

COURSE: MEJO 157 (News Editing)
TERM: Fall 2016
PLACE: Room 58, TIME: 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Denny McAuliffe
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OFFICE HOURS, 261 CARROLL: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.,
by appointment
CLASS WEBSITE: mcafulnews.wordpress.com

ABOUT THE COURSE

OVERVIEW: 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, story-related tweets and headlines, headlines and more headlines. You will publish edited stories, headlines and captions to the class news website. We'll use InDesign to edit for print and do some page design while we're at it -- and we'll take a detour to do some personal editing, such as making your resume and cover letter conform to AP style. You'll become familiar with AP style and gain an appreciation for accuracy of information and fairness in language for print and digital media. The goal is to help you become a better communicator – and perhaps even a copy editor!

REQUIRED TEXTS: Working With Words, Eighth Edition. The Associated Press Stylebook, 2016 edition. Stylebook of the School of Media and Journalism (available at <http://jschoolstylebook.web.unc.edu/>).

RECOMMENDED READING: Good editors know what's in the news. Read The Washington Post, since your instructor works there (free digital access with an .edu email address, allegedly). To round out your news consumption, be sure to read locally grown print or digital editions of The Daily Tar Heel.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Students will conduct themselves within the guidelines of the university 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.

ATTENDANCE: It's crucial. So is punctuality. Treat the class as if it were your job. That means, if you foresee an absence or lateness, or if you're sick, let me know (email or text). If you don't, I may not let you make up class assignments.

ETIQUETTE: We'll set a cellphone policy in class. It will resemble newsroom practices, but not the outright bar of other classes at the School of Media and Journalism. Please refrain from talking, texting, tweeting, Facebooking, YouTubeing, Instagraming, Tumblring, Flickr-ing, LinkIn-ing, shopping or emailing on your cellphones, tablets or computers during class. You may leave the room to take a break at any time.

ASSIGNMENTS: Most of the work in this class will be what you would do in a newsroom: editing stories, writing headlines, publishing content to the Web. Expect lots of grammar and AP style drills, which you will do in groups of three. There will be one long test that mimics the annual test for a Dow Jones copy-editing internship. (It's practice for the real thing, which you will be encouraged to take.) The final will consist of editing one last (hence, "final") story for print and Web, similar to what we'll be doing in every class. The one out-of-class assignment will be preparing a critique of an assigned weekly or daily state newspaper and website.

GRADING: After the initial grammar and Stylebook "boot camp" of mostly ungraded drills, all your work will be graded on a point system. Stories – and tests, including the final -- are worth 100 points each. In keeping with the instructor's philosophy that we should be smarter today than we were yesterday, grades in the second half of the course are worth double those of the first half – that's not the same as saying first-half grades don't count. In the second half, I will literally count each grade as two A's, two B's, etc., and each assignment will be counted double. This will also soften the shock and awe of what may be low grades in the first half, as you wrestle with grammar, adapt to the preciseness required of a copy editor and start getting the hang of headline writing. In the end, I will divide the total number of points you earned by the number of assignments (including the doubling described above) and use the following scale to calculate your grade:

93%-100%: A
90-92: A-
87-89: B+
83-86: B
80-82: B-
77-79: C+
73-76: C
70-72: C-
60-69: D
59 or less: F

Guidelines for grading stories and headlines: Each story assignment will count 100 points, combining 75 points for story editing and 25 points for headlines. Anything that would result in a printed correction in a newspaper or atop a Web article – wrong name or other serious error -- will suffer a deduction

of minus 10 points; evidence that you didn't look up something when you should have, either in the Stylebook or on the Web (a proper name, fact-checking a quote or date, etc.), minus 5; a basic AP style or dictionary error (typically spelling – is it advisor or adviser? -- that you should have looked up but didn't), minus 3; and grammar-punctuation errors, minus 1. While these deductions seem low, especially compared with the minus-50 whoppers you suffer for misspelled names in other courses at the School of Media and Journalism, they do add up!

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 is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and 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 status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities, visit Accessibility Services website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND: I'm an editor at The Washington Post, where I've worked for more than 20 years, mostly as night editor for the Foreign and Financial desks. I now work remotely on The Post news and Editorial copy desks three nights a week from Raleigh, where I moved in August 2015 from the Washington, D.C., area. I taught News Editing and other classes for 11 years at the University of Montana School of Journalism, where I also directed a Native American journalism program. This is my third semester teaching at UNC.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY: My goal is to get you to do my job! I also hope to give you writing and editing skills that will benefit you personally and professionally. I want to help you succeed in whatever area of media and journalism interests you, and I will be relentless in encouraging you to pursue internships and other journalism opportunities as soon as you can. To that end, there will be at least one mandatory one-on-one meeting with me, and a class assignment will be editing your resume and cover letter to make them conform to AP style.

Class Schedule

Wednesday, Aug. 24

Topic: Introductions (to one another, to the course and to editing).

Assignment: Read copy editor's obituary. And find hidden errors in story.

Monday, Aug. 29

Topic: What editors do in print and online.

Reading: Working With Words, Chapters 1, 2, 9. AP punctuation guide.

Assignment: Punctuation exercise; AP style drill, A-B; edit story.

Wednesday, Aug. 31

Topic: Intro to class news website, mcawfulnews.wordpress.com

Readings: Working With Words, Chapters 8, 10 and 12. AP Stylebook, C-F.

Assignment: AP style drill, C-F; grammar drill; edit and publish a story.

Monday, Sept. 5

No class; Labor Day

Wednesday, Sept. 7

Topic: Names, titles and quotes.

Readings: Working With Words, Chapters 3-7. AP Stylebook, G-L.

Assignment: AP style drill, G-L; grammar drill; edit and publish a story.

Monday, Sept. 12

Topic: Numbers, numbers, numbers: Stylebook's "numeral" entry (Page 190).

Readings: Working With Words, Chapters 11, 14, 16. AP Stylebook, M-O.

Assignment: AP style drill, M-O; grammar drill; edit and publish a story.

Wednesday, Sept. 14

Topic: Watching out for bias and avoiding stereotypes.

Readings: Working with Words, Chapter 13. AP Stylebook, P-R.

Assignments: AP style drill, P-R; grammar drill; edit and publish a story.

Monday, Sept. 19

Topics: Things you must *always* check.

Reading: AP Stylebook, S-U.

Assignments: AP style quiz, S-U; grammar drill; edit and publish a story.

Wednesday, Sept. 21

Topics: Cleaning your copy.

Reading: AP Stylebook, V-Z.

Assignments: AP style quiz, V-Z. Take Poynter's "Cleaning Your Copy" course.

Monday, Sept. 26

Topic: Editing news stories, writing news headlines and adding hyperlinks.
Assignment: Edit news story, write headline, tweet, cutline; add hyperlinks.

Wednesday, Sept. 28

Topic: Editing and fact-checking.
Assignment: Fact-check all quotes in news story, plus headline, cutline, etc.

Monday, Oct. 3

Topic: Updating news stories, adding inserts and trimming.
Assignment: Edit national news story about a report on sexual assaults on campus and insert graphs about UNC.

Wednesday, Oct. 5

Topic: Doing the math.
Assignment: Edit story news story containing math and double-check (and correct if necessary) all numbers and percentages.

Monday, Oct. 10

Topic: Editing an obituary.
Assignment: Edit obituary of TBD. Hefty trim required.

Wednesday, Oct. 12

No class; University Day

Monday, Oct. 17

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

Wednesday, Oct. 19

Topic: Old-school hed counts.
Assignments: Edit news story in WordPress, write social headline, then wrestle with a “tight hed order” – a 1-col. print hed with bank.

Monday, Oct. 24

Topic: Dow Jones editing test.
Assignment: Take mock test for grade.

Wednesday, Oct. 26

Topic: “Face time” with instructor.
Assignment: Each student will hold private 10-minute meeting with instructor.

Monday, Oct. 31

Topic: “Meet Your Morning Paper”: Print headlines and trimming to fit.
Assignment: Trim story with InDesign story editor, write 2-col., 3 col. heads.

Wednesday, Nov. 2

Topic: Editing, trimming and updating multiple stories on deadline.
Edit, trim three news stories; write 1-col., 2-col., 4-col. main and bank headlines.

Monday, Nov. 7

Topic: Personal editing: Applying AP style to your other writing.
Assignments: Copy-edit and rewrite (if necessary) your cover letter and resume.

Wednesday, Nov. 9

Topic: How editors guide and shape The Big Story.
Movie Night: "Spotlight." Write review, edit to conform with AP style.

Monday, Nov. 14

Facetime Q&A with Courtney Rukan, Washington Post's deputy copy-desk chief.
Pick papers to critique for April 19 presentations.

Wednesday, Nov. 16

Topic: Editing as rewriting.
Assignments: Combine and rewrite AP/Reuters wire stories on same event.

Monday, Nov. 21

Topic: Editing and design (print and online). Social media discussion.
Assignment: Draw story on Twitter troubles in inDesign, publish on WordPress.

Wednesday, Nov. 23

No class; Thanksgiving

Monday, Nov. 28

Topic: More on print layout.
Assignment: Working in pairs, put together a page in InDesign.

Wednesday, Nov. 30

Assignment: Open lab to work on news critiques.

Monday, Dec. 5

Topics: Presentation of critiques of North Carolina daily or weekly newspapers.

Wednesday, Dec. 7

Assignment: Final exam (if students unanimously decide to hold final during the last class; otherwise, you'll take it during scheduled final-exam period).

Core values and competencies

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

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- 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;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- 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.