

The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies
Master of Media in Journalism and Communication
MJCOM 9507 Winter 2019

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Sheila Hannon
Office: Wednesdays – before and after class.
Other times by appointment. Please email to arrange a time.
Phone: 519-572-7923 (Cell)
E-Mail: shannon2@uwo.ca
Communications on class days: text my cell 519 572 7923

Class Information

Class times: **Wednesday 1:30 to 4:20 p.m.**
Class time in **FNB 3050**, 1:30 – 2:20p.m.; Lab time in **FNB 3010**, 2:30 – 4:20 p.m.
This is an interactive course – we will learn by doing. While there will be an instructed/lecture portion, much of your learning will result from group work and assignments, both in and out of class.

Editing

Editors are often called unsung heroes. Writers love 'em – but also hate 'em. Editors ensure that written material is clear and concise; they correct punctuation, spelling and grammar. But they must also produce text that is understandable, has context, and is fair. Their work may repair a text that lacks clarity or – worst of all – is just plain boring. Unlike authors, editors do not receive public recognition. Editors work behind the scenes but they are worth their weight in gold.

MMJC 9507 covers the theory and practice of the many-layered editing process. Students will learn about different types of editing -- from high-level strategic editorial decisions to basic copy editing.

We will consider how editorial work is affected by news judgment, fairness, and word usage in conjunction with the critical thinking and writing skills needed to polish text for publication. The practical aspects include copy editing, headlines, cutlines, style guides, (and, yes, grammar and punctuation).

Sessions will be split between the classroom and the lab. There will be in-class exercises, quizzes, editing of copy, short writing assignments, an editing assignment in conjunction with other specialization classes (if possible), and other activities designed to strengthen our command of the written word. The course will consider editing for multiple applications – in both journalism and communication, print, online and mobile.

Whether you become a professional editor – either in communications or journalism – you will always be required to produce clean, concise written work. And this course will help you become a careful editor of your own writing and that of others.

Course Goals / Learning Outcomes

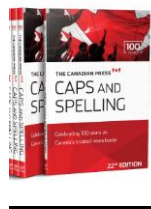
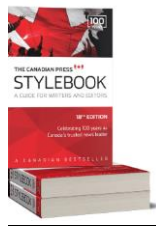
At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the role of editors and how they fit into contemporary newsrooms and communications firms
- Identify news values and apply them in editing situations
- Use professionally accepted (CP) guidelines in writing and editing situations
- Edit news stories and/or communications texts for greater clarity and stronger structure
- Edit for grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Write engaging headlines and cutlines for multiple applications
- Identify ethical concerns relating to the role of the editor in journalism and/or communications, and evaluate the appropriate response
- Develop interpersonal skills needed to communicate with writers during editing
- Exhibit the professionalism expected in the workplace concerning deadlines, accuracy, and working relationships

Course Tools and Learning Materials

OWL: Western's online learning platform will be our primary tool for communication. Please **regularly** check the announcements as well as your email. Readings and information on assignments will be posted on the site.

Resources:



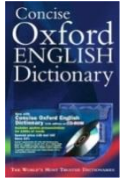
- *CP Caps and Spelling – 22nd ed*
- *CP StyleBook - 18th ed*

Please bring both to class.

Alternately, you may purchase online access.

It is important to have the most recent editions of both texts.

- An online grammar/style resource: Newsroom 101. You will need to purchase access. Approximate cost is less than \$50.
- Strunk and White *The Elements of Style* – available in print or online
- Links to other required or suggested readings will be posted on the course site



You should also have access to

- A Canadian dictionary – the *Oxford English Dictionary* is preferred
- A comprehensive Canadian grammar book

As communicators and journalists, you should also

- Read at least one newspaper daily – electronic and/or hard copy
- List to, or view, broadcast and online news
- Be tuned in to Twitter and other relevant social media

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Expectations: Because this is a graduate class, emphasis is placed on rigorous engagement with the course materials and active participation in class discussion. It is expected that students will attend each class, have completed the required readings or assignments, and be prepared to participate thoughtfully and respectfully in discussion and activities on an ongoing basis.

Class attendance is not only mandatory, but part of your professional development.

Arrive – on time – prepared and ready to participate.

This link outlines the FIMS expectations for attendance:

http://intranet.fims.uwo.ca/graduate/academic_programs/mmjc/attendance_requirements.html

Of particular importance is the guideline: **Skipping a class in order to meet a production deadline or to complete an assignment for another course is not excusable.**

Any valid absences (health-related or family emergencies) should be approved by the instructor in advance, or as soon as practical.

Editing demands flexibility and an ability to communicate constructively with your colleagues. A sense of humour and a willingness to help others are important when deadlines are approaching.

Evaluation:

| Assignment | | Due Date |
|---|-----|---------------------------------|
| Editing/Proofreading midterm | 15% | Feb. 27 |
| Final assessment | 25% | April 10 |
| Collaborative Editing Assignment (with another MMJC class) | 20% | TBA (End of March/early April) |
| In-class Quizzes/ Classwork /Professionalism | 20% | Ongoing throughout term |
| Completion of assigned online exercises | 20% | By March 15 |

Midterm and Final Assessments:

These will involve in-class completion of editing and writing tasks to assess skills covered. As an editor, you will be required to complete writing and editing assignments with time constraints. In your professional life, you will be tested under deadline pressure every day!

Collaborative Editing Assignment: (20%)

If this can be arranged in conjunction with other MMJC classes, this assignment will involve editing the work of students, providing feedback to the writer, and a written discussion of the editing process.

(If this is not possible, another editing assignment will be substituted.)

In-class or At-home Quizzes and Assignments/Class Work: (20 %)

As part of your professionalization, deadlines, accountability and consistency of work are important. Active participation in all classes, discussions, and group work is expected.

If you are *absent from class*, it is YOUR responsibility to catch up on missed work. If you do not submit a take-home assignment on the day it is due, your grade will be zero. You cannot make up missed in-class assignments.

Class Work will involve exercises or other assignments, completed at home or during class. These may involve writing, editing, or other relevant skills. These may be marked on a pass/fail basis. All exercises or assignments must be submitted by the end of the class to pass unless the instructor approves later submission.

In-class Quizzes: Short pop quizzes will be conducted in class during the term to assess your understanding of the readings for that week, CP style, grammar, or current news or communications issues. Weekly CP quizzes will be a major portion of this mark.

If you are absent, your mark will be zero. If you have a doctor's certificate, or a valid reason provided by email to the instructor prior to class, the absence may be excused and the missed work will not detract from your grade.

Online Exercises Newsroom 101: (20%)

A strong command of grammar, punctuation, and usage is essential for a successful editor. This component involves completing online exercises on your own time. Assigned modules and completion dates will be available in class. In-class work and quizzes may test the work done in Newsroom. Completion of the assigned modules in a timely manner is the key to success.

Contacting the instructor

E-mail: Students should regularly check the course website and their UWO accounts for important announcements and additional information.

Please allow a 24-hour turnaround – and please do not expect responses over the weekend.

Any email correspondence should have MMJC 9507 in the subject headline. Use **only** the OWL website and your UWO email account.

**Notes from the Dean's Office of the
Faculty of Information and Media Studies**

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Plagiarism: Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. Plagiarism is a major academic (and journalistic) offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under licence to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Academic Accommodation

Medical Accommodation

For Western University policy on accommodation for medical illness, see:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Student Medical Certificate (SMC): studentservices.uwo.ca under the Medical Documentation heading

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

For work worth less than 10% of the final grade, the instructor will consider requests for academic accommodation on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or by appointment in office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may, however, decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor. If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire or some other exceptional crises, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request.

Bereavement

Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation.

For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation.

Students seeking additional bereavement leave for religious or other reasons should contact their Academic Counsellors, and provide valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. <http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

Further specific information is given in the Western Academic Calendar.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Western's "Health and Wellness" http://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Other support services on campus:

Office of the Registrar: www.registrar.uwo.ca

Student Development Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca

Psychological Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/psych

Services for Students with Disabilities: www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd

Accessibility Information: www.accessibility.uwo.ca/

Writing Support Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing

Learning Skills Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning

Indigenous Services: indigenous.uwo.ca/

International and Exchange Student Centre: www.sdc.uwo.ca/int

Career Centre at Western: www.success.uwo.ca/careers/