

The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies
Master of Media in Journalism and Communication
MJCOM 9507 **Editing** Winter 2023

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Sheila Hannon
Office Hours: Please email to arrange a time.
Phone: 519-572-7923 (Cell)
E-Mail: shannon2@uwo.ca
Quick response: smehanno@gmail.com
Class time:
Wednesdays 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. FNB 3050



This class will explore editing in both communications and journalism.

MJCom 9507 is an interactive course: we learn by doing.

During our time together, I will teach and lead discussion. But a large portion of your learning will evolve from in-class activities and at-home assignments that give you opportunities to put our learning into practice.

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in MMJC, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Patience, understanding and mutual respect will help us make this program an outstanding personal and educational experience. (And enjoyable! I look forward to sharing this journey with you.)

Editing

Editors are 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 also ensure information is understandable, contextualized and fair. Editors may repair a text that lacks clarity or – even worse – 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.

MJCOM 9507 covers the theory and practice of the multi-layered editing process. Students will learn about different types of editing -- from high-level strategic editing to fundamental copy editing.

We will consider how editorial work is affected by news judgment, fairness and ethics 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 may include in-class exercises, quizzes (especially on CP style), editing of copy, short writing assignments, and other activities designed to strengthen our command of the written word. The course will consider editing for multiple applications – in journalism, communications, and other areas, and for a variety of applications: print, online and mobile.

As a communicator, you will always be required to produce clean, concise written work. This course will equip you to become a careful editor of your own writing and that of others.

Land Acknowledgement: Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London.

The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population.

Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

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, communications firms and other organizations
- 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 an editor in journalism and/or communications, and determine the appropriate response
- Develop interpersonal skills needed to communicate with writers during the editing process
- 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.



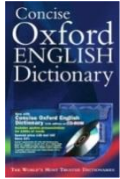
Resources: For those who love handling a physical book:

CP Caps and Spelling – 23rd ed.

CP Stylebook - 19th ed.

Or, even better, access the online versions through the FIMS library licence!

- An online grammar/style resource: **Newsroom 101**. You will need to purchase access. Approximate cost is less than \$35. (I will provide details re access in the first class.)
- Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style* – print or online. (Optional)
- Links to other required or suggested readings will be posted on the course site.



You should 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
- Listen to, or view, broadcast and online news
- Be active on relevant social media

Course Requirements and Evaluation

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. When we are using Virtual delivery, please respect Class Netiquette: attend from a quiet location, appear with a non-distracting background, refrain from engaging in behavior that would be inappropriate in a classroom (e.g. eating, lounging, using a treadmill – I think you get the picture!) And speaking of which, please keep your camera turned on. It makes the class so much better.

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

Valid absences (health-related or family emergencies) should be approved by the instructor in advance, or as soon as practical. Meeting a production deadline or completing an assignment for another course are not valid reasons for skipping class.

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 approach.

Dates to remember:

Western Reading Week: February 20 - 24, 2023. No classes are held during this week.

Production Week: March 20 - 24, 2023. Students take part in special production-week exercises

Evaluation:

Assignment		Due Date
Editing midterm	20%	Feb. 15
Editing Assignment (for another MMJC class)	30%	TBA (Week 10 or 11)
In-class Exercises / CP quizzes/ Classwork/ Professionalism	20%	Ongoing throughout term
Editor’s Notebook	10%	April 5 (Draft) April 8 Final Version
Newsroom 101 Completion of online exercises	20%	<u>By</u> March 1

Midterm Assessment: (20%)

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!

Editing Assignment: (30%)

This assignment involves editing the work of a student, providing feedback to the writer, and a written discussion of the editing process.

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

“In-class” and At-home Quizzes and Assignments/Professionalism: (20%)

Professionalism: The MMJC is a graduate program designed to prepare you for a career.

The skills that will make you a valued employee will also give you success in this program: attendance, punctuality, contributions to class discussions, attitude, quality of your work, your willingness to help others, and your ability to work well in a team.

And don’t forget your communication with your instructors. Grammar and spelling matter. Your communication should always be professional!

Class Work will involve exercises or other assignments, completed at home or during class. 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 to assess your understanding of the readings for that week, CP style, grammar, or current news or communications issues.

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

Editor's Notebook: (10%)

The Editor's Notebook is your one-page take-away from the course. Consider it your personal style guide that you will collect as the course proceeds: useful nuggets you will need as an editor.

Newsroom 101 online exercises: (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 MJCOM 9507 in the subject headline. Use the OWL website and your UWO email account.

One-on-One Consultations: I am available for advice or assistance via Zoom or another convenient virtual platform. Contact me via email to set up a time.

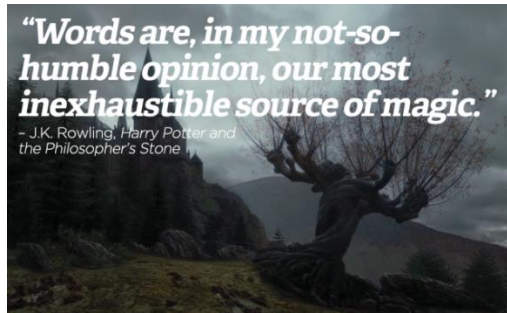
Marking: In the MMJC program, story-telling excellence is one of our core values. As an editor, your role is to help the writer produce stories that are clear and understandable but also outstanding and spellbinding. Technical values – spelling, grammar, sentence structure and so on – are an important aspect of ensuring clear communication. These basic concepts apply whether you are editing communications material, journalism stories or other genres of communication.

A-range work: When you finish your editing, the text has a strong story element, clearly communicates its message, and has flawless textual features. In other words, the text is ready to publish.

B- range work: The edited text is solid: clear writing, logical structure. Proficient editing means there only minor edits are needed prior to publishing.

C-range work: The text may exhibit a weak story line, lack of journalistic or communications judgment, confusing story structure and/or weak writing.

Deadlines: Deadlines are deadlines. As editors, we are often squeezed for time when writers miss their deadline. Assignments filed late will be marked as zero, unless an extension has been granted beforehand. Extensions may be granted with or without penalty at the instructor's discretion.



Welcome to my world! Let's explore the magic together.

Schedule of Topics (Subject to change)

Week 1 What is Editing?

Week 2 Editing for Story

Week 3 Editing for Story Part II Technical Editing

Week 4 Principles of Good Writing and Editing Clarity, Plain Language, Diversity and Sensitivity

Week 5 Writing Clearly and Concisely – The Editor's Tool Kit

Week 6 Editing for Communications and Business; Writing Persuasively

Week 7 Headlines and Cutlines; Midterm Assessment – Details to follow

Week 8 Editing Visual Elements, Charts, Multi-Media

Week 9 Online Editing

Week 10 Credibility; Plagiarism; Accountability

Week 11 Production Week! March 20 – 24

No dedicated editing class this week. The Production Week schedule and assignments will be developed in conjunction with other MMJC classes.

Week 12 Editing in Other Realms – Academic, Scientific, Technical

Week 13 Editing – The Big Picture

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

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education Western (AEW):

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with **Accessible Education Western (AEW)**, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both **AEW** and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted

literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

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.

Duplication of assignments between courses is an 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/