

Editorial PROCESSES

Fall Semester 2018

COMM 313; 3 credits

Instructor: Ross F. Collins, Ph.D.

Good morning!

This is fall semester 2018 at North Dakota State University, Fargo. You are reading the syllabus for COMM 313, Editorial Processes.

You may get in touch with instructor Ross Collins by email at ross.collins@ndsu.edu, by calling 231-7295, by stopping at Minard 338B14 during office hours (2-4 Tuesdays and Thursdays), by appointment, or just stop by.

Email is the fastest way to reach Ross; he will try to respond within a couple hours. Class material and announcements will be posted to the Blackboard class management system. In most cases these will also be available directly from www.rosscollins.com. No password required.

Course objectives announced

FARGO, N.D. — A professor at North Dakota State University here today announced course objectives for COMM 313, Editorial Processes. According to Ross Collins, students are expected to learn:

- how to correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, word usage, leads, and AP style in written material;
- how to write headlines and headings;
- effective news judgment and promotional practices as they pertain to editing;
- effective handling of illustrations;
- principles of typography;
- design and make-up for print and multimedia. Basic InDesign and Photoshop software.

“My objective is to turn beginning mass communication students into precise and creative editors,” said Collins. “Editing is critical for credibility and quality in any publication or website.”

Bulletin description: Principles of media copy-editing, headline composition, publication design, photo editing, and computer editing. Prereq: COMM 200. Restricted to Communication professional majors and minors.

Collins attendance policy

What can you expect?

While some professors follow strict rules regarding attendance, Ross Collins believes students should be given the opportunity to make their own decisions. “I do not take roll,” said Collins. “We’re all adults here. You decide whether you want to come to class.”

Collins warned, however, that lectures will not merely “parrot the text.” He said he tries to add information not found in the book, or cover some areas in greater detail, so that students benefit from as much information as possible. “Of course lecture material will be on the exams, so if you skip class, how will you learn that material?”

What to expect: projects and examinations

You’ll need to prepare for two exams and two larger projects. In-class assignments will help you master the many skills you need to edit with precision. You’ll be doing some of your work using InDesign and Photoshop software.

The final grade will be based on:

Midterm exam, 120 points; final exam, 180 points; assignments/projects, 325 points. Tentative total: 625 points.

Grade percentages: 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; below 60=F.

In addition, the instructor noted that a number of in-class assignments will be given, using the sessions to practice the kinds of deadlines real editors face. “The deadline aspect means that you can’t make up the work outside of class. So if you happen to miss that day, you have to take an F for the work.”

Collins did admit that students occasionally must skip class for (perhaps) good reasons. “So okay, I’ll give you a break: miss **two daily assignments**, and at the end of the semester, I’ll drop the missed points from your final grade computation. Think of it your PTO day emergencies.”

Vital listing

What you’ll need for COMM 313:

- Required text: Collins, ed., *Editing Across Media. Content and Process in a Converged World*. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013). This text includes chapters by authors from around the country. Your instructor has designed it to reflect what editors actually do, along with a few vaguely amusing sidebars. Note: book sale profits help fund NDSU comm student scholarships.

Highly recommended:

- Brooks et al., *Working With Words*.
- *AP Stylebook*, published by the Associated Press.
- Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*. (A cute new illustrated edition of this classic is out, by the way.)

Daily bonus!

Editors learn to pay keen attention to detail. To help you improve your own skills, the instructor offers you this challenge: for every error you find in any published material, you will receive ONE HALF POINT of extra credit. This includes typos, misspellings, fact errors, grammar errors, usage errors. (Style is not included, as it depends on the publication.) Just copy or send URL, identify the source, correct the error, and submit. Ten points is worth an extra grade-A daily assignment! (15 pts. max.) Why not start now by finding possible grammar errors/typos in **this very syllabus?**

Tentative Schedule

Fall Semester 2018

Editorial
PROCESSES

Week One (August 20-24)

Introduction, importance of editing. Read *Editing Across Media*, Intro and Ch. 1. Study online readings 1 and 2 (see Blackboard for online reading links, or go to rossfcollins.com. Choose Classes, Editing.

Week Two (August 27-31)

The words. How editors work. Begin study of grammar. Read *Editing Across Media*, Chs. 2-3. Study online readings 3-6, plus the sneaky word list and proofreader's marks. *Note Reading 6 includes four video podcasts covering aspects of grammar.*

Week Three (Sept. 3-7; note: Sept. 3 is Labor Day, no classes)

The words, continued. How to edit. Grammar, spelling, punctuation, AP style, etc.

Week Four (Sept. 10-14)

The words, continued; clichés, word clutter, quotes. Study online readings 7-10.

Week Five (Sept. 17-21)

The words, continued; slow leads, accuracy, concise editing. Study online readings 11-13.

Week Six (Sept. 24-28)

Editing for the web. The big picture. Law, plagiarism and editors. Read *Editing Across Media*, Ch. 4.

Week Seven (Oct. 2-5; note instructor will be attending the American Journalism Historians Association convention Oct. 3-5, so no class Wednesday or Friday. An out-of-class project will be assigned.)

Begin headlines and headings. Read *Editing Across Media*, Ch. 5. Study online readings 14 and 15, plus "10 Common Typographic Pitfalls."

Week Eight (Oct. 8-12)

Headlines, continued. Read *Editing Across Media*, Ch. 6. **Midterm exam** is Friday, Oct. 12.

Week Nine (Oct. 15-19)

Typography, and headlines, continued. Begin InDesign.

Week 10 (Oct. 22-26)

Photos and illustrations. Writing cutlines. Begin page design and make-up. Read *Editing Across Media*, Chs. 7-8. Study online readings 16 and 17.

Week 11 (Oct. 29-Nov. 2)

Cutlines, photo proportioning, page dummying, page layout. Read *Editing Across Media*, Ch. 9. Study Online Reading 18. View "How they used to look: famous mass media, 1674-1974." If you need more help on dummy sheets, see link to instructor's YouTube video, "Dummy Sheets for Editors."

Week 12 (Nov. 5-9)

Computerized pagination for editors (InDesign). If you need more help, view instructor's podcasts demonstrating basic elements of pagination.

Week 13 (Nov. 12-16; Nov. 12 is Veterans Day, no classes)

Computerized pagination and publication design continued; newsletter practice exercise. Editing and convergence. Read *Editing Across Media*, Ch. 10.

Week 14 (Nov. 19-23; Nov. 22-23 is Thanksgiving break, no classes)

Pagination continued; editing a broadsheet. Working with pdfs and printers. Read *Editing Across Media*, Ch. 11.

Week 15 (Nov. 26-30)

Pagination, continued; editing a newsletter.


Week 16 (Dec. 3-7; last week of class).

Advanced design and editing; wrap up newsletter project, review for final exam.

Final exam period: 8 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 13.

University official notices

The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records. Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty. According to NDSU Policy 333 (www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf), attendance in classes is expected. **Veterans and student service members** with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible, and are encouraged to provide activation orders. As a member of the **Safe Zone Ally community network** of trained faculty at North Dakota State University, the instructor is committed to promoting an inviting and inclusive environment that is emotionally and physically safe for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) students.

 **Any students with disabilities or other special needs who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the Disability Services Office (www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices) as soon as possible.**

Want to know more?

Fowler, *Modern English Usage*. Many editions of this classic usage guide are available.

Kessler and McDonald, *When Words Collide. A Media Writer's Guide to Grammar and Style*.

Collins, *Weird Ways of News. A User's Guide to News Values*. Online: www.weirdwaysofnews.com.

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