

JOMC 457: Advanced Editing Spring 2014

Meeting time: Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Meeting place: 58 Carroll Hall

Instructor: Andy Bechtel

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Office hours, 213 Carroll: Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Blog: editdesk.wordpress.com

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/andybechtel>

About the course

OVERVIEW: Advanced Editing is a hands-on course that will build on your previous editing experience in print and digital media. We'll also explore the editor-writer relationship. For much of the semester, you will be a copy editor and page designer for publications, some real and one mythical:

- **THE TRIANGLE TATTLER:** This is our fictional newspaper and website. It's a hard-charging regional news organization that is competing against the Herald-Sun and The News & Observer. Its audience consists of readers in Orange, Durham and Wake counties. For this publication, you will use wire services to put together pages, edit stories, etc. You will edit various types of stories, including sports and opinion pieces.
- **THE CARRBORO COMMONS and DURHAM VOICE:** These are our real publications, part print and part online. It's a joint project with students in JOMC 459, Community Journalism. The Commons and Voice are "intensely local" publications. For these publications, you will edit the work of your fellow students. See more at carrborocommons.org and www.durhamvoice.org.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- "The Newspaper Designer's Handbook" (7th edition) by Tim Harrower
- "The Subversive Copy Editor" by Carol Fisher Saller
- The Associated Press Stylebook
- Stylebook of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication available at jomc.unc.edu/stylebook.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: You must adhere to the University's honor code:

<http://studentconduct.unc.edu/honor-system>

ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY: They are crucial, especially because many assignments will be team projects that require collaboration. If you miss an assignment because you are late, you may not make it up. If you miss class, you may only make up assignments 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 arrange makeup work.

GRADING: Your assignments will be graded on a point system. The more important the assignment, the more it's worth. A story-editing exercise could be worth 100 points. In the end, I will divide the number of points you earned by the total possible points and use the following scale to calculate your grade:

- A = 93-100
- A- = 90-92
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 83-86
- B- = 80-82
- C = 70-79, with +/- ranges the same as for B
- D = 60-69, with +/- ranges the same as for B
- F = 0-59

Tentative schedule

Thursday, Jan. 9

Topic: Introductions.

Tuesday, Jan. 14

Topic: Refreshing your editing skills.

Readings: AP Stylebook, A-M; section on social media. Saller, chapters 1-3.

Assignments: Style quiz; story editing.

Thursday, Jan. 16

Topic: Refreshing your design/headline skills.

Readings: Harrower, chapters 1-3. AP Stylebook, N-Z; section on food guidelines.

Assignments: Style quiz; designing pages and writing headlines and captions.

Tuesday, Jan. 21

Topic: Editing and designing feature stories.

Readings: Harrower, chapter 7.

Assignment: Writing features headlines.

Readings: Saller, chapter 4 and 5.

Thursday, Jan. 23

Topic: Editing for plagiarism and fabrication.

Assignment: Fact-checking exercise.

In-class viewing: "Don't Get Fooled Again" NewsU webinar with Craig Silverman.

Readings: "Telling the Truth" e-book. (<http://www.rjionline.org/newsbooks/aces>)

Tuesday, Jan. 28

Topic: Alternative story forms for print.

Readings: Harrower, chapter 6.

Assignment: Transforming a traditional story into an alternative story form.

Thursday, Jan. 30

Topic: Alternative story forms for online.

Assignment: Using Storify to write and edit an FAQ or list.

Readings: Saller, chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Tuesday, Feb. 4

Topic and assignment: Carrboro Commons/Durham Voice.

Thursday, Feb. 6

Topic: Editing columns and editorials.

Readings: Harrower, chapter 4. Saller, chapters 9, 10 and 11.

Assignment: Editing opinion pieces.

Tuesday, Feb. 11

Topic: Editing at the The New York Times in the digital era.

In-class viewing: "Page One" DVD about The New York Times.

Thursday, Feb. 13

Topic: Editing and the future of local news.

Guest speakers: Ness Shortley, editor of The News of Orange; Charles Duncan Pardo, editor of the Raleigh Public Record.

In-class viewing: "The Sun Never Sets" DVD about The Rio Grande Sun.

Tuesday, Feb. 18

Assignment: Carrboro Commons/Durham Voice.

Thursday, Feb. 20

Topic: Editing obituaries.

Assignment: Compiling and editing an obituary using Storify.

Tuesday, Feb. 25

Topic: The front page.

Assignment: Planning and budgeting a front page.

Thursday, Feb. 27

Assignment: Putting together a front page.

Tuesday, March 4

Assignment: Carrboro Commons/Durham Voice.

Thursday, March 6

Assignment: Midterm exam.

Tuesday, March 18

Topic: Editing and Wikis.

Assignment: Creating and editing an entry at <https://trianglewiki.org>.

Thursday, March 20

No class; ACES conference.

Tuesday, March 25

Topic: Features with extra flavor: food pages.

Assignment: Putting together a food page.

Thursday, March 27

Topic: Photo pages.

Assignment: Putting together a photo page.

Readings: Harrower, pages 130-138.

Tuesday, April 1

Topic: Photo slideshows.

Assignment: Putting together a "Day in Photos" slideshow.

Thursday, April 3

No class; instructor out of town.

Tuesday, April 8

Topic: Sports.

Readings: Sports guidelines in AP Stylebook.

Assignment: Quiz on AP sports style.

Guest speaker: Jim Young and Lauren Brownlow of ACCsports.com.

Thursday, April 10

Topic: More sports.

Assignment: Putting together a sports page.

Tuesday, April 15

Assignment: Carrboro Commons/Durham Voice.

Thursday, April 17

Topic: Editing beyond news.

Guest speakers: Ayse Erginer, deputy editor at the Center for the Study of the American South; Lisa Chensvold, director of communications at UNC Institute for Global Health; Lindsey Alexander, freelance book editor.

Tuesday, April 22

Topic: The art of the redesign.

Readings: Harrower, Chapter 8.

Assignment: Critiquing the Durham Voice, Carrboro Commons.

Thursday, April 24

Assignment: Final exam.

Guidelines for grading your story editing

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

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

Guidelines for grading your headlines/captions

Headlines and captions are worth 25 points. Here's how it works:

25: Shows unusual flair and cleverness; represents the story clearly and forcefully.

23: Solid, publishable; reflects the story and attracts reader interest.

21: Usable but lacks precision or feels flat.

18: Vague or difficult to understand; awkwardly structured.

16: Contains a major flaw; misses the major angle of the story; contains a punctuation error such as use of a semicolon where a comma is needed. Has unintended meanings.

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

Assignment: Guest Blogging

For this assignment, you will write a guest post for The Editor's Desk. You can read the blog at editdesk.wordpress.com.

TOPICS: You have plenty of leeway here, provided that the topic fits the mission of the blog as a place for "thoughts on editing for print and online media." Possible areas to explore include grammar questions, headline writing, news judgment and slideshows.

Write about something you care about and that matches the interests of the blog's readers.

FORMAT: The post should be between four and eight paragraphs in length. Include a suggested headline of up to 40 characters. Think of the post as a short essay in which you introduce your topic, provide evidence and offer a conclusion or recommendation.

Turn in your blog post as a Word file, submitted by email to abechtel@email.unc.edu. Include a sentence or two about yourself. Include suggested links in brackets, with the words you would link to underlined, like so:

Bono will be a guest columnist for The New York Times, the paper announced recently.

[<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/oct/24/bono-new-york-times-columnist>]

GRADING: This assignment is worth 100 points. I will consider these factors in grading your post: Timeliness and interest: Is the post about a current event or use a recent example? Does it have a "news peg"? Is the topic introduced in a way that will grab the reader? You will lose 10 points for each day your post is overdue.

LINKS: Does the post include relevant, specific links that help the reader understand your point? Also consider how linking is a sort of footnoting that can support an argument. Incorporate the links into the writing itself — avoid "click here" and similar phrases.

WRITING: You may have a "voice" for the post, and first person is OK. But keep the journalistic audience of the blog in mind and write accordingly. Avoid redundancy, jargon and other pitfalls. Use AP style and proper grammar and punctuation.

BLOGGERS AND DEADLINES

JAN. 24: Bradshaw

JAN. 31: Dickson

FEB. 7: Dinovis

FEB. 14: Dodson

FEB. 21: Freshwater

FEB. 28: Hayes

MARCH 7: Leonard, Lindstrand

MARCH 21: Marriner

MARCH 28: McFarland

APRIL 4: Singh

APRIL 11: Sommerville

APRIL 18: Trogdon

APRIL 25: Wood, Zimmerman