

## **JOMC 457: Advanced Editing Spring 2015**

**Meeting time:** Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

**Meeting place:** 58 Carroll Hall

**Instructor:** Andy Bechtel

**Email:** abecht@email.unc.edu

**Office hours, 213 Carroll:** Tuesday/Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon

**Blog:** editdesk.wordpress.com

**Twitter:** @andybechtel

### **About the course**

OVERVIEW: Advanced Editing is a hands-on course that will build on your previous editing experience in print and digital media. We'll also explore the editor-writer relationship. This semester, you will be an editor at several news organizations, some real and one mythical:

- THE CARRBORO COMMONS and DURHAM VOICE: These are real publications, part print and part online. It's a joint project with students in JOMC 459, Community Journalism. The Commons and Voice are "intensely local" journalism. For these publications, you will edit the work of your fellow students. See more at [carrborocommons.org](http://carrborocommons.org) and [www.durhamvoice.org](http://www.durhamvoice.org).
- NEWS BUREAU: This is a new course in the j-school that will be similar to a wire service like The Associated Press. Teams of students in that course will work on story packages made up of text, video, photos and audio. On occasion, you will review and edit their work in progress.
- JOMC 452 (Business Reporting) and JOMC 584 (Documentary Multimedia Storytelling): You will edit student work from these courses; we will also create a website for the J452 course.
- THE TRIANGLE TATTLER: This is our fictional newspaper and website. It's a hard-charging regional news organization that is competing against the Herald-Sun, the News & Observer and WRAL.com. Its audience consists of readers in Orange, Durham and Wake counties.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- "The Newspaper Designer's Handbook" (7th edition) by Tim Harrower
- "The Subversive Copy Editor" by Carol Fisher Saller

- The Associated Press Stylebook
- Stylebook of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication available at [jomc.unc.edu/stylebook](http://jomc.unc.edu/stylebook).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: You must adhere to the University's honor code: <http://studentconduct.unc.edu/honor-system>

ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY: They are crucial, especially because many assignments will be team projects that require collaboration. If you miss an assignment because you are late, you may not make it up. If you miss class, you may only make up assignments if you provide documentation of illness or other cause for your absence. If you cannot attend class because of a university-related trip, please let me know ahead of time so we can arrange makeup work.

GRADING: Your assignments will be graded on a point system. The more important the assignment, the more it's worth. A story-editing exercise could be worth 100 points. In the end, I will divide the number of points you earned by the total possible points and use the following scale to calculate your grade:

- A = 93-100
- A- = 90-92
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 83-86
- B- = 80-82
- C = 70-79, with +/- ranges the same as for B
- D = 60-69, with +/- ranges the same as for B
- F = 0-59

## **Tentative schedule**

### **Thursday, Jan. 8**

Topic: Introductions.

### **Tuesday, Jan. 13**

Topic: Refreshing your editing skills.

Readings: AP Stylebook, A-M; section on social media. Saller, chapters 1-3.

Assignments: Style quiz; story-editing exercises.

### **Thursday, Jan. 15**

Topic: Refreshing your design/headline skills.

Readings: Harrower, chapters 1-3. Stylebook, N-Z.

Assignments: Style quiz; designing pages and writing headlines and captions.

### **Tuesday, Jan. 20**

Topic: Editing as curation.

Reading: [http://www.cjr.org/news\\_literacy/news\\_roundups.php](http://www.cjr.org/news_literacy/news_roundups.php)

In-class viewing: "Curating Content: How To Aggregate Coverage" webinar.

Assignment: Curating an email newsletter.

### **Thursday, Jan. 22**

Topic: Editing feature stories.

Readings: Harrower, chapter 7; AP Stylebook sections on food, fashion and religion.

Assignment: Writing features headlines; style quiz.

Readings: Saller, chapter 4 and 5.

### **Tuesday, Jan. 27**

Topic: Editing local news.

Guest speakers: Laura Fiorilli-Crews of the Raleigh Public Record and Mark Schultz of The Chapel Hill News.

Viewing: "The Sun Never Sets" documentary.

### **Thursday, Jan. 29**

Topic: Editing at the The New York Times in the digital era.

In-class viewing: "Page One" DVD about The New York Times.

**Tuesday, Feb. 3**

Assignment: Carrboro Commons/Durham VOICE.

**Thursday, Feb. 5**

Topic: Editing columns, reviews and editorials.

Readings: Harrower, chapter 4. Saller, chapters 9, 10 and 11.

Assignment: Editing opinion pieces.

**Tuesday, Feb. 10**

Topic: Alternative story forms.

Assignment: Using Storify to write and edit an FAQ, list or other ASF.

Readings: Saller, chapters 6, 7 and 8. Harrower, chapter 6.

**Thursday, Feb. 12**

Topic: Editing news obituaries.

Assignment: Compiling and editing a news obituary using Storify.

**Tuesday, Feb. 17**

Topic: Editing for plagiarism and fabrication.

Assignment: Fact-checking exercise; Carrboro Commons/Durham VOICE stories.

Guest speaker: Craig Silverman, author of "Regret the Error" and editor of "The Verification Handbook."

Reading: "Telling the Truth" e-book.

(<http://www.rjionline.org/newsbooks/aces>)

**Thursday, Feb. 19**

Assignment: Finishing work on Carrboro Commons/Durham VOICE.

**Tuesday, Feb. 24**

Topic: The centerpiece package.

Assignment: Editing/designing a centerpiece for print.

**Thursday, Feb. 26**

Topic: Editing beyond news.

Guest speakers: Ayse Erginer, deputy editor at the Center for the Study of the American South; Lindsey Alexander, freelance book editor.

**Tuesday, March 3**

Assignment: Carrboro Commons/Durham VOICE.

**Thursday, March 5**

Assignment: Midterm exam.

**Tuesday, March 17**

Topic: The front page.

Readings: Harrower, pages 88-97.

Assignment: Planning and budgeting a front page.

**Thursday, March 19**

Assignment: Putting together a front page.

**Tuesday, March 24**

Topic: Features with extra flavor: food pages.

Assignment: Putting together a food page.

**Thursday, March 26**

Topic: Editing and Wikis.

Assignment: Creating and editing an entry at <https://localwiki.org>

**Tuesday, March 31**

Topic: Photo pages.

Assignment: Putting together a photo page.

Readings: Harrower, pages 130-138.

**Thursday, April 2**

Topic: Photo slideshows.

Assignment: Putting together a "Day in Photos" slideshow.

**Tuesday, April 7**

Topic: Sports.

Readings: Sports guidelines in AP Stylebook.

Assignment: Quiz on AP sports style.

Guest speakers: Michael Lananna of Baseball America; Brooke Pryor of the Herald-Sun.

**Thursday, April 9**

Topic: More sports.

Assignment: Putting together a sports page.

**Tuesday, April 14**

Assignment: Carrboro Commons/Durham Voice.

**Thursday, April 16**

Topic: Business news.

Assignment: Editing and posting a business story from the JOMC 452 course.

**Tuesday, April 21**

Assignment: Editing content for JOMC 584, Documentary Multimedia Storytelling.

**Thursday, April 23**

Assignment: The art of the redesign.

Readings: Harrower, Chapter 8.

Assignment: Critiquing the Durham Voice, Carrboro Commons.

**Friday, May 1 (noon)**

Assignment: Final exam.

**Guidelines for grading your story editing**

Fact error: -25

Misspelled word: -10

Style error: -5

Garble: -5

Punctuation error: -3 to -5

Grammar error: -5

Redundancy: -5

Other offense: -3 to -25

You can get points by performing heroic acts of editing. These include breaking a long sentence into two sentences, tightening wordy copy and improving the structure of a story.

## **Guidelines for grading your headlines/captions**

Headlines and captions are worth 25 points. Here's how it works:

25: Shows unusual flair and cleverness; represents the story clearly and forcefully.

23: Solid, publishable; reflects the story and attracts reader interest.

21: Usable but lacks precision or feels flat.

18: Vague or difficult to understand; awkwardly structured.

16: Contains a major flaw; misses the major angle of the story; contains a punctuation error such as use of a semicolon where a comma is needed. Has unintended meanings.

0: Contains an obvious grammar error such as subject-verb disagreement. Has a misspelled word, fact error or libelous material.

## **Assignment: Guest Blogging**

For this assignment, you will write a guest post for The Editor's Desk. You can read the blog at [editdesk.wordpress.com](http://editdesk.wordpress.com).

**TOPICS:** You have plenty of leeway here, provided that the topic fits the mission of the blog as a place for "thoughts on editing for print and online media." Possible areas to explore include grammar questions, headline writing, news judgment and slideshows.

Write about something you care about and that matches the interests of the blog's readers.

**FORMAT:** The post should be between four and eight paragraphs in length. Include a suggested headline of up to 40 characters. Think of the post as a short essay in which you introduce your topic, provide evidence and offer a conclusion or recommendation.

Turn in your blog post as a Word file, submitted by email to [abechtel@email.unc.edu](mailto:abechtel@email.unc.edu). Include a sentence or two about yourself. Include suggested links in brackets, with the words you would link to underlined, like so:

Bono will be a guest columnist for The New York Times, the paper announced recently.

[<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/oct/24/bono-new-york-times-columnist>]

**GRADING:** This assignment is worth 100 points. I will consider these factors in grading your post: Timeliness and interest: Is the post about a current event or use a recent example? Does it have a "news peg"? Is the topic introduced in a way that will grab the reader? You will lose 10 points for each day your post is overdue.

**LINKS:** Does the post include relevant, specific links that help the reader understand your point? Also consider how linking is a sort of footnoting that can support an argument. Incorporate the links into the writing itself — avoid "click here" and similar phrases.



WRITING: You may have a "voice" for the post, and first person is OK. But keep the journalistic audience of the blog in mind and write accordingly. Avoid redundancy, jargon and other pitfalls. Use AP style and proper grammar and punctuation.

## BLOGGERS AND DEADLINES

JAN. 16: Bailey

JAN. 23: Brown

JAN. 30: Castro

FEB. 6: Chavarro Arias

FEB. 13: Feddeman

FEB. 20: Haney

FEB. 27: Harrington

MARCH 6: James, Jeffries

MARCH 20: Ladisic

MARCH 27: Lihn

APRIL 3: Niedzwiadek

APRIL 10: Noel

APRIL 17: Raymond

APRIL 24: Schanze, Upton

## **ACEJMC values and competencies relevant to this course**

- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.