

COURSE: JOMC 157, News Editing
TERM: Fall 2016
PLACE: Room 58
TIME: 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday-Wednesday

INSTRUCTOR: Andy Bechtel
EMAIL: abechtel@email.unc.edu
OFFICE HOURS, 213 CARROLL: Tuesday/Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon
BLOG: editdesk.wordpress.com
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ABOUT THE COURSE

OVERVIEW: Welcome to JOMC 157. In this course, you will learn the fundamentals of editing for print and digital media. You will learn how to edit news stories and how to write photo captions, tweets and headlines. We'll do a bit of print design, too. You'll become an expert in AP style and gain an appreciation for accuracy of information and fairness in language. The goal is to help you become a better communicator, for your career and for your life.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Working With Words, Eighth Edition. The Associated Press Stylebook, 2015 edition. Stylebook of the School of Media and Journalism (<http://jschoolstylebook.web.unc.edu>).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS: Editors know what's in the news. You should read a daily newspaper (either in print or online) such as The News & Observer, The New York Times or the Herald-Sun as well as The Daily Tar Heel.

HONOR CODE: All students will conduct themselves within the guidelines of the university's honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this university demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

SEEKING HELP: If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability or an illness.

DIVERSITY: The university's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. UNC-Chapel Hill is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community, and the university does not discriminate in offering

access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

SPECIAL NEEDS: If you have any disability or other special situation that might make it difficult to meet the requirements described above, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. If you have not done so already, you should also contact the Department of Accessibility Resources & Service (AR&S) at 919-962-8300 or accessibility@unc.edu.

ATTENDANCE: It's crucial. So is punctuality. If you miss an assignment because you are late, you may not make it up. If you miss class, you may make up assignments only if you provide documentation of illness or other cause for your absence. If you cannot attend class because of a university-related trip, please let me know ahead of time so we can make arrangements.

ETIQUETTE: Be ready to participate in class discussions and class exercises. Please turn off ringers on cell phones at the start of class. Please refrain from texting, tweeting and checking email and Facebook during class. You may leave the room to take a break at any time; as a class, we'll also take a few minutes off midway through many class meetings.

ASSIGNMENTS: Most of the work in this class will be what you would do at a news organization: editing stories, writing headlines, etc. You will also take a series of quizzes on AP style, current events and names in the news. The one out-of-class assignment will be a design critique of a daily newspaper.

GRADING: Your assignments will be graded on a point system. The more important the assignment, the more it's worth. For example, an AP style quiz is worth 50 points. The final exam will be worth 200 points. In the end, I will divide the number of points you earned by the total possible points (typically about 1,600) and use the following scale to calculate your grade:

90-100: A
80-89: B
70-79: C
60-69: D
59 or less: F

BONUS ROUND: You can get extra credit by bringing in an error in a print publication and explaining how you would repair it. To cash in on this offer, turn in the error with a brief written explanation. Describe the mistake and how you would fix it. Examples of errors: a misspelled headline, a math error, a misplaced comma or bad word choice.

You may get extra credit for up to four such mistakes. Each one is worth five points. I may ask you to share some of your more interesting finds with the rest of the class. Professionally produced print publications such as daily newspapers, magazines, menus, and textbooks are fair game. So is this syllabus. Student publications, fliers stuck on telephone poles and digital media are not. I am the final arbiter of what counts and what doesn't.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND: I am a journalist with more than 10 years of newspaper experience. My first job was as a copy editor and page designer at the News & Record in Greensboro. The bulk of my experience is at The News & Observer, where I worked in sports, at the newspaper's Chapel Hill bureau and as the lead editor on the Nation & World desk.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: My goal is to give you skills that will benefit you personally and professionally. I want to help you succeed in whatever area of journalism interests you, and I am happy to help you with career advice, internships, etc.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Monday, Jan. 11

Topic: Introductions.

Wednesday, Jan. 13

Topics: What editors do in print and online; getting down to basics.

Readings: Working with Words, Chapters 1, 2 and 9.

Assignment: Punctuation exercise.

Monday, Jan. 18

No class: MLK holiday.

Wednesday, Jan. 20

Topics: Eliminating redundancy, misspellings and other miscues.

Readings: Working with Words, Chapters 8, 10 and 12. AP Stylebook A-E.

Assignments: AP style quiz, A-E; conciseness/editing exercise.

Monday, Jan. 25

Topics: Editing for sense and impact; dealing with names, titles and quotes.

Readings: Working with Words, Chapters 3-7.

Assignments: editing exercise.

Wednesday, Jan. 27

Topics: Story editing and adding hyperlinks.

Readings: AP Stylebook, F-M. Working with Words, Chapters 11, 14, 16.

Assignment: Editing a news story. AP style quiz, F-M.

Monday, Feb. 1

Topics: Editing for accuracy and credibility; checking facts, maps and charts.

Assignments: Fact-check exercise; editing news graphics.

Wednesday, Feb. 3

Topic: Watching out for bias and avoiding stereotypes.

Readings: AP stylebook, N-R. Working with Words, Chapter 13.

Assignments: Style quiz, N-R; settling a style question.

Monday, Feb. 8

Topic: Editing with InDesign/InCopy.

Assignment: Editing a story in InCopy.

Wednesday, Feb. 10

Topic: The law and editing.

Reading: Briefing on media law in AP Stylebook. AP Stylebook, S-Z.

Assignments: Libel exercise; style quiz, S-Z.

Monday, Feb. 15

Topic: Bringing it all together: style, accuracy and fairness.
Readings: Local stylebook (jschoolstylebook.web.unc.edu)
Assignments: Quiz on local stylebook; story-editing exercise.

Wednesday, Feb. 17

Topic: Editing and Twitter.
Assignment: Writing tweets.

Monday, Feb. 22

Topic: Digital editing.
Assignment: Editing a news story and adding links in WordPress.

Wednesday, Feb. 24

Topic: Headline writing.
Reading: <http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/newsgathering-storytelling/140675/10-questions-to-help-you-write-better-headlines/>
Assignment: Headline exercise.

Monday, Feb. 29

Topic: More headlines.
Assignment: Headline/editing exercise.

Wednesday, March 2

Topic: Adding dropheads and writing multiple-line headlines.
Assignments: Headline/editing exercise.

Monday, March 7

Topic: More headlines.
Assignment: Headline blitz!

Wednesday, March 9

Topic: Exploring alternative story forms.
Assignment: Editing exercise.

Monday, March 21

Topic: Headlines for digital media.
Assignment: Writing headlines for digital media.

Wednesday, March 23

Assignment: Headline writing/story editing in WordPress.

Monday, March 28

Topic: Photos and captions.

Reading: <http://www.poynter.org/uncategorized/1753/hot-tips-for-writing-photo-captions/>

Assignment: Caption-writing exercise.

Wednesday, March 30

No class; instructor at ACES conference.

Monday, April 4

Topic: Layering information in print — headline, image and words.

Assignment: Story package in InDesign/InCopy.

Wednesday, April 6

Topic: Layering information online — headline, image and words.

Assignment: Story package in WordPress.

Monday, April 11

Topic: Editing and print design.

Assignment: Newspaper critique.

Wednesday, April 13

Topic: More on layout.

Assignment: Putting together a page.

Monday, April 18

Topic: Standalone photos.

Assignment: Writing captions for standalone photos.

Wednesday, April 20

Topic: Working on newspaper critiques.

Assignment: Open lab.

Monday, April 25

Topics: Presentation of critiques; review for final exam.

Assignment: Layout critique due.

Last day to turn in extra credit.

Wednesday, April 27

Assignment: Final exam.

Guidelines for grading your story editing

Misspelled proper name: -50

Missing first reference: -15

Other fact error: -25

Misspelled word: -10

Style error: -5

Garble: -5

Punctuation error: -3 to -5

Grammar error: -5

Redundancy: -5

Other offense: -3 to -25

Point bonuses

On some assignments, you can get points by performing heroic acts of editing. These may include breaking a long sentence into two sentences, tightening wordy copy and improving the structure of a story.

Guidelines for grading your headlines and captions

Headlines and captions are worth 25 points each. Here's how the grading works:

25: Shows unusual flair and cleverness. Represents the story or photo clearly and forcefully. A caption or headline that's truly exemplary.

23: Solid and publishable. Reflects the story or photo and attracts reader interest.

21: Usable but lacks precision and action.

18: Vague or difficult to understand, or has structural problems that hinder comprehension.

15: Contains a major flaw. Fails to use key words that reflect the news or misses the major angle of the story. Contains a punctuation error, such as use of a semicolon where a comma is needed. Has unintended double meanings.

0: Contains an obvious grammar error, such as subject-verb disagreement. Has a misspelled name, fact error or libelous content.

Core values and competencies

This course covers the following competencies required by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication:

- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.