

San José State University
School of Humanities and Arts
Department of English and Comparative Literature
E106, Editing for Writers, Spring 2018

Contact Information

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Office Hours:	W 2:30–4:00; and always by appointment
Class Days/Time:	MW 12:00–1:45
Classroom:	Clark 238

Canvas

All course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc., will be found on Canvas.

The login site for Canvas is:
<https://sjsu.instructure.com/>

Use your standard SJSU login to access the class. We will cover basic login in class, but there are additional resources to learn Canvas here:
<http://guides.instructure.com/>

If there are any issues with your Canvas account, email me immediately.

Course Description

Writing is as much a craft as it is an art, and writers who excel in their fields understand the mechanics of their craft as well as the aesthetic effects their writing will have on an audience. Gone are the days where the genius author transfers her raw brilliance to paper

with the lowly editor sweeping up commas and semicolons behind her. As writers in the digital age, we are not only expected to understand the rules that hold written language together, but to be able to articulate why particular constructions are more correct than others, both in our critiques of the work of others, and in the defenses of our own writing choices. For better or for worse, the tortured solitary writer is now a team player—the degree of woe determined by how well she understands the editing process. Such knowledge is crucial to ensure that one’s genius reaches the light of day with as little tinkering as possible.

Additionally, there is always demand for quality editors in the workplace. Whether your goal is to become a freelance writer, copywriter, manuscript editor, technical editor, or managing editor—or just earn some burrito money while your novel finds its publisher—having an arsenal of technical and terminological expertise to back your writing ability will put you into a position for success, however you might define it.

This class is a boot camp for writers and editors in which we strip written language down to its fundamentals: grammar, punctuation, syntax, spelling, etc. As the semester progresses, we hunt increasingly bigger game, moving from phrases and sentences to paragraphs and entire documents. Our goal is to understand how to create useful texts which are geared towards achieving their goals. Thus, we look not only at technical errors of grammar, but also at stylistic choices that will improve clarity, and ways of reorganizing information in documents to better suit the needs of our readers.

Lastly, this class is designed to let writers understand the function of editing in the real world, grounding abstract skills into the realm of the publishing workplace. Any piece of printed or online writing you read has most likely seen multiple layers of commenting, revision, editing, and proofing by multiple people. This becomes more obvious when we encounter writing which has not gone through such rigorous review. A successful writer understands how editing fits into the process of getting published, as well as the potential for paying editorial gigs in the course of a writing career.

Department Goals

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
- Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
- Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.

Course Goals (Student Learning Objectives)

The ultimate goal of this course is to give you the technical background to be a successful editor, both of your own writing and the writing of others. This goal can be understood as a set of smaller goals. By the end of this class, you will be able to:

- Edit multiple forms of writing using the basic principles and techniques of copyediting and proofreading, including editing symbols and the use of style sheets.
- Demonstrate a mastery of English grammar, spelling, punctuation and usage so you can persuasively justify your editing decisions to other writers.
- Analyze and edit documents at higher levels of organization.
- Demonstrate proficiency with the fundamentals of document design and page layout.
- Demonstrate proficiency with elements of graphic design and editing graphics to support text.
- Perform the duties of a working editor in terms of clarity, organization, persuasion, coordination, and negotiation.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks

- Class Reader, Available at Maple Press (330 South 10th Street).
- Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, 6th edition.

Style can be found used and relatively cheap on Amazon or Powell's. Though I included the .pdf of the chapters we cover in the reader, I strongly recommend its purchase.

Canvas. Your homework assignments and worksheets will be posted to Canvas. Additionally, I will use Canvas to communicate with you during the week.

Every semester I seem to have a student or two who can't quite figure the technology out. If you are having any problems logging on to your account, please contact me! Your success in this class is dependent on this!

Other books you'll probably need to succeed:

- Dictionary
- Grammar Reference Book (*The Grammar Bible* by Strumph & Douglas is solid)

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Readings. Readings form the core of the class. You are not only expected to have done the readings prior to class, you are expected to BRING the readings to class as well.

Homework and Worksheets. To prepare for each class session you will not only read the text but complete exercises to apply what you've learned. Editing is a skill, acquired only through practice. **Lots and lots of practice.** You are required to bring completed homework to every class.

Occasionally, I will single out a particular exercise as a “worksheet.” These exercises will require you to demonstrate your mastery of several skills we've studied—and put it all together to edit a full text. See the schedule for the due dates.

Exams. There will be three exams, one covering each of the three types of editing we are studying: copyediting, substantive editing, and document editing. These exams are comprehensive. (Anything covered up until the exam is fair game.)

Assignments. I will do visual checks for some homework assignments, but all other work should be submitted as a Microsoft Word file unless otherwise noted. Word is still an industry standard, and you will need to be able to engage with the program at some level as an editor. SJSU students can get a free copy of Word (in MS Office) here: <http://its.sjsu.edu/services/software/microsoft-students/index.html>

The Department Website. E106 will be in charge of the editorial process for articles on our program's website. In teams, you will first edit articles for correctness and clarity, and then select the top articles for publication.

Final Project. For your final project, you will team up with two or three other members of the class to produce an effective version of a really messed up instructional document of my choosing. You will begin by rethinking the draft for a specific audience and use: a textbook chapter for professionals, a quick guide for those in the field, and an online text for the general public. We'll cover it in more detail one we get further into the semester.

Final Exam. This final exam is cumulative.

Grading Policy

Homework and Worksheets	20%
Exams	50%
Article edits	10%
Final Project	15%

Please note also the following departmental policy on grading:

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale defined in the official SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC, for No Credit, shall replace D or F. In A, B, C, No Credit courses NC shall also substitute for W (for Withdrawal) because neither NC nor W affects students' grade point averages.

This statement shall be included in all Department of English syllabi.

Grading Criteria: Most grades are points-based for right or wrong answers. However, the following sums up my criteria for grading assignments.

Assignments are assigned letter grades, from A+ to F.

An "A" is awarded to work that is consistently excellent, professional, and publishable.

A "B" is awarded to work that is consistently above average—and occasionally excellent. Despite some bright spots, a client or editor would probably pass it back for more editing.

A "C" is awarded to work that is developing. Though the potential is there, a client or editor would pass on this.

A "D" is awarded to work that is incomplete or way off the mark.

An "F" is generally awarded to work that is not turned in. This usually comes in the form of a zero.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a + or - grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Grades on Canvas. Because I want you to know how you are doing in the class at all times, I will be updating your grades on Canvas as I give them. It is part of my job as an instructor to return work in a timely fashion. It is part of your job as a student to make sure that I am entering correct grades for you. (Do not email me at the end of the semester with an errant grade from week 1!)

Grading Disputes. The only time I will ever change a grade is if I botched basic arithmetic and gave you the wrong point total, or if I entered your grade incorrectly in Canvas—both of which are real possibilities. It is up to you to make sure I've calculated your grade correctly, and that you bring any errors on my part to my attention immediately. (Obviously, if I erred in your favor, I'm not expecting you to speak up. That's on me.) Otherwise, any conversation will be about how you can do better on the next assignment. NOTE: There are more opportunities at the beginning of the semester to

improve your grade than in the final week.

My Classroom Policies

Attendance. As per university policy, I can't make attendance is not mandatory. I can, however, guarantee that missing more than a few days will significantly affect your understanding of the material. If you miss class **DO NOT EMAIL ME AND ASK WHAY YOU MISSED**. Refer to the syllabus and your classmates.

Please notify me if you are unable to attend class. Absences are excused if (1) you provide a doctor's note; (2) you provide proof of attending a professional conference or job interview; (3) you notify me of a religious holiday that you observe **BEFORE** the fact; or (4) your advisor emails me about a health- or family-related emergency.

Please, please, please don't disappear on me. If you are dealing with something major that's getting in the way of regular attendance, **LET ME KNOW**. Otherwise, I'm led to assume you've decided to quit.

Lateness. We're all late sometimes. I know many of you are coming from far away and are subject to broken-down busses, bad traffic, and crazy people on the train. **HOWEVER**, it drives me insane when people are the person who comes late to class every day. Don't be that person. If there is something that will make you late to class, whether reoccurring or not, please let me know. We check homework at the beginning of class. If you're late more than three times, I'm not accepting your homework for subsequent lateness.

Grading class participation. I expect everyone to participate in class. This means you are awake and engaged, having done the readings and the homework, are actively participating in discussion and are working constructively when we break into small groups. A participation grade allows me to reward those students who are actively engaged in each class, while being able to account for students who are routinely late, absent, sleepy, or engaged in non-class related activity during our brief time together. (Yes, I can actually see you refreshing your Instagram.) An "A" means always engaged, a "B" means mostly engaged. A "C" is sometimes engaged.

Late work. I don't accept it. Part of being a professional writer is, though Earth itself may be aflame, you meet your deadlines. All of them. I understand your life is complicated, with many responsibilities pulling you in multiple directions. If you are unable to attend on a day that an assignment is due, you must still turn in your assignment in to me on time. No exceptions.

Acting with academic integrity. In both your academic and professional careers, you are expected to act with integrity. You are in this class for more than a grade, you are here to emerge with actual skills—skills which are not developed through cheating. Though it most likely will not be an issue, any plagiarism, homework copying, or unauthorized

borrowing from your neighbor's brain will earn you an automatic "F" in my class, and I will push to see that you are removed from this university and all records of your attendance here are burned and cast into the South Bay in a mock burial of your academic career. Yes. It's that serious. Just do your own work.

Technology use. You should treat the classroom as a professional workspace. I'm encouraging the use of tablets, laptops, and even phones—whatever you'd prefer to read on. This has worked fine for me in the past, but I realize the temptation to refresh your Twitter feed as we delve into the intricacies of dangling participles may be strong. Emailing, texting, and engaging in unrelated activities are discourteous and distracting to me and your classmates. I begin the semester assuming you are adults with adequate impulse control, and will continue to treat you as such until proven wrong. Please don't turn me into a technology cop. There is a reason I teach college instead of high school.

Food and beverages. You are allowed to bring food and beverages with you to class. If said food happens to be a home-cooked meal from your grandmother, please bring extra for your instructor. I like my coffee black, without spit.

Transparency: My open door policy. I am dedicated to your success in this class, but there is only so much I can do in the classroom. I'm happy to talk with you at any time about the readings, assignments, and any other aspect of the course. Just talk to me after class, send me an email, or arrange to meet with me outside class. COME TO MY OFFICE HOURS! My highest compliments from students have always come from the one-on-one help I give out of class.

After this class. In addition to my assistance in this class, I extend to all my students an offer to help with any future writing issues which may arise once this class is over. In the past, I have assisted former students with cover letters, updated resumes, grad school applications, and have even helped with the abstract of a scientific paper. Additionally, for all students who receive an A in this class, I will happily write a letter of recommendation for any grants, schools, programs, or internships you may be applying to. Also, if you receive an A in this class, you may include me as a reference in any jobs you might apply to.

University Policies

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

E106 / Editing for Writers, S18, Course Schedule

Although the exams and due dates for assignments are solid, the rest of this schedule is subject to change, and most likely will change. I will notify you of any changes to the schedule in class, via a new document. I will make sure that there is ample time for you to make any changes to your schedule that you might need to. If in doubt, go by what is says on Canvas.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Jan 25	Intro to the class, survey, first-day torture exercises HOMEWORK: READ: Rew Chap. 1,2,5,6; Einsohn 3-28; DO: Ex1.pdf
2	Jan 30 Feb 1	Class Discussion: Intro to Editing HOMEWORK: READ: Rew Chapter 3,4,7. DO: Ex2.pdf Class Discussion: The Professional Editor, Editing Technologies (.pdfs) HOMEWORK: READ: Rew Chapter 9. DO: Ex3.pdf
3	Feb 6 Feb 8	Class Discussion: Grammar Review HOMEWORK: READ: Rew Chapter 10. DO: Ex4.pdf Class Discussion: Punctuation HOMEWORK: READ: Rew Chapter 11. DO: Ex5.pdf
3	Feb 13 Feb 15	Class Discussion: Punctuating in Action!!! HOMEWORK: WORKSHEET #1 Class Discussion: Go Over Worksheet #1, Editing Technologies (Advanced Word) DUE: WORKSHEET #1 HOMEWORK: DO: Ex7.pdf
4	Feb 20	Class Discussion: <u>Punctuation within Sentences, Summary and Review</u> HOMEWORK: READ: Rue Chapter 8 & Einsohn Chapter 5, pp. 121-145. DO: Ex8.pdf

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
4	Feb 22	Class Discussion: <u>Spelling and Hyphenation</u> HOMEWORK: READ: Einsohn Chap 6,7 pp. 151-195. DO: Ex9.pdf
5	Feb 27	Class Discussion: Capitalization, Numbers and Numerals, Review for Midterm. HOMEWORK: STUDY
5	Mar 1	Exam 1: Copy Editing HOMEWORK. READ: Rew Chapter 12. DO: Ex10.pdf
6	Mar 6	Class Discussion: <u>Word Choice</u> HOMEWORK: READ: Williams Concision (Lesson 7) DO: Ex11.pdf
	Mar 8	<u>Class Discussion: Concision.</u> HOMEWORK: READ: Rew Chapter 13. DO: Ex12.pdf
7	Mar 13	Class Discussion: <u>Building Effective Sentences.</u> HOMEWORK: DO: Ex13.pdf
	Mar 15	<u>Class Discussion: Effective Sentences, pt. 2</u> HOMEWORK: READ: Williams Clarity 1 (Actions) DO: Ex14.pdf Class Discussion: Clarity 1: Actions
8	Mar 20	HOMEWORK: READ: Williams Cohesion.(Lesson Five) DO: Ex15.pdf
	Mar 22	Class Discussion: Cohesion and Coherence READ: Rew Chapter 14. DO: Ex16.pdf
		<u>SPRING BREAK, WOOOO!</u>
9	April 3	Class Discussion: Developmental Editing Set up editing production teams. HOMEWORK: WORKSHEET #2
	April 5	Class Discussion: Editing for a Publication Begin Writing Life article selection process, assign editing duties. DUE: WORKSHEET #2 HOMEWORK: DO: Ex17.pdf

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
10	Apr 10	Class Discussion: Organizational Editing, Editing Technologies (Advanced Word, pt. 2) <i>Editorial production meetings.</i> HOMEWORK: Study for Exam
	Apr 12	Exam 2: Substantive Editing HOMEWORK: READ: VisualDesign1.pdf DO: Ex18.pdf
11	Apr 17	Class Discussion: Editing for Visual Clarity HOMEWORK: Finish Article Edits
	Apr 19	Review Exams, Proof Edits, Introduce Final Project DUE: Article edits HOMEWORK: READ: Rew Chapter 15. DO: Ex19.pdf
13	Apr 24	Class Discussion: Editing Graphics, Visual Design HOMEWORK: READ: Rew Chapter 16. DO: Ex20.pdf
	Apr 26	<u>Class Discussion: Document Design.</u> HOMEWORK: WORKSHEET #3
14	Apr 24	Class Discussion: Worksheet #3, review, Group Meetings HOMEWORK: Work on your Final Project DUE: WORKSHEET #3
	Apr 26	Class Discussion: Content Management Systems, In-Class Editing HOMEWORK: Read ProfessionalEditor.pdf
15	May 1	Class Discussion: Gettin' Paid as an Editor
	May 3	Group Meetings, Group Check-in

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
16	May 8	Putting it All Together, Group Meetings HOMEWORK: Keep working on your Final Project Discuss In-Class Editing
16	May 10	Final Project Due: Presentations, Wrap Up.
Final Exam	May 17 (Thursday)	Reg. Classroom, 9:45-12:00