

English 5503: Professional & Technical Editing

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Name: Professor Geoff Clegg
 Office: Bea Wood 234
 Office Phone: 940-397-6263 (please email instead)
 Cell Phone: 318-730-1743 (texting is encouraged)
 Email: Geoffrey.clegg@msutexas.edu

Course Description

Technical editing has changed over the last twenty years. Iterations of this course across the nation primarily focus on the basics of copyediting, comprehensive editing, and substantive editing of workplace documents. However, you will find that this version of technical editing expands the function of editing beyond proofing, learning editing marks, and working with plain documents. We will spend time with the expanded nature of editing to include topics drawn from the desired skills found in recent job advertisements.

Our eight-week intensive course will cover topics like: grammar, revising texts, creating accessible documents, content management, usability, XML, and more. You will learn more than just how to edit a professional text.

Prerequisite(s): Communication core complete.

Principles of and practice in comprehensive editing: substantive editing, copyediting, and proofreading.

Graduate Student Learning Objectives

- Develop understanding of **copyediting** and its role in line-by-line editing, spelling, grammar, punctuation, document development, publication, and use.
- Perform **comprehensive editing** (rhetorical dimensions--purpose, audience, context, delivery), copyediting, and proofreading.
- Gain experience with comprehensive editing of organization, style, and design.
- Use and understand editorial terminology.
- Use electronic tools to assist in the editing of text with greater emphasis on providing content feedback drawn from past graduate coursework.
- Understand the profession of editing, including career possibilities and professional and ethical responsibilities.
- Read and analyze academic articles in the fields of technical editing
- Write an analytical research paper in preparation for a conference in the field of technical communication

Summer Statement

Because this is a summer course, you will need to make sure you have set aside time Monday through Friday to read and work on quizzes/exams/assignments. We will be moving through material faster than normal, so be prepared to read a lot.

Textbook and Readings

- Cunningham, D. H. (2020) *Technical editing: An introduction to editing in the workplace*. Oxford UP.
- Readings on D2L
- Have access to a decent dictionary

ENGL 5503 Course Requirements (Graduate)

Assignments	Grade Percent
D2L Discussion posts	10%
Editing assignments x3	30%
Project 1: Editing for an Organization	10%
Project 2: Style Guide Assignment	10%
Final Exam	30%
Graduate Research Paper	10%

Graduate Research Paper Requirement

Because graduate students are required a separate assignment, you will produce a scholarly research paper on the subject of editing. I have provided some of the harder to find readings on D2L to help you gather some sources. This paper should be written as if you would deliver a talk at a professional conference, i.e. ATTW, CCCC, Pro-Comm ACM, etc.

Graduate students will produce a 6-8-page scholarly research paper using MLA or APA citation style.

Grading Policy

In this class, the following numerical equivalents for final grades are used: A = 100-90%; B = 89-80%; C = 79-70%; D = 69-60%; F = 59-0%.

Assignments

D2L Discussion Posts:

Discussion posts will consist of two parts: one responding to a prompt or reading due by Wednesday, and one that responds to a classmates' post. Post length is normally 150-200 words per post unless otherwise stated. These act as de facto participation since we are an online class.

Editing Assignments (x3):

You will have short to medium length editing assignments due throughout the semester. We will be focusing on medium copyedits, structural edits, and substantive edits in

response to different authors. These assignments will cover editing both native English writers and non-native English writers.

Projects (x2):

You will have two simple projects that test both your creative and editorial abilities. These will allow you to have documents for graduate (MA) or potentially PhD (for the current graduate students) application portfolios.

Final Exam:

The final will cover the whole of the course and work with material from your readings.

Paper Submission Format and Policy

All out-of-class assignments must be typed in Times New Roman 12-point black font with one-inch margins using MLA or APA format. By enrolling in this class, the student expressly grants MSU a “limited right” in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The “limited right” shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and for educational purposes.

Note: You may not submit a paper for a grade in this class that already has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in another course, unless you obtain the explicit written permission of me and the other instructor involved *in advance*.

Late Paper and Assignment Policy

Unless arrangements are made *in advance* for extenuating circumstances, you will automatically lose a letter grade for each day a paper is late, including weekends. If you can't make it to class on the day a major assignment is due, email me in advance and hand it in either during my office hours or into the main English office (216 Bea Wood Hall) by 5:00 the day the paper is due to avoid losing a letter grade for a late paper. A paper that is more than a week late will automatically receive an F, regardless of the quality of work. All major assignments must be turned in to pass the class. You will not be able to make up daily work and there is no extra credit.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the use of someone else’s thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical citation at the end and a listing in “Works Cited”)—whether you use that material in a quotation, paraphrase, or summary. It is a theft of intellectual property and will not be tolerated, whether intentional or not. I have a zero tolerance for any type of plagiarism. All incidents of plagiarism will be penalized (the paper will receive an automatic F), reported, and kept on file. The second incident of plagiarism in class by the same student will result in the student receiving an F for the course.

Any assignment created using ChatGPT or AI will be considered plagiarism and receive a zero score. Don’t even try it.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 397-4140.

Safe Zone Statement

I consider this classroom a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being – regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is my expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

Attendance Policy

Check D2L at least three times per week. Set a schedule for when you know you have time to do so.

Because this is a writing and discussion course and the work we do in class is designed to help you understand the readings and improve your writing skills, you must attend class to do well. Although I do not take daily role, your in-class writing and participation grades should ensure your attendance and preparedness. By failing to regularly attend class you will not understand the critical terminology and concepts necessary to successfully complete the daily writing assignments and larger papers. You are in college; come to class.

Writing Proficiency Requirement

All students seeking a Bachelor's degree from Midwestern State University must satisfy a writing proficiency requirement once they have 1) passed English 1113 and English 1123 and 2) earned 60 hours. You may meet this requirement by passing either the Writing Proficiency Exam or English 2113. Please keep in mind that, once you have earned over 90 hours, you lose the opportunity to take the \$25 exam and have no option but to enroll in the three-credit-hour course. If you have any questions about the exam, visit the Writing Proficiency Office website at <http://academics.mwsu.edu/wpr>, or call 940-397-4131.

Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change)

Theme	Date	Topic	Read Before Class	Assignment Due
WEEK 1	Mon 6/1	Introduction	Cunningham Ch. 1	Discussion Board 1 (DB1)

Basics of Grammar and Editing	Tues	Grammar	Cun Ch. 2	
	Wed. 6/2	Punctuation	Cun Ch. 13-14	Grammar Pretest (due by midnight)
	Thurs 6/3	Editing Grammar	Cun. Ch. 17	DB 2
	Fri 6/4	Spelling, Caps, Abbrev. and Spelling	Cun Ch. 15	Grammar Test
WEEK 2 Types of Editing	M 6/7	Editing	Cun. 3	
	T 6/8	Editing	Cun. 6	DB 3
	W 6/9	Editing and Style	Cun. 7	Exam 1 posted (Comprehensive edit exam of a resume/letter)
	R 6/10	Onscreen Editing and Track Changes	D2L	DB 4
	F 6/11	Organization	D2L	Copyediting Exam 1 due by midnight
WEEK 3 Writer-Editor Relations	M 6/14	Audience & Purpose	Cun. 12, 13 Annett's 11 Guidelines	
	T 6/15	Collaborative Editing	Cun. 14, 15	DB 5
	W 6/16	Editing Informative Prose	Cun. 16, 17 St. Amant	Copyediting exam (Editing an internal company document) posted
	R 6/17	Editing Persuasive Prose	Cun. 18, Burnett, Cooper, Weishausen Allen & Voss	DB 6
	F 6/18	Work on Copyediting Exam	D2L	Copyediting Exam 2 due
Week 4 Style Guides & Working with Non-Native Speakers/Writers	M 6/21	What's a style guide?	Cun. 8	
	T 6/22	Working with non-native writers	Cun. 9	DB 7
	W 6/23	Cultural Differences and User Instructions	D2L	Editing Exam 2 (Copyediting a non-native speaker) posted
	R 6/24	World Englishes?	D2L	
	F 6/25	Work on Exam 2		Copyediting Exam 2 due by midnight

Week 5 Plain Language	M 6/28	Intro to Plain Language Law	D2L	
	T 6/ 29	Plain Language and Vocabulary	D2L	Editing for an Organization Assignment assigned, Graduate Paper assigned
	W 6/30	Editing Plain Language	D2L	
	T 7/1	Plain Language Remixed	D2L	DB 8
	F	Corpus Linguistics and TE	D2L	Assignment 3 due Sunday.
Week 6 Accessibility	M 6/28	Rethinking Accessible and Accessibility	Cun. 10	
	T 6/ 29	Section 508 and W3 Standards	D2L	DB 9
	W 6/30	Alt-text for graphics	D2L	
	T 7/1	Editing captions	D2L	
	F	Making Websites compliant		
Week 7 Usability, UX, UD	M 6/28	Usability Intro	Cun. Ch. 9-10	Style Guide Assignment Assigned
	T 6/ 29	User Experience (UX) and editing	D2L	DB 10
	W 6/30	User Interface and editing	D2L	
	T 7/1	Rethinking editing and audience	D2L	
	F			Style Guide due by Sunday before midnight
Week 8 Final Week	M 6/28	Prep for final	D2L	
	T 6/ 29	Prep for final	D2L	DB Reflections (optional), Graduate paper due
	W 6/30	Final Review		Final Exam Opens
	T 7/1	Final	Final	Final Exam Due