TECM 5195: Editing Technical Documents

University of North Texas | Department of Technical Communication

Instructor and Course Information

Time: Online

Instructor: Dr. Vincent D. Robles

Office: Language Building 407K

Office Hours: Tu/Thr 3:00–4:30 CST

Email and Skype: Vincent.Robles@unt.edu

Course Website: http://unt.instructure.com

Course Description and Outcomes

In this class, you'll learn how to edit technical documents from copyediting to comprehensive editing.

By the end of this course you should be able to
- perform comprehensive editing, copyediting, and proofreading
- use and understand editorial terminology
- understand the profession of editing, including career possibilities and professional and ethical responsibilities
- revise for tone, clarity, conciseness, and continuity
- use effective onscreen editing technology
- become familiar with project management techniques
- use technologies related to editing

Course Materials

- Riley, K., Campbell, K., Manning, A., & Parker, F. *Revising Professional Writing*, 4th Edition.
- *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition (available online for free to UNT students: https://libproxy.library.unt.edu/login?url=http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/)

Course Assignments

The following are the assignments for the course:

Copyediting Exam, 15%
The exam will cover all copyediting topics covered in the first two weeks. The items will include a mix of long technical passages and shorter sentence-level items. You'll complete the test using Microsoft Word ("lastname_copyedit.docx") and upload it to Canvas.

Job Materials Edit, 30%
For this assignment, you will edit a set of job materials: either a job letter and resume or a personal statement and a resume. You will choose your client for this project. While you cannot edit your own job materials, you can locate someone entering your desired career field. You may also edit job materials for a family member, friend, roommate, etc.

I will evaluate your work based on the quality of your editorial revisions, suggestions, and the comments' potential for improving the persuasiveness of the job materials. I will also evaluate the tone you use to phrase the editorial suggestions and the attempts you make to establish goodwill with the client.

Deliverables
In one MS word document ("lastname_jobmatedit.docx") provide the following to upload to Canvas:
- Editorial Cover Letter that provides the URL for the job to which the client is applying
- Edited cover letter and resume in Microsoft Word with track changes and comments

Comprehensive Edit 30%

The final project will be a comprehensive edit (copyedit, style, organization, and visual design) of a website. I will provide one case scenario for you to use, or you can choose your own client website.

Deliverables

In one MS Word document ("lastname_compedit.docx") provide the following to upload to Canvas:
- Editorial cover memo that mentions the original website URL
- Suggested information architecture with an explanation
- Edited website content with track changes and comments (with screenshots to provide visual design consultation)

Exercises, 25%

In addition to the major assignments, you will complete a series of exercises in MS Word docs ("lastname_exerciseweek#.docx") and discussion board posts.

If you complete the exercises for a given week, you receive 100%, but that score will be averaged with the correctness of your performance. For example, complete exercises (100%) that get 15/20 items correct (75%) will receive a grade of 88% (100+75=175; 175/2=88). I would then calculate 88% of the total point value for that exercise. So if the exercise was worth 20 points, you would earn 18 points. Also, if you don't meet with me via Skype/office visits, I deduct 10% for each missed meeting from your final exercises grade.

Email and Communication Timeframe

Generally, I will respond to any email within 24 hours. During office hours, I'm available to Skype call or meet in my office.

Grading

The grading criteria serve as general guidelines for all course assignments.
- **A (90–100%)**: A manager would be very impressed and would remember the work when a promotion is discussed. In this course, that means work that is a pleasure to read, with excellent content, grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and visual design. In addition, work is thorough, complete, coherent, well organized, supported sufficiently, and demonstrates a superior understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.
- **B (80–89%)**: A manager would be satisfied with the job, but not especially impressed. This means that papers are well written and well produced, and demonstrate a substantial addition to the learning process. Work is sufficiently developed, organized, and supported, and demonstrates a solid understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.
- **C (70–79%)**: A manager would be disappointed and ask you to revise or rewrite sections before allowing clients and others to see the work. In other words, the paper may have clear, but underdeveloped ideas, or the paper might not engage or affect the reader. The paper may contain some errors in grammar, mechanics, or logic.
- **D (60–69%)**: A manager would be troubled by the poor quality of work. This level of work forces the reader to work too hard to understand the main ideas. The paper may contain incomplete information, have serious grammar and mechanical problems, lack clear organization, or be conceptually unclear.
- **F (0–59%)**: A manager would start looking for someone to replace you. In particular, work fails to address the tasks of the assignment, is so underdeveloped as to demonstrate incompetence, and is mechanically and grammatically incomprehensible. This grade will also be assigned for any evidence of plagiarism.

Homework

All homework, labeled "Do" in the course, is due by 11:59 p.m. CST on Monday evening.

Late Work

All late work will be marked down 10% for each day it is late.

Email Requirement

All students must have a valid UNT email address. I will use MyUNT to send mass emails to the class. I often use email to send class emails, including notices, updates, and advisories. It is your responsibility to check email regularly. Not receiving an email is not a valid excuse for late or missing work. You will also need your UNT email address to check your grade throughout the semester.

ADA

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will work with the Office of Disability Accommodation to help reasonably qualified students with disabilities. If you have such a disability, please advise me in writing of your needs no later than the second week of class.

Religious Holidays

In accordance with State law, students absent due to the observance of a religious holiday may take examinations or complete assignments scheduled for the day missed within a reasonable time after the absence. Travel time required for religious observances shall also be excused.

Please see the UNT Student Handbook for information on which holidays or holy days are covered by this policy. State law also requires that students notify their teachers at the beginning of the semester if they expect to miss class on a religious holyday during the semester but want to make up the work missed. Students will be allowed to make up the work provided they have informed their teachers in writing within the first 15 days of the semester. Once again, all assignments and scheduled work must be turned in before the date of the excused absence. University policy requires that students provide their teachers with an official notification card issued by the university if they want to make up any in-class work they missed while they were involved in a university authorized activity.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

It is your responsibility to become familiar with UNT's Policy of Academic Dishonesty. This policy defines the following forms of academic dishonesty:
- Cheating intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
- Plagiarism the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgement.
- Fabrication intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- Facilitating academic dishonesty intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity. If any course material is submitted that violates this policy of academic dishonesty, the assignment will receive a grade of "F" and appropriate judicial action will be filed. This action includes a report of academic misconduct to your college Dean and possible dismissal from The University of North Texas. There are no first-offense warnings regarding plagiarism.
- It is expected that plagiarism and the correct use (citation) of other's ideas (including print, digital, images and other media) are fully understood. Contact me if you're ever confused about what constitutes academic dishonesty. Misunderstandings, miscommunication, oversights, or lack of comprehension as to what constitutes academic dishonesty is not accepted.

Technology Requirements

To successfully complete this course, you should have access to a reliable internet source. You should also have these technical skills:
- Using the learning management system
- Using email with attachments
- Creating and submitting files in commonly used word processing program formats
- Copying and pasting
- Downloading and installing software

- Using spreadsheet programs
- Headset/Microphone (if required for synchronous chats)
- Word Processor
- Remember that your password is the only thing protecting you from pranks or more serious harm. Don't share your password with anyone. Change your password if you think someone else might know it.
- Always log out when you are finished using the learning management system.
- The following information has been provided to assist you with the technological aspect of the course.
  - UIT Help Desk: http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm
  - Canvas Support: https://clear.unt.edu/services/lms-support
  - Computer and Internet Literacy: http://clt.odu.edu/oso/index.php?src=pe_comp_lit

Netiquette Guide

When communicating online, you should
  - Treat others with the same respect you would show in a face-to-face classroom.
  - Err on the side of being too formal rather than too informal. You should take your cue for the right level from how your professor interacts with you and other students.
  - Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as it can easily be misunderstood.
  - Be careful with personal information (both your own and other people's).

Course Schedule

RPW=Revising Professional Writing, 4th edition; CMoS=Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition; Other readings on Canvas
Course weeks span Tuesdays at 12:00 a.m. to Mondays at 11:59 p.m., and all work is due by the end of the course week.

Week	Dates	Topic(s)	Watch	Read	Do
1	Aug. 28–Sep. 3	• Course Introduction • Technical Editing • Editing for Grammar	• Course Introduction • What is a technical editor? • Word 2016: Essential Training Lynda • Onscreen Editing • Editing Grammar	• TECM 5195 Policies and Schedule • Winninger • RPW 17–19 • CMoS 2.78–89 • Scan through CMoS 5; esp. 5.250 • Copyediting Test Assign. Desc.	• RPW 17 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1–5 • RPW 18 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1–5 • RPW 19 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1–5 • Discussion board response • Schedule Skype/office visit w/ professor
2	Sep. 4–10	• Editing for Punctuation	• Editing Punctuation • Editing Spelling • Editing Capitalization • Editing Numbers • Editing Quotations and References	• RPW 16, 21 • Stroud • Scan through CMoS 6–9	• RPW 16 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1–15 • RPW 21 "Check" 1–5 • Skype/office visit with professor • Discussion board response
3	Sep. 11–17	• Revising Content • Copyediting Exam	• Revising Informative Content • Revising Persuasive Content	• RPW 3–4 • Bush • Job Materials Edit Assign. Desc.	• RPW 3 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 14 • RPW 4 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1 (a–f) • Copyediting Exam due
4	Sep. 18–24	• Editing for Organization	• Revising for Placement of the Bottom Line • Revising for Paragraph Unity • Revising for Cohesion • Revising to Build Transitions	• RPW 6–9 • Comprehensive Edit Assign. Desc.	• RPW 6 "Check" 1–5 • RPW 7 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1 • RPW 8 "Check" 1–4; "Apply" 1–3 • RPW 9 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1–2 • Organization Exercise • Discussion board response
5	Sep. 25–Oct. 1	• Editing for Style and Tone	• Revising for Conciseness • Revising for Parallel Structure • Revising Active and Passive Voice • Revising Word Choice • Revising to Improve Tone	• RPW 11–15	• RPW 11 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1–5 • RPW 12 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1–5 • RPW 13 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1–2 • RPW 14 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1 • RPW 15 "Check" 1–5; "Apply" 1, 3 • Style and Tone Exercise • Discussion board response • Schedule Skype/office visit w/ professor
6	Oct. 2–8	• Editor-Author Relationships • Editorial Comment Phrasing	• Editor-Author Relationships • Linguistic Politeness and Editing	• Mackiewicz & Riley • Comment Phrasing Handout • Goodwill Client Memo Example	• Comment Decision Exercise • Discussion board response • Skype/office visit with professor
7	Oct. 9–15	• Revising Graphics • Revising Format	• Revising Graphics • Revising Format	• RPW 5, 10 • CMoS 3.8–14; 21–37; 41–46; 50–88	• RPW 5 "Check" 1–5; RPW 10 "Check" 1–5 • Data Display Exercise • Discussion board response • Job Materials Edit due
8	Oct. 16–22	• Work Week • Final Project	• none	• none	• Comprehensive Edit due • Course Evaluation