

# Journalism 330 & 330L: Editing

Fall 2009, Monday & Wednesday, 2-3:40 p.m.  
MZ 362

**Instructor:** Tim Whyte

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**Office hours:** Noon-2 p.m. Monday, 1-2 p.m. Wednesday (MZ337, part-timer office across from third-floor elevator)

**Prerequisite:** Proof of a C or better in J310

## COURSE OUTLINE

Journalism 330 and 330L, Editing, is designed to teach upper-division journalism majors the skills and knowledge necessary to perform the job of a copy editor, including rewriting stories, handling wire copy, writing headlines, checking facts and improving grammar, language and style. While the course is most often couched in terms of daily newspaper journalism, the skills and attitudes explored are relevant and applicable to most other forms of journalism, including magazines, public relations, broadcast and online media. In addition, specific discussion of editing for those media will be included, and students will be encouraged to understand and apply the editor's function in a multimedia environment. The course also will include discussion of legal issues and editing, the importance of critical evaluation skills, and typography, design and layout. Even students who never intend to work as editors will find the course valuable in improving their own writing and editing abilities.

As in all courses offered by the Journalism Department, students in this course are strongly encouraged to broaden their journalistic experiences, with the instructor's help, by including in their work people and subjects such as ethnic, racial and religious minorities; the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians; and other similar groups. The intent is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community.

## REQUIREMENTS

You are expected to have a functional knowledge of the English language, including spelling, punctuation and grammar. You will be working under deadline pressure and are required to meet deadlines, just as you would if you were working for a newspaper, magazine or website. Unless otherwise stated, the deadline for submitting work is the end of each lab session. You are expected to read a daily Los Angeles-area newspaper and to watch a major (national) newscast. This will help you understand changes in journalistic practices as well as keep you informed of current events. Regular attendance in class is crucial in order to earn a passing grade, as there will be exercises and quizzes during lecture and lab time. If you miss one, there is no opportunity to make it up. There will be midterm and final exams, and there will be a semester project in which you will design and edit a newspaper front page and/or home page (details to be announced during the semester).

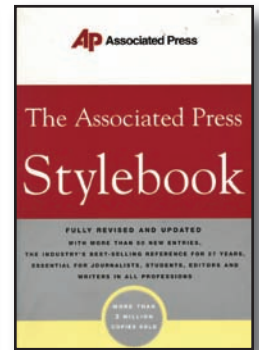
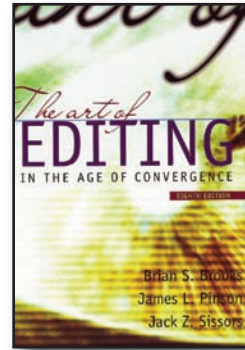
The Journalism Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating will receive a failing grade in the class and will be reported to the university for possible further disciplinary action. For additional explanation of the behavior defined as academic dishonesty, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult the current CSUN catalog (pages 534-539). Please also remember that much of the information posted on the Internet is protected by U.S. copyright laws. Passing this information off as your own is a violation of CSUN's plagiarism policy, and carries the penalties outlined above.

## EQUIPMENT

Texts: Each of the four required texts are available at the Matador Bookstore.

- The Art of Editing, 9th edition. Jack Z. Sissors, James L. Pinson and Brian S. Brooks.
- Student's Workbook for The Art of Editing, 9th edition. Sissors and Brooks.
- The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual, a recent edition.

Note: You must bring the workbook, stylebook and dictionary to each class meeting. You will be expected to have your workbook in class beginning Week 2.



## GRADING

A portion of most meetings will be devoted to in-class exercises, and there will be weekly quizzes that focus on style, spelling, current news events and the week's reading assignment.

Your semester grade will be based on the traditional 90-80-70 scale (there will be no curve):

90-100 percent:	A
80-89 percent:	B
70-79 percent:	C
60-69 percent:	D
59 percent and lower:	F

The instructor will award plus or minus grades to accurately reflect performance, and will also take into account class-room participation/preparation. Points will be awarded for the following assignments:

IN-CLASS LAB EXERCISES	Approx. 10 points each
WEEKLY QUIZZES	Approx. 10 points each
MIDTERM EXAM	Approx. 40-50 points
SEMESTER PROJECT	Approx. 40-50 points
FINAL EXAM	Approx. 40-50 points
Estimated total points:	300

**You can miss one lab and one quiz without penalty.** In the event that all assignments are completed, the lowest lab and quiz grades will be dropped. At the instructor's discretion, a maximum of one extra credit lab assignment may be offered during the final three weeks of class, and will be worth no more than 10 points. An extra credit assignment will be graded just as the weekly in-class lab exercises will be graded: 9-10 points for exceptional work, 8 points for "good" work, 7 points for "average" work, and so on.

**Fatal errors:** Misspelling a proper name (person, place or thing) will result in an automatic "D" for an assignment. Similarly, any "gross factual error" will result in an automatic D. This includes, for example, an incorrect number or fact in a headline. In such cases, the grade may be reduced even further by additional errors.

**Weekly quizzes:** Will be brief — short-answer questions — and will include questions about style, prominent news events, spelling and the weekly reading assignments.

**Reading:** You are expected to keep up with the reading as noted on the class schedule. The chapters and pages indicated on the syllabus should be read *before* coming to class on a given week. (Example: Before coming to class on Week 2, you should have read the reading assignment listed for Week 2.)

**Semester Project:** By semester's end, you will design and edit a newspaper front page using all of the skills taught in this course, including copy editing, page layout and headline writing. Some lab assignments will be designed to be done in conjunction with the semester project. Additional details will be provided by the instructor.

**"NORMAL" CLASS SCHEDULE:** The instructor reserves the right to alter the class schedule as needed based on any circumstances that may arise. However, the "normal" weekly class schedule will be as follows:

**Mondays:** Review of the week's reading and lecture material, followed by the weekly quiz

**Wednesdays:** Lab assignments

## **COURSE OUTLINE (pending approval of faculty furlough schedule)**

**Week 1, Aug. 24-26:** Intro to course, editing, and editing symbols.

**Lab 1:** Copy fixing

**Week 2, Aug. 31-Sept. 2:** Changes in the media and audience; Basic news story review; roles and responsibilities

Reading: Chapters 1, 2, 3

**Lab 2:** Style exercises

**Week 3, Sept. 7-9:** Style, editing skills, readability, language

Reading: 6

**Lab 3:** Style exercises

**\* No class meeting Monday, Sept. 7, Labor Day holiday**

**Week 4, Sept. 14-16:** News judgment, leads, accuracy, objectivity and fairness

Reading: 4

**Lab 4:** Local copy, style

**Week 5, Sept. 21-23:** Legal issues and editing, ethics; sensitivity and stereotyping; taste and tone.

Reading: 5, SPJ Code of Ethics (double quiz)

**Lab 5:** Local copy

**Week 6, Sept. 28-30:** "Holistic Editing," story types, review

Reading: 7

**Lab 6:** Local copy

**Week 7, Oct. 5-7:** Wire services; handling wire copy, rewriting and compiling

Reading: 10 (pages 293-308)

**Lab 7:** Wire copy, compiling

**Week 8, Oct. 12-14:** Midterm exam

**No class meeting Monday, Oct. 12, due to faculty furlough (midterm exam Wednesday, Oct. 14)**

**Week 9, Oct. 19-21:** Newspaper design and layout

Reading: 10 (pages 308-317, design section only)

**Lab 8:** Front-page layout

**Week 10, Oct. 26-28:** Headline writing

Reading: 8

**Lab 9:** Headline writing

**Week 11, Nov. 2-4:** Typography and photography

Reading: 9

**Lab 10:** Headline writing, photo cutlines

**Week 12, Nov. 9-11:** Other media: Magazines and the web

Reading: 11, 12

**After quiz:** Intro to semester project

**No class meeting Wednesday, Nov. 11, Veterans Day**

**Week 13, Nov. 16-18:** Other media: Broadcast, PR and advertising

Reading: 13, 14

**Lab time devoted to semester project**

**No class meeting Monday, Nov. 16, due to faculty furlough. (Lecture & quiz Wednesday, Nov. 18)**

**Week 14, Nov. 23-25:** Wrap-up and review; lab time devoted to semester project

Reading: 15, 16 (last quiz of the semester)

**No class meeting Wednesday, Nov. 25, due to faculty furlough**

**Week 15, Nov. 30-Dec. 2:** Lab only, both days; Lab time to be devoted to semester project

**Week 16, Dec. 7-9: Lab only, both days. Semester projects: Printouts due to instructor at 3 p.m. Dec. 9.**

**Week 17, Dec. 14: FINAL EXAM, 3-5 p.m.**