English 373
Technical and Professional Editing
Department of English and Creative Writing, SFASU

Professor: Dr. Megan Condis
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Office: LAN #210
Meeting Times:
Office Hours
Available by appointment in person, on the phone, or via Skype

Description

Study and application of the principles involved in the editing and publication of professional and technical projects. Emphasis placed on planning, arranging, editing, and laying out complex documents like journal issues, scholarly anthologies, and lengthy technical documents. Prerequisite: Six hours of freshman English and at least three additional hours of a sophomore or higher level writing course.

Additional Information

This class runs like a lab in the sense that a lot of the work we do will be done in class. This means that attendance is VERY important. We will also be “juggling” multiple projects at once, as most editors do. Consult your syllabus often to make sure that you are on pace with each of the tasks you are concurrently working on.

Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 273

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

Copyedit and proofread text for publication.

Critique written work in terms of content, organization, tone, and “house style.”

Work with a local business or non-profit to develop real world workplace documents.

Write, edit, and publish an instructional zine.

Required Text and Materials

*Technical Editing* by Carolyn Rude and Angela Eaton. 4th or 5th Edition.

Subscription to InDesign publishing software

Additional readings available online via D2L.

Strongly recommended

Any writing handbook, such as the one you may have been required to buy in English 131 and 132. (Note: Cheap older editions can be gotten from Amazon for very little).
Course Requirements

All writing assignments prepared outside of class must be typed. The format will vary for each writing assignment, depending on its purpose and audience. All assignments will be graded for proper formatting, soundness of content, attention to rhetorical context, resourcefulness, grammar, and mechanics.

All assignments must be completed in the order in which they are given, and you must complete all the major assignments in order to pass this course.

Late work will receive a 5% penalty per day up to 7 days after which the assignment will receive a zero. If you foresee that you will have difficulty meeting a due date, let me know in advance and we can work out an accommodation. Otherwise, the penalty outlined above will apply.

All assignments will be turned in via D2L by 5 pm on their scheduled due date. We will go over how to do this in class. Technical difficulties with D2L will not be an acceptable excuse for late work. If you have questions about how to turn in an assignment, you need to let me know in advance so we can work on it together.

Most major assignments will include intermediate drafts and other materials.

Grading Policy

This course will be graded according to a contract system.

To earn an A in this course you must:
- Complete the course with 2 or fewer absences
- Complete all practice copy editing exercises in a satisfactory manner
- Copyedit and proofread 2 Piney Dark submissions including comments and a letter to the author
- Compete to create one draft of a workplace document for a business and assist your group in editing and submitting the winning document
- Write at least one article for your group’s zine meeting all of the requirements for the prompt
- Assist with copyediting, assembling, and publishing your group’s zine
- Successfully complete one student presentation

You will earn a grade of B if you:
- Accumulate 3-4 absences OR
- Turn in 1-2 unsatisfactory copy editing exercises

You will earn a grade of C if you:
- Turn in 3-4 unsatisfactory copy editing exercises OR
- Edit only 1 Piney Dark piece OR
- Fail to meet the prompt’s expectations your workplace document OR your zine article

You will earn a grade of F if you:
- Complete the course with 5 or more absences OR
- Turn in 5 or more unsatisfactory copy editing exercises OR
- Fail to edit any Piney Dark pieces OR
- Fail to meet the prompt’s expectations for both the workplace document AND your zine article
- Fail to successfully complete one student presentation
Assignments

Copy Editing Exercises

Students will complete various copy editing practice exercises, some of which will take place during class and others of which will be done independently via D2L.

Piney Dark Editing

Students will copyedit and proofread the winners of the Piney Dark short horror fiction contest to prepare them for publication. They will mark up the text using the Track Changes function of Microsoft Word and write a short letter to the author summarizing the changes they've made.

Workplace Documents

Students will work in groups with a local business or non-profit to identify a need. As an individual, they will create a draft of a document to serve that business. Then, as a group, they will decide on which document serves the business best and fine tune it for final submission.

Zine Editorial Team

Students will conceptualize, write, edit, and publish a zine on the technical topic of their choice. Each group member will be required to write at least one article for the zine. As a group, students will then organize the publication, copy edit and proofread each item, design it, and publish and distribute it.

Student Presentation

Students will each pitch and present on at least one topic of their choice related to editing and/or publishing over the course of the semester. This could be something about the history of the profession, the technology editors use, the ethics of editing, or any current news stories involving publishing. Pitches should be submitted in the form of a memo addressed to me that describes the topic, some resources that will be used for research, and are due a week prior to the presentation date. Presentations should last 10-15 min followed by a 10-15 min discussion led by the presenter. Bring prepared questions with you to get the conversation started. Students may attempt additional presentations if slots are available.

Plagiarism/Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: Adhering to academic integrity standards at all times by producing your own work and successfully attributing others’ ideas to them is a necessary aspect of university communication.

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assignment; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author due credit.

Any appeals on academic integrity cases must be made within thirty days after the first class day of the next long semester. Students should appeal to the instructor first then to the chair if the situation is not resolved. Further appeals can be made to the dean and provost if necessary.

Please read the complete policies at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp and
My policy is simple: plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in a zero for that assignment, or a failing grade for the course depending on the severity of the violation.

We will be discussing the proper way to cite your sources during this class, but in the meantime, if you have any questions about this definition or about a particular case in any of your courses, it is up to you to approach me (or any of your other instructors) for help.

**Classroom Conduct**

In order for our classroom sessions to be productive, we need to create an environment in which none of us are afraid to put ourselves out there in front of each other. Rudeness will not be tolerated. We may discuss “hot button” issues, but we need to be respectful of the opinions, feelings, and life experiences of others. Hateful language or behavior such as racism, sexism, homophobia, etc is not acceptable. Students who engage in this behavior will be asked to leave the classroom and may be subject to further disciplinary action.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Special Accommodations**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify your instructors and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided.

Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations, and no accommodations can be made except through the ODS. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**Resources**

The AARC offer free writing tutoring, which is available on a walk-in and appointment basis. They also offer online writing tutoring services and workshops about writing-related topics. For more information, go to http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc/, visit them on the first floor of the Steen Library, or call them at 936-468-4108.

**Course Calendar**

**Note:** This calendar is subject to change around *Piney Dark*’s publishing schedule.

**Week 1**

T Aug 29 – Introduction to the class, Go over Contract Grading, Sign Up for Presentation slots

Read Chapter 1
Read Steven Pinker’s “Good Writing”

R Aug 31 – Reverse Engineering Good Writing

Week 2

Read Chapter 7 and 9

T Sept 5 – Choosing the Right Word

Read Chapter 4 of Editing for the Digital Age

Read Steven Pinker’s “The Curse of Knowledge”

R Sept 7 – Obscure prose and jargon

Week 3

Read Chapter 10

T Sept 19 – Fragments and Comma Splices, Dangling Modifiers

Read Chapter 11

R Sept 14 – Punctuation

Week 4

Read Chapters 15 and 16

T Sept 12 – Sentence Structure – Active vs. Passive Voice

Read Chapter 17

R Sept 21 – Transitions and Organization

Week 5

Read Chapter 4

T Sept 26 – Traditional Paper Text Mark Up

Read Chapter 6

R Sept 28 – Microsoft’s Track Changes Function, Introduction to Piney Dark

F Sept 29 – All copy editing exercises due at 5 pm

Week 6

Read Chapter 2 and 3

T Oct 3 – What’s Technical about Technical Writing? – Introduction to Workplace Documents Project

R Oct 5 – NO CLASS – Instructor at a Conference
F Oct 6 – Contracts with workplace sponsors due at 5 pm

**Week 7**

T Oct 10 – Introduction to Workplace Writing

R Oct 12 – Genres of Workplace Writing

F Oct 13 – All *Piney Dark* pieces due

**Week 8**

T Oct 17 – Work on individual drafts of your workplace document

R Oct 19 – Continue to work on individual drafts of your workplace document

F Oct 20 – All individual drafts of workplace documents due

**Week 9**

Read Zine articles on D2L

T Oct 24 – Form Zine Groups, Brainstorm about topics

Read Chapter 21

R Oct 26 – Discuss Copyright, Plagiarism, and other legal issues

Work on winning workplace document

F Oct 27 – Final version of winning workplace document due

**Week 10**

T Oct 31 – Discuss research practices and how to judge the reliability of sources

R Nov 2 – Surveys, Interviews, and Experiments

**Week 11**

Read “Matters of Taste” on D2L

T Nov 7 – Discuss Matters of Taste

Read “Content that Clicks” on D2L

R Nov 9 – Discuss Content that Clicks, Marketing and the Economy of Attention

**Week 12**

Read InDesign materials on D2L

T Nov 14 – Introduction to InDesign, Create dummy pages using filler text

R Nov 16 – Stock Photo Search
Week 13

NO CLASS THANKSGIVNG BREAK

Week 14

T Nov 28 – Exchange articles with your group members, begin copyediting and proofreading

R Nov 30 – Finalize table of contents and begin importing content into your publication using InDesign

Week 15

T Dec 5 – Continue to work on your zine using InDesign

R Dec 7 – Continue to work on your zine using InDesign Wrap up, Evaluations

F Dec 8 – All zine materials due at 5 pm

Week 16

Zine Release Party During Final Exam Period TBD