

JOUR 419 – Multimedia Editing

Fall 2019 Syllabus

Texts

- Associated Press Stylebook (2018 or 2019 edition required, or use the online edition free *only on campus* at www.apstylebook.com/the-university-daily-kansan)
- “The Associated Press Guide to News Writing” by Rene J. Cappon
- “Grammar Girl’s Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing” by Mignon Fogarty
- You will need to have access to a *reputable* (American Heritage or Merriam-Webster) dictionary or dictionary app
- You will be expected to keep up with current news (local, national and global). Read the University Daily Kansan, the Lawrence Journal-World and national news sources.

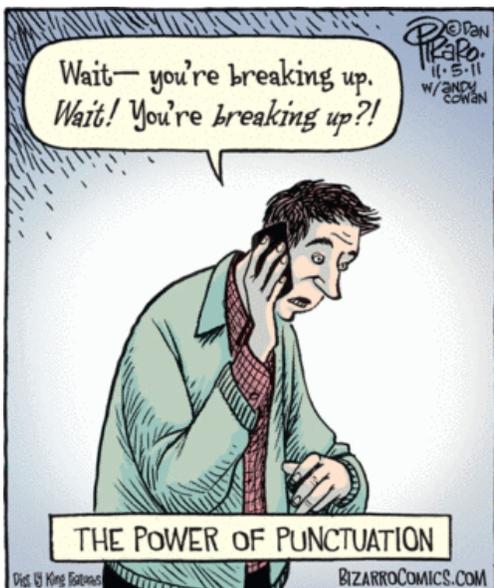
Instructors

9:30 a.m. section (Fraser 207): Lisa McLendon, lisamclendon@ku.edu, Stauffer-Flint 112

1 p.m. section (Summerfield 514): Gerri Berendzen, gberendzen@ku.edu, Dole 2056

Course description

Editing will help you clean up, slim down and polish writing – others’ and your own – to make it accurate, clear and correct. Editors are the grammar geeks and the nitpickers, but also the ones who cut, add, move, restructure and clarify writing, and the ones who check facts, do the math and ask uncomfortable questions – editors are **the last line of defense** and, most importantly, **the first readers**. If editors do their jobs well, no one notices.



The most important part of editing is **thinking critically**. This involves being skeptical, scrutinizing information and digging beneath the surface so that the story is as complete, fair and relevant as it can be.

And at heart, editing is about **understanding language**. Editors need to have a strong grounding in grammar, punctuation, style and usage. Through that lens, editors focus on issues big and small. Through proper grammar and usage, verified facts and correct punctuation they create clarity and trust, but editors also save news outlets from accusations of insensitivity, bias and libel.

Course goals

You don’t have to aspire to be an editor yourself to benefit from this class. That’s OK. **The skills you develop in editing will be useful in nearly any job** you hold for the rest of your life, plus they will make your writing better. In a nutshell, here’s what you should learn in this class:

- Learn to edit copy for **correct grammar, usage, style, spelling and punctuation**.
- Learn to check for **factual accuracy**.
- Learn to eliminate **bias** in language, make sure a **diversity** of voices is represented and ensure copy is **fair**, and discuss other **legal and ethical** issues that editors deal with.
- Learn to write effective **headlines, cutlines** and other **display type** for a variety of platforms, including **social media**.
- Learn to **organize** stories sensibly and to understand how words, data, images and display type work together to form a **coherent package**.
- Learn to check and critically evaluate **numbers** and **statistics** in news stories and polls.
- Learn to recognize **lapses in logic and judgment**, and to **ask appropriate questions** about missing or incomplete information.
- Learn to distinguish the approaches used in **print, online** and **broadcast** media.
- Learn about **metrics** publications use to **measure** and **track** readership.
- Learn to more critically evaluate the **credibility** of news and information sources.



Course requirements

Much of the work in this class will be hands-on, as editing is a skill developed through practice. Because this is a hybrid class, you need to keep up with the online material. Each unit's material and quizzes become available right after the lab period for the previous unit and need to be completed **before** that unit's first lab period. Homework assignments, in-class exercises and quizzes will reinforce and measure what we've covered.

Deadlines are very important in journalism, and so are strictly enforced in this class. Late or missed work will not receive credit. No exceptions. Zeroes kill your grade, so be careful about this. You are responsible for budgeting your time and meeting deadlines for assignments.

Homework and online assignments: These are due by class time on the date noted by the instructor. If you do not turn in a homework assignment on time, it will not count. No exceptions.

In-class exercises: We will do exercises in class to practice specific skills. Some are graded and some are not. If you are not in class, you may not make up the exercises you miss.

Error spotters: One "error spotters" assignment is due every week by lab Thursday. These are:

- **errors** in spelling, grammar, punctuation, usage, fact or math (**not** in AP style – it has to be something that would be wrong anywhere)
- that **YOU** see (you **MAY NOT** use something that someone else found and shared)
- in a **professional or commercial piece of communication**: a news story, TV super or crawl, ad, promo material, corporate publication, sign, brochure, etc. (for example, a friend's text or an internet comment doesn't count, but a CNN tweet or a mistake in a sign or menu does)



A good "error spotter"

Errors can be spotted in print, on TV or online. You need to submit a paper clipping, screen grab or photo of the error with **three pieces** of information: **1) where** you spotted it, **2) what** the error is, and **3) how** it should be fixed. **Do not** just submit a picture without comment. These are basically free points, but skipping them can negatively affect your grade, so be sure to keep up.

Quizzes: After you cover each unit’s online material, there is a **content quiz** on Blackboard over important concepts. This quiz can be taken multiple times and does not count for a grade, but you need a score of 100 percent to unlock the grammar/AP style quiz, which DOES count for a grade. Each unit’s **grammar & style quiz** must be completed by 11:59 p.m. the Monday of that week’s unit – it shuts off then and if you haven’t taken it, you get a zero. You may take each grammar quiz only once. Every Thursday in class we will have a short **current-events quiz** over the news. If you miss a quiz, you may not make it up. No exceptions.

Extra credit: **There is no extra credit. Don’t ask. Especially do not ask near the end of the semester if you blew off assignments and/or skipped a bunch of classes at the beginning of the semester.** Just come to class and do your work.

Grading

Grading for J419 is on a plus/minus system:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
93+	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	59-

Your final grade will be determined according to this breakdown:

40 percent: Graded assignments and exercises (two lowest grades dropped)

30 percent: Quizzes, grammar & style, and current events (two lowest grades dropped)

20 percent: Ungraded assignments and exercises, including error spotters

10 percent: Engaged participation

If you “need” an A in this class, it is your responsibility to work toward that A from the beginning, not scramble at the end. Please ask for help if you don’t understand something. A rubric is on Blackboard (in “Syllabus & Info”) to show you how news story editing assignments are evaluated.

Engaged participation

Engaged participation is crucial to success. “Engaged” means you do more than just show up. Come prepared, pay attention in class (that is, don’t be doing something else on your phone or laptop in class – it’s rude as well as distracting) and participate thoughtfully and respectfully in class work and discussions. Please ask questions whenever you need to; we’re here to help.

Attendance

Basic professionalism means showing up on time and prepared. Class time is an important part of your learning. We aren’t going to police your reasons for missing class (this means no “excused” vs. “unexcused” absences), but **expect your grade to suffer** if you miss more than a couple of classes. That said, stuff happens. If you cannot attend class, let your instructor know, preferably before class. If you miss a class, you will not be allowed to make up that day’s in-class work/quiz, though if you turn in that day’s homework **before class** you will receive credit for it. For situations such as long-term illness, serious injury or a death in the family, please talk to your instructor.

The fine print

Academic misconduct

In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas, thoughts, and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate the standards for academic integrity, you'll fail the course, and you may be dismissed from the J-School.

We strictly follow the code of Academic Misconduct detailed in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. University policies covering academic misconduct are spelled out in the current Student Handbook, which is available free in Room 213 of Strong Hall.

Here's some clarification:

If you use or attempt to use any unauthorized materials during a test, or if you give any unauthorized materials to someone else during a test, this is cheating. Unauthorized materials include notes, answers and signals. Copying from someone else's work is also cheating, as is working together on something that should be your work alone.

Plagiarism is stealing. It is taking someone else's ideas, thoughts, or words and presenting them as your own original work. This includes taking ideas from written sources, broadcast sources, online sources or work done by another student. Copying and pasting material directly from the Internet and presenting that work as if it were your own – that is, without quotation marks and proper attribution – is plagiarism. You will often need to incorporate another person's ideas, reporting or words into the stories you write, to make a point or to provide background. When you do this, **it is essential that you attribute that information**: explain where it came from and give credit where credit is due.

Fabrication means that you made up information, sources or quotes. This can include making up an entire interview or embellishing a fact, quote, or statistic to make it sound better. **Don't do it. Ever.** No matter how pressed you are for time, it's far better to risk the wrath of your boss than to risk your credibility as a journalist.

Content "recycling": The expectation in this class is that you've come to learn, to be creative, to stretch your imagination, and expand your skills. Therefore, all the work you do in this class must be original. That means no "recycling" of your previous interviews, assignments, stories or work from other classes. The journalism school regards any efforts to recycle material as academic dishonesty.

Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication or Falsification

The School of Journalism **does not** tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence or falsification of evidence.

Penalties for engaging in such behavior can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the school.

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult your instructor.

The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.

Plagiarism

Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

Fabrication and Falsification

Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Disability accommodation

If you have a special need that may affect your learning and for which you are requesting accommodation, KU Student Access Services in the **Academic Achievement and Access Center (AAAC)**, will help you in arranging accommodations and services. Information is online at <http://access.ku.edu/>, at the office in Strong Hall Room 22, or by calling 785-864-4064. Please contact your instructor privately regarding your needs in this course. You will likely need official documentation and requests from the AAAC before accommodations are made. Please realize that **accommodations cannot be made retroactively**, so talk with AAAC sooner rather than later.

Other student services

CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services): 785-864-2277

Campus Cupboard: 4th floor of the Kansas Memorial Union, room 435

J-School Nutrition Nook: In Stauffer-Flint Hall (location may vary due to construction)

Journalism School and financial aid policy on classroom attendance

"Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent."

"The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid."

Classroom lectures and notes

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all in-class materials presented by the instructor, are the instructor's property. Photography, audio or video recordings, or live-streaming of class meetings without instructor consent is prohibited. Pursuant to the University of Kansas' [Policy on Commercial Note-Taking Ventures](#), commercial note-taking is not permitted in J419. Notes may be taken on in-class and course materials for personal use only and may not be sold to any person or entity in any form. ***Note-taking provided by a student volunteer for a student with a disability, as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, is not the same as commercial note-taking and is allowed.*



J419 schedule of topics

Timing is subject to change depending on circumstances

Unit 1: Intro to editing; AP style

- What editing is and why we need it
- What AP style is and how we use it

Unit 2: Grammar and clarity

- Common grammar errors and how to fix them
- Making writing more clear and direct

Unit 3: Punctuation, quotes and concise writing

- Using punctuation correctly
- Proper punctuation and formatting of direct quotes
- How to make writing more concise

Unit 4: Fact-checking

- What facts you should check
- Where to check facts
- How to judge a reliable source

Unit 5: News judgment and leads

- Review what makes something newsworthy
- Ensure a news lead is clear, appropriate and accurate

Unit 6: Headlines

- What headlines look like across platforms
- Elements of a good headline

Unit 7: More on display type

- Forms of display type and how they differ, depending on platform and audience
- How to write clear, concise summaries of news stories

Unit 8: Libel (and other legal issues)

- How to recognize potential libel in news stories

- How to fix potentially libelous statements

Unit 9: Editing crime stories

- Ensuring crime stories are accurate, fair and properly sourced
- Ensuring language is free of libel and bias

Unit 10: Taste, bias and fairness

- Understanding your audience, and potential problems involving taste, graphic details and stereotyping
- Ensure fair coverage of news events and sources

Unit 11: Cutlines and working with photos

- What goes into a good cutline
- Editors' roles in working with photos

Unit 12: Broadcast style and writing for the web

- Elements of broadcast writing style
- How to turn a broadcast script into an online story

Unit 13: Math and graphics

- Review of percents, percentage points and other math that frequently comes up in news stories
- Editing charts, maps and graphics

Unit 14: Social media, online analytics

- How people read online
- Emphasizing accuracy in an era of immediate news
- Basics of online analytics

Unit 15: Pulling it all together

- Review of concepts
- Tips for professional development
- Final weekly quizzes