

EDITORIAL PROCESSES

Spring Semester 2009

COMM 313

Instructor: Ross Collins, Ph.D.

Good morning!

This is spring semester 2009 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 at 231-7295, or by stopping at Minard 321A during office hours, 9:30-11 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

E-mail: ross.collins@ndsu.edu.

Class web site: www.ndsu.edu/communication/collins. Choose Classes link, scroll to COMM 313.

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, and media style in written material;
- how to write headlines;
- news and promotional practices as they pertain to editing;
- effective handling of illustrations and photographs;
- principles of typography;
- design and make-up of pages for print.

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

Collins added that the course would not only cover newspaper editing, but would emphasize editing for all sorts of publications, including newsletters, magazines and brochures.

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?”

In addition, the instructor notes that

What to expect: projects and examinations

You’ll need to prepare for two exams and a final project. In-class assignments will help you master the many skills you need to edit with precision. You’ll be doing much of your work using a word processor.

The final grade will be based on:

- Midterm exam, 120 points.
- Final exam, 180 points.
- Assignments/projects, 300 points.
- Tentative total: 600 points.

a number of in-class assignments will be given, using the 50-minute sessions to practice the kinds of deadlines real editors face every day. “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 with a sigh that students occasionally must skip class for good reasons. “So okay, I’ll give you a break: miss up to two daily assignments, and at the end of the semester, I’ll drop the two Fs from your final grade computation. Think of it as a bank account for emergencies.”

Vital listing

Here is a comprehensive list of tools you’ll need for COMM 313, Editorial Processes:

- The texts: Brooks, *Working With Words*, 6th edition; on-line readings at <http://www.ndsu.edu/instruct/rcollins/313editing/313resources09.htm>.
- CDs or flash/jump drive, to store your on-line editing projects.

Highly recommended:

- Brooks, *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!

Good 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 photocopy, identify the source, correct the error, and sign your name. Each ten points is worth an extra grade-A daily assignment! Why not start now with the obvious grammar problems/typos in **this very syllabus?**

Tentative Schedule

Spring Semester 2009

EDITORIAL PROCESSES

Week One (Jan. 12-16)

Introduction, importance of editing.

Week Two (Jan.19-23; Monday is Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no classes)

The words. Begin study of grammar. Read text Introduction for Students. Read on-line readings one, two, three and four.

Week Three (Jan. 26-30)

The words, continued. Grammar, spelling, punctuation, style, etc. Read text chapters one through four, and Appendix. Read on-line readings five and six, plus the sneaky word list and proofreader's marks (also can be found on back cover of text).

Week Four (Feb. 2-6)

The words, continued, grammar, word clutter, news values. Read text chapters five through eight. Read on-line readings seven, eight and nine. *Note: I will be in London this week working on a student exchange program with Thames Valley University, but will find substitutes for this week's class.*

Week Five (Feb. 9-13)

The words, continued, slow leads, accuracy, concise editing, editing for the web. Read text chapters nine and 10. Read on-line readings 10, 11, and 12.

Week Six (Feb.16-20: Monday is Presidents' Day, no classes)

General semantics, the big picture, begin headlines. Read text chapters 15 and 16. Read on-line readings 13 and 14.

Week Seven (Feb. 23-27)

Law, ethics and editors; heads, continued.

Week Eight (March 2-6)

Headlines, continued; typography. Read on-line reading 15, plus "10 Common Typographic Pitfalls." **Midterm exam** is Friday, March 6.

Week Nine (March 9-13)

Typography, cont. Working with photos and illustrations. Copy control and dummy sheets. Read on-line readings 16 and 17.

Week Ten (March 23-27; March 16-20 is spring break, no classes)

Work with pictures, begin page design and make-up. Read on-line reading 18.

Week Eleven (March 30-April 3)

Page dummied, page layout. Read "How they used to look: famous mass media, 1674-1974."

Week Twelve (April 6-10; April 10-13 is Easter break, no classes)

Copy-handling, computerized pagination.

Week Thirteen (April 13-17)

Computerized pagination and publication design cont.

Week Fourteen (April 20-24)

Pagination continued; working with printers.

Week Fifteen (May 27-May 1)

Pagination, continued, advanced design and editing.

Week Sixteen (May 4-8)

Advanced design and editing, wrap up projects. Last day of class is Friday, May 8.

Final exam period: 8 a.m. Monday, May 11.

University official notice: Work in this course must adhere to the NDSU Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct. This addresses cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or facilitating dishonesty. Instructors have the right to respond to a student's dishonesty by failing the student for the particular assignment or test, or even the entire course, or recommend the student drop the course.

Note: If you need special accommodations for learning, please let the instructor know as soon as possible.

Want to know more?

Baskette, Sissors and Brooks,
The Art of Editing.

Friend, Challenger and McAdams,
Contemporary Editing.

Artson,
Graphic Design Basics.

McClelland,
Adobe InDesign for Dummies.

Also on the instructor's web site!

- Special insider's info for students
- Travel stories
- Photographs
- Self-guided tutorials.

www.ndsu.edu/communication/collins