English 302: Editing
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-11:15 a.m. | Colson G06
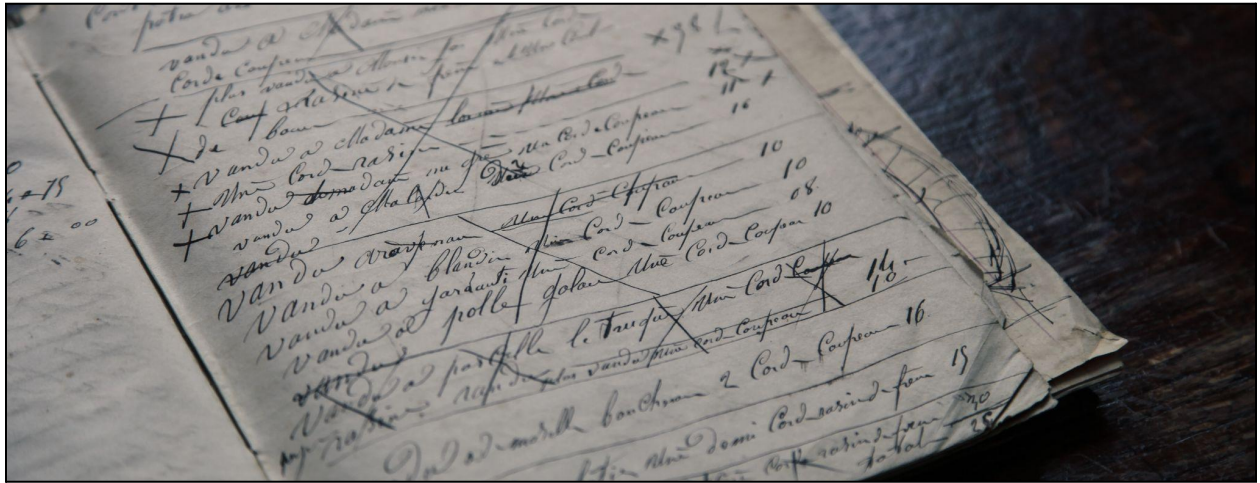

Image courtesy of Dim Hou via Unsplash

Instructor Details: Dr. Erin Brock Carlson, erin.carlson@mail.wvu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:15 a.m.-12:45 p.m. in my office (Colson 337) or by appointment–just send me an email and we'll find a time that works!
Course Links: Schedule and Classroom

Overview
Regardless of your relationship with language and the dreaded red pen (or MS Word comments), this class promises a comprehensive look into the world of editing. We will discuss practical and theoretical concerns, including: What counts as "editing"? Should editors focus on grammatical "correctness" or more on ideas? How can an editor anticipate readers' needs? Is slang ever okay? And hey, what is a compound-complex sentence, anyway? Throughout the semester, you will develop your comprehensive and detailed editing skills through practice in copyediting, proofreading, design critique, and situational analysis. Ideally, at the end of the semester, you will see yourself as an editor who works in *collaboration* with organizations, employers, publishers, style guides, writers, and readers–one that advocates for readers by ensuring that documents are accessible and understandable to a diverse array of stakeholders.

Course goals
By the end of the semester, students who earn a passing grade in the course (C- or above) will have demonstrated their ability to:
- **Understand** and effectively **participate** in all of the stages of editing;
- **Identify** and **correct** errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation;
- **Evaluate** a document's visual design, content, organization, and style based on a solid understanding of audience needs and document purposes;
- **Consider** the effects of word choice, sentence structure, and document design on the meaning and effectiveness of documents; and
- **Interact** professionally and communicate effectively with and as professional writers.

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Required texts

There is one textbook required: *Technical Editing* edited by Carolyn Rude and Angela Eaton, **5th edition** (ISBN: 9780205786718). It's important to get this edition because otherwise the content won't be the same. The bookstore's prices are, as always, exorbitant–$124 for used, $82 for used rental. You can rent it from Amazon or Chegg for about $26 with a return date at the end of May, or buy it used from Amazon for around $60.

Any other reading materials will be provided via Classroom.

Course tools

In addition to online platforms, we will also use pen and paper fairly often, so come prepared! We will meet in a Mac computer lab with new Mac mini computers (so they should work fairly well). You are welcome to bring your own devices, as well. We will be using Google Classroom as a headquarters for our class (click this link or enter this code to join: 76qp5r7).

Work overview

We have four overarching units in this course: copyediting, proofreading, comprehensive editing, and project management. Your grade will be based on the categories below.

Skills tests (25%)

You will take five cumulative editing tests during the term, which are noted on our course schedule. These tests are designed to ensure that you are reading the required material, to reinforce what you read, and help you prepare for editing and writing assignments. If you read carefully, you should pass these tests. You are welcome to use your notes and textbook while taking the tests, though the tests are timed (which means you must prepare in order to complete the test in the allotted time frame). Though these tests will be cumulative (you will be tested on everything we have covered to date), they will emphasize the material addressed since the last test. Again, these will be open book tests, but you may not ask for or accept any help from any person—they must be done on your own.

Editing projects (30%)

You will complete three smaller editing projects over the course of the term (each worth 10% of your overall grade). We will go over specific instructions for each project, but each corresponds to the first three units of the course. These projects will give you the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge acquired through reading, discussions, and tests in different forms.

Final project and portfolio (25%)

In lieu of a final exam, you will complete a final project that requires you to respond to the needs of a client in the community. This semester, we will be working with the Morgantown Area Partnership to develop a style guide for their organization. There will be several stages in this project: a document analysis, a style guide research brief, a project scope of work, a final guide and sample edits, a presentation to the client, and a postmortem memo.

English 302: Editing

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-11:15 a.m. | Colson G06

In-class activities and homework (20%)

Class engagement (more than just attendance) is key to your success in this class, which contains a lot of content. You will earn points for attending class with your homework completed, ready to review; you can also earn some points back for turning in that homework later if you miss a class or did not have it. You will also earn points for in-class activities, which **cannot be made up** barring extreme circumstances.

Extra credit

You can earn up to 10 points of extra credit, applied to either your test or project grade, for identifying broken style or usage rules (either erroneously or for good reason) in the communication you consume every day (online, on Facebook, at work, in emails, in advertisements, on billboards, in the news, or even in materials for this class!). Under the "Extra Credit" section of Classroom, post a screenshot, image, or your own description of the grammar/usage/style trespass along with your explanation (including evidence, i.e., 3 credible resources) of why it's an editable offense or an effective bending/breaking of the rules. You can earn up to 2 points per post (maximum of 5) submitted by Sunday, 4/30.

Grading

Specific criteria and rubrics for each major assignment will be provided; however, all of the writing you produce in this course should meet the requirements of the specific project, be well-informed and thoughtful, be respectful of audience, be grammatically and stylistically sound, and be rhetorically effective for its intended purpose.

If you are unsatisfied with your grade on a major assignment, you may revise it for a higher grade; but, you must correspond with me about those revisions and write a brief rationale that explains your changes. (After all, this is what would happen in a professional environment.)

In compliance with relevant privacy laws (FERPA), I must discuss grades with you in confidence. This means I cannot email grades to you; please set up a meeting where we can discuss virtually. I post grades on Classroom regularly, so you can keep track of them there.

letter grade	range	letter grade	range	letter grade	range
A+	100-99%	B-	82-80%	D	67-63%
A	98-93%	C+	79-78%	D-	62-60%
A-	92-90%	C	77-73%	F	59-0%
B+	89-88%	C-	72-70%		
B	87-83%	D+	69-68%		

Course policies

Attendance and engagement

WVU's full attendance policy covers a wide range of circumstances (extended illness, military deployment, official university events, etc.). Just as you would if you were going to miss a shift at work, it

is good practice to notify your instructor that you won't be in class. If you must be absent from class for any reason, I expect you to take full responsibility for your academic work and to complete any missed assignments that were due during the class period. (However, you will not be able to make up activities missed in class unless you and I have made alternate arrangements beforehand.)

This classroom will be run like a work environment, meaning that you will have a fair amount of freedom. With that freedom comes the expectation that you will be not only physically present, but mentally present, and ready to work in class. I also expect you to use technology (computers, phones, etc.) with care and consideration for others.

Community health

Sicknesses abound these days, so please…If you are sick, do not come to class. If you don't feel well or have been around other folks you know are ill and attend class, please wear a mask and respect others' personal space. There are folks in class (including me!) that are high risk or live with high risk individuals. Since, as you see above, I do not have a particular number of absences you are allowed, take that as a sign that I will work with you–but please don't take advantage of that.

Late work

I set deadlines for a reason – to help you be better students and to help me be a better teacher. This class is modeled after real work environments, where deadlines matter. That being said, in professional environments, you may ask for an extension. An approved extension will not affect your grade, but do not over use this professional courtesy. Additionally, if you submit an assignment late, you will not get detailed written feedback as per usual. And finally, if you do not ask for an extension **before** the due date, your late work will not be accepted, and you will receive a zero.

Accessibility

I strive to make my courses as accessible and accommodating to all persons as I can. If you require any specific accommodations, please send me an email within the first week of the term in order to discuss any necessary adjustments. I want you to succeed and I will work with you to ensure that you do! For more information, consult the [Office of Accessibility Services](#).

Community

I take seriously the need to provide a respectful and supportive environment in our classroom. You are expected to behave professionally in class and out of class (this includes while corresponding through email), and to treat everyone in our community with kindness and respect. I have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment in all forms.

Student success, basic needs, and mental health

WVU has a number of resources and offices dedicated to student success. Of special note, when it comes to writing, is the [Eberly Writing Studio](#) where you can receive personalized help for your projects at any stage: brainstorming, drafting, revising, or editing.

I understand that student success involves more than just succeeding in classes. Any student who faces challenges securing their food, housing, mental health, or other elements of wellbeing, and believes this

may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Student Advocacy Center for support. Also, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess and to try and connect you to others who can help, too.

I know that college students face many stressful issues that affect one's ability to remember, learn, and perform, and interact socially in and out of the classroom. According to a 2019 survey conducted by the American College Health Association, 66.4% of college students felt "overwhelming" anxiety, while 46.2% experienced depression so severe they had difficulty functioning. With the increased stress and isolation of living in a COVID-19 environment, these difficulties have been amplified: 60% of college students surveyed stated that the pandemic has made it more difficult to access mental healthcare.

If you (or a friend) are struggling, I strongly encourage you to seek support. I take your mental health seriously and can help you navigate the resources available to you as a WVU student. Supportive resources are available on campus, and most are at no-charge. The Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services (CCPPS) offers consultations, short-term individual therapy, group therapy, and various mental health-related workshops. Virtual and in-person services are available. You can text "WVU" to 741741 for support 24/7 from a trained Crisis Counselor or call 304-293-4431. If you're experiencing mental distress, need immediate attention, and would prefer to use a non-university support service, you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

English 302: Editing

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-11:15 a.m. | Colson G06

Note: This schedule is subject to change; please consult this live document for most accurate information. Previous weeks have been moved to bottom of document.

Week 1 (Starts 1/9): Key editing concepts and principles

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read		*TE* Chp. 1 (Editing: The Big Picture) *EB* Intro (PDF)
Do		Review syllabus and schedule (if you haven't) Order textbook ASAP
Notes	Please complete intro survey by end of this week.	

Week 2 (Starts 1/16): Editing strategies and platforms

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 2 (Readers, Users, etc.) *TE* Chp. 3 (Collaborating with Writers)	*TE* Chp. 6 (Electronic Editing) Editing project 1 overview
Do	Respond to DA #1 on p. 40 of book; write 2-4 sentences for each response	Finish and submit initial draft of editorial statement
Notes		

Week 3 (Starts 1/23): Basic copyediting and paper mark up

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 4 (Marking Paper Copy) *EB* Verbs (PDF)	*TE* Chp. 7 (Basic Copyediting) *EB* Verb Agreement (PDF)
Do	Respond to DA #1, 2 on pp. 56-57 of book	Respond to DA #1, 2 on pp. 106-107 of book
Notes	Thursday, 1/26 in class: Skills test #1	

Week 4 (Starts 1/30): Proofreading and sentence structure

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*EB* Sentences (PDF)	*TE* Chp. 13 (Proofreading)
Do		Respond to DA #1, 2, 6 on pp. 199-200 of book
Notes		

English 302: Editing

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-11:15 a.m. | Colson G06

Week 5 (Starts 2/6): Consistency: spelling, capitalization, abbreviations

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 8 (Copyediting for Consistency) *EB* Punctuation (PDF)	*TE* Chp. 9 (Spelling, etc.)
Do	Respond to DA #2, 3 on pp. 121-122 of book	Respond to DA #1, 2, 6 on pp. 132-133 of book
Notes	Wednesday, 2/8 in Writing Studio from 8.15-10.15: Coffee and donuts Thursday, 2/9 in class: Skills test #2	

Week 6 (Starts 2/13): Editing for general audiences

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	Editing project 2 overview Editing project 3 overview	Wikipedia readings TBD
Do	Submit editing project #1	Make Wikipedia account and sign up for event OPTIONAL: Work through the modules suggested on project 3 overview
Notes	EBC @ CCCC conference in Chicago, no in-class meeting this week	

Week 7 (Starts 2/20): Consistency: grammar, usage, punctuation

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 10 (Grammar and Usage)	*TE* Chp. 11 (Punctuation) *EB* Punctuation (PDF)
Do	Respond to DA #1-4 on pp. 148-149 of book	Respond to DA #1-4 on pp. 17-171 of book
Notes		

Week 8 (Starts 2/27): Consistency: caps, word choice, numbers

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 12 (Quantitative and Technical) *EB* Numbers (PDF)	*EB* Caps, etc. (PDF) TBD
Do	Respond to DA #1-2 on pp. 187-188 of book	Bring draft of editing project #2 to class
Notes	Thursday, 3/2 in class: Skills test #3	

English 302: Editing

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-11:15 a.m. | Colson G06

Week 9 (Starts 3/6): Comprehensive editing

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 14 (Comprehensive Editing)	Editing project 3 overview
Do	Respond to DA #2-3 on p. 217 of book	Submit editing project #2
Notes		

Week 10 (Starts 3/13): SPRING BREAK, BABY

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read		
Do		
Notes		

Week 11 (Starts 3/20): Comprehensive style

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 15 (Definition, etc.)	*TE* Chp. 16 (Verbs and Other Words) *EB* Modifiers, Parallelism (PDF)
Do	Respond to DA #2, 8 on pp. 230-231 of book	Respond to DA #1-3 on p. 246 of book
Notes	Thursday, 3/23 in class: Skills test #4	

Week 12 (Starts 3/27): Organization and structure

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 17 (Organization) Editing for Navigation (PDF)	
Do	Respond to DA #5 on p. 264 of book Submit editing chart in class	
Notes	Thursday, 3/31: Participate in edit-a-thon on 2nd floor of Downtown Library!	

Week 13 (Starts 4/3): Visuals and page design

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 18 (Visual Design)	*TE* Chp. 19 (Editing Illustrations) *TE* Chp. 22 (Type and Production)

English 302: Editing
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00-11:15 a.m. | Colson G06

Do	Submit editing project #3 Respond to DA #2 on p. 280 of book	Respond to DA #1 on p. 298 of book
Notes		

Week 14 (Starts 4/10): Project management strategies and working with clients

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 23 (Project Management) Planning and Implementing (PDF)	*TE* Chp. 24 (Client Projects)
Do		
Notes		

Week 15 (Starts 4/17): Editing across contexts

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	*TE* Chp. 21 (Legal and Ethical Issues)	*TE* Chp. 20 (Editing for Global Contexts) TBD
Do	Skills test #5	
Notes		

Week 16 (Starts 4/24): Proofreading and polishing projects

	By Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	By Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Read	TBD	
Do	Bring draft of final project	
Notes		

Finals Week (Starts 5/1)

	By Tuesday, 12:00 p.m.
Do	● Turn in final editorial stance statement ● Turn in final editing project portfolio ● Fill out SEI