:30-4 p.m.; Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9-9:30 a.m., 1:30-2:30 p.m.; Fridays, 9 a.m.-noon; or by appointment.

Course Description: This course is a study of the editing and layout processes, with emphasis on accuracy and fairness. Using the newest computer software, students will learn and apply the principles of design.

Required Text:

Frazell, D.L. & Tuck, G. (1996). Principles of Editing: A comprehensive guide for students and journalists. New York: McGraw-Hill.

The Associated Press. (2015). The Associated Press Stylebook.

Additional material presented for the course will be from the following sources:

Baskette, F. K., Sissors, J.Z., and Brooks, B.S. (1986). The Art of Editing. New York: Macmillan.

Harrower, Tim. (1998) The Newspaper Designer's Handbook. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Assignments:

1. **Five-minute papers:** Near the end of each class, you will have approximately five minutes to write down what you thought were a few of the main points made on the topic covered that day or other thoughts about the class.
2. **Critiques:** You will turn in four critiques: one on finding an article, another about examining content and story selection, a third about mistakes and typos, and a fourth about overall design. The critiques are aimed at helping you see how the editing process is done in the real-world of print and Web newspapers. You have the Web at your fingertips; you can do most of these critiques on any newspaper in the country. The Library also is a good place to find "hard copies."
3. **Copy Editing Assignment:** You will edit and trim three stories given to you in the assignment packet, editing each story for legal and ethical issues, Associated Press

and news writing style, spelling, grammar, syntax, factual errors, wordiness and awkward writing.

4. **Headline Writing Assignment:** You are to write headlines for the four world briefs, two local stories and one regional story given to you in the assignment packet. Be sure to follow the instructions and write the headlines per the specifications required.
5. **Design Project:** You are to design one front page and one inside page, using InDesign software. Use text and graphics from the Internet or from past issues of *The Plainsman Press* from previous semesters.
6. **Quizzes:** You will have three quizzes (20 pts. each), one on AP Style and two on the elements and principles of newspaper page design.
7. **Exams:** You will have two exams (one written mid-term, one final) that cover the material presented in lectures.

Course Grades: The grading scale is:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
below 60	F

Your grade will be determined by the following:

Five-Minute Papers (3 pts. each)	66 pts.
Critiques (4)	100 pts.
Quizzes (3)	60 pts.
Design Project	200 pts.
Mid-Term Exam	100 pts.
Editing/Headline Assignments	100 pts.
Participation/Initiative**	5 pts.

**Good journalists, print or broadcast, need to show initiative in their professional lives. This portion of the grade is intended to reward students who exhibit such initiative in this course. The criteria include, but are not limited to: attending class; being on time for class; participating in a thoughtful manner in class discussions; turning in assignments on time (do not request deadline extensions); taking responsibility for your actions; and not whining.

Absence Policy: Because class participation is essential, missing more than *three* classes (unexcused absences) will result in your *final* grade being lowered by a full letter grade. If you miss four consecutive classes, you may be dropped from the course (at the discretion of the instructor). Students are expected to attend all classes in order to be successful in a course. A student may be administratively withdrawn from the course when absences become excessive.

Deadlines: ALL deadlines are absolute. You need to get used to deadlines that exist in the off-campus world. Technical malfunctions (i.e. “My computer ate my homework,” or “My printer crashed”) will not be an excuse for late work. All assignments will be due at the beginning of each class, and any late papers will be penalized a full letter grade each class date they are not turned in.

Excuses: Don’t bother to try any. I’ve heard most of them and have used some of them myself. Only deaths of immediate family members (parents, grand parents, siblings – ONLY), or your own, may be considered for an excused absence. Of course, you will need to provide proof (such as the obituary notice). Student athletes or those participating in other college-sponsored activities that require an absence will be excused, with prior notice to me and appropriate documentation.

Please Sanitize: You’re encouraged to sanitize your desk and work space prior to leaving class. If using a computer, sanitize BEFORE and AFTER use.

Mask Policy: Masks are required to be worn in all college classrooms and hallways. **It is the policy of South Plains College for the Fall 2020 semester that as a condition of on-campus enrollment, all students are required to engage in safe behaviors to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in the SPC community. Such behaviors specifically include the requirement that all students properly wear CDC-compliant face coverings while in SPC buildings including in classrooms, labs, hallways, and restrooms. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the current class session. If the student refuses to leave the classroom or lab after being dismissed, the student may be referred to the Dean of Students on the Levelland campus or the Dean/Director of external centers for Student Code of Conduct Violation. Students who believe they have been exposed or may be COVID-19 positive, must contact Health Services, DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN at (806) 716-2376 or dedens@southplainscollege.edu.**

ADA Statement: Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, visit the Disability Services Office in the Student Health & Wellness Center, or call (806) 716-2577.

Diversity Statement: In this class, the instructor will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

Nondiscrimination Policy: South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College, 1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336, (806) 716-2360.

Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations: If you are pregnant, or have given birth within six months, Under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To [activate](#) accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact the Director of Health and Wellness at (806) 716-2362 or [email cgilster@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:cgilster@southplainscollege.edu) for assistance.

Academic Honesty and Professional Conduct Policy: The same standards and ethics will apply to students enrolled in this course as apply to news reporters and other media professionals. Violations of these standards will result in a failing grade for the assignment and immediate dismissal from the course will be considered. These standards include, but are not limited to:

1. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. You may not take material verbatim from other sources such as previously published newspaper stories, wire service stories, broadcast news stories, etc... To do so is to plagiarize.
2. Pay strict attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Since the invention of the dictionary and spell checker, there is no excuse for a misspelled word. To allow for a misspelled word to appear in any assignment you submit for a grade is laziness. Any misspelled words or factual errors will be graded harshly.

One of the best ways to improve your writing, as well as your grade, is through revision. You may regain up to half of lost points on most graded writing assignments (excluding any writing for an exam) by revising based on notes on your graded paper. To regain some lost points, revise your paper, and return the original and the revision (within one week of the day you received the original graded paper).

Civility Code: Future journalism professional should communicate with each other in a professional and civil manner. We all may feel passionately about certain issues; however, passion is no substitute for a solid grasp of the facts and sound, logical reasoning. Disparaging comments about gender, ethnicity, religion, etc... will not be tolerated. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves.

Disruptive behaviors such as cell phones ringing, leaving and returning to class while in session, arriving late to class, talking with others during lectures/discussions, checking

your e-mail or Facebook, sending/receiving text messages, eating or drinking in class, etc... will result in a substantial reduction in the participation portion of one's grade and a request that such students leave the class. Cell phones must remain turned off or on "silent" and kept out of sight during this class. They may only be activated in individual extenuating circumstances after consulting with the instructor.

Tentative Course Schedule
(subject to change at the discretion of instructor)

Jan. 19	Introduction to the course/Discussion of Syllabus
Jan. 21	Lecture: What is an editor?
Jan. 26	Lecture: A Little Grammar
Jan. 28	Lecture: Associated Press Style
Feb. 2	In-Class Exercise: AP Style
Feb. 4	Critique #1 Presentation/Discussion
Feb. 9	"Shattered Glass" – Part I
Feb. 11	"Shattered Glass" – Part II
Feb. 16	Lecture: Newsroom Ethics (Quiz #1 – AP Style)
Feb. 18	Lecture: The Editing Process
Feb. 23	Lecture: InDesign – The Basics
Feb. 25	Critique #2 Presentation/Discussion
March 2	Lecture: Wire Services/USA Today/NY Times
March 4	Guest Speaker (?) (*Copy editing assignment due)
March 9	Exam Review
March 11	*Mid-term Exam
March 15-19	Spring Break!
March 23	Lecture: Writing Headlines

March 25 In-Class Exercise: Writing Headlines

March 30 Lecture: Design Fundamentals – What’s it called?

April 1 Lab Day/Design

April 6 Lecture: Typography
(Read: chapter 7)
(***Headline writing assignment due**)

April 8 **Critique #3 Presentation/Discussion**

April 13 Lecture: Photos & Cutlines

April 15 Lecture: Page Design
(**Quiz #2 – Design**)

April 13 Lecture: More Page Design

April 20 **Critique #4 Presentation/Discussion**

April 22 Design

April 27 (**Quiz #3 – Design**)

April 29 Lab Day/Design

May 4 Wrap-up Day/Design

May 6 Wrap-up Day/Design

May 11 **Final Exam – 10:15 a.m.**