Editing and Layout

Spring 2020

MEDA-3318.001

M 07:00-09:30PM OCNR-240

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Office hours: M 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; W 1-3 p.m. and by appointment

This course covers copy editing, headlines and design. We will discuss concepts and issues and look at a lot of examples. In labs, you’ll be editing copy, writing headlines and captions, and designing pages. For most class periods, the lab will be the last 60-90 minutes.

Editing can take on two general forms: minute, line editing, and larger levels of focus, such as fairness, approach and organization. A good editor takes both into account, and we will be taking that into account in discussions and assignments. This will cover the first five weeks.

Headline writing is an underrated skill in terms of being able to fill a small space with enough content to be interesting and inviting for the reader. Many editors write headlines and captions for content in a print and web publication. But also many writers find they need to write their own headlines as well. The middle three weeks will focus on headline and caption writing.

The final five to six weeks will focus on design, and incorporating both editing and headline writing lessons. At many publications, copy editors will also do some page design. For the larger news corporations, the design desks have been centralized into hubs. Regardless of the size of the news organization, if there is any print product, there needs to be experienced designers to help readers have an enjoyable experience reading the print product. This requires solid design principles to go a long with good headline writing, and clean, well-edited copy.

We focus on using the Adobe Cloud Creative Suite, including InDesign and Photoshop, for design.

Course Objectives

By the end of this class, you should:

- Develop skills in copy editing
- Develop skills in headline and caption writing for print and online
- Demonstrate news judgement
- Demonstrate basic skills in page design for print and online
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- Develop an appreciation for the role of editing in content creation
• Collaboratively create a printable publication.

**Required text:** 2019 Associated Press Stylebook. Always bring this with you. There is also an online/app version.

**Recommended text:** The Newspaper Designer’s Handbook, 6th or 7th edition, by Tim Harrower. (I have the 6th edition at the bookstore because it’s less expensive).

**Readings**

We will be discussing the news in class. This is part of the participation grade. You’ll also read and analyze selections to use as a model for your work. Here’s what you should read so we can have a common frame of reference for discussions and quizzes. And please don’t limit yourself to this list. You should always read/listen/watch all the news you can.

**Local news**, including the Caller Times and Island Waves, TV and radio, including the local stations, and PBS.


**Class readings.** I will post additional class readings on Blackboard.

**Course assignments and grading:**

More details regarding specific assignments will be given in class and on Blackboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due*</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class lab assignments (14)</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation, evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Find and fix (10)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publications (2)</td>
<td>Midterm and final</td>
<td>100</td>
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There will be daily assignments to work on in class that are due at the end of the class period.

Participation and evaluation: These include contributions to the discussions as well as evidence of improvement over the course of the semester.

Find and fix: Find and fix mistakes made in news publications and online. Print the mistake and make a correction on it. Bring it to me in class to evaluate the mistake.

Publications: We are working toward producing two publications as a class. A portion of the grade include peer review of your work and contribution to the publication. More details to come.

**Course grading**

Grading for this course will be based on these percentages:

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

All stories are based on deadline-style requirements. Missing a deadline in news work is unacceptable. **A late assignment will lose points automatically**, so get it in early.

**Course attendance and class policies**

This is a hands-on course that requires faithful attendance and your full attention. Because deadline writing and constructive feedback are essential to your growth as an editor, it is critical that you attend class. Unexcused class absences will result in lower engagement points and missed in-class assignments for unexcused absences cannot be made up.

Here, as in the professional world, good communication is key. If you know you’re going to be absent, please let me know as soon as possible—and before class. If you are having trouble with an element of this class, I can’t help unless I know what’s going on.

**Laptop and phone use:** During class discussions, there should be no laptops or cell phones out. During our writing labs and in-class exercises, then laptops and phones are allowed. Research has shown that taking notes by hand yields better cognition and memorization of ideas, concepts and practices. Therefore, laptops are allowed only when it is time to write or take quizzes.

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1: Jan. 26 (Our first day is in Week 2 of the semester due to MLK Day)**

What editors do  
Style, grammar, punctuation

**Week 2: Feb. 2**

Accuracy and precision issues: Numeracy, word editing, tone, sexism, stereotyping, fairness, libel

**Week 3: Feb. 9**

Leads, organization, holes, inconsistency

**Week 4: Feb. 16**

Cutting stories, combining stories, clarity, readability

Working with writers

**Week 5: Feb. 23**

Headlines, old and new “rules”

**Week 6: March 1**
Writing good, appropriate headlines for news and features
Print and online headlines, differences and similarities

**Week 7: March 8**
Spring break

**Week 8: March 15**
SEO and web design

**Week 9: March 22**
Thinking visually
Small inside pages

**Week 10: March 29**
Layout: story design, larger inside pages
Use of photos, cropping and sizing, captions
Font selection

**Week 11: April 5**
Page one
News judgement and story selection

**Week 12: April 12**
Page one, part 2
Section fronts and special sections

**Week 13: April 19**
Front pages and inside jumps

**Week 14: April 26**
Photo packages

**Week 15: May 4**
Magazines, covers and inside pages

**May 8, 11-14**
Finals
Final Grades due May 19
Disabilities Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Grade Appeals

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: http://academicaffairs.tamu.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf.

Academic Advising

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Dropping a Class

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

Statement of Civility

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.
**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**

**Definition:** In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/), and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.