

SJSU School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Journalism 133, Section 1

Editing and News Management

Spring 2021

Contact Information

Instructor:	Richard Craig
Office Location:	DBH108 (off campus this semester)
Telephone:	Contact via email
Email:	profcraig@profcraig.com
Office Hours:	Wednesday 3:00-6:00 p.m.; email me to arrange Zoom appointments
Class Days/Time:	Monday-Wednesday 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.
Classroom:	Online via Zoom

Faculty Web Page

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on my faculty web page at <http://www.profcraig.com>. You may follow me on Twitter at [@SJSUProfCraig](https://twitter.com/SJSUProfCraig) or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Profcraig>, but it is not required. You are responsible for regularly checking your e-mail or my Facebook or Twitter to learn any updates.

Syllabus Supplement

You are required to read all information on this syllabus and on the syllabus supplement, which lists policies that apply to all my classes. It is available on the class home page and on the Web at <http://www.profcraig.com/syllsup.html>.

Course Description

Instructor description: Students will be taught the most important elements of being an editor in a daily newsroom setting. Subjects will include:

- Editing for spelling, grammar, context and accuracy;
- Writing headlines, decks, kickers, cutlines, link text and other teasers;
- Generating and focusing story ideas;
- Working with reporters and other editors to produce high-quality stories.

Catalog description: Media lab. Designed for the editor serving as wordsmith and coach, a hands-on approach to copy editing and headline writing for online and print media.

Learning Objectives

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) specific to this course. Upon completion of this course you will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge about ethical principles and issues in mass communications as they relate to working ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity in our three fields of study.
2. Apply appropriate journalistic standards in the evaluation of news stories.
3. Demonstrate the ability to conduct research essential to the effective reporting of stories.
4. Write correctly and clearly in a style appropriate to various journalistic platforms.
5. Students will demonstrate mastery of current journalistic tools and technologies.

Required Texts/Readings

[Associated Press Stylebook, digital edition or print 2020 edition \(or newer\).](#)

Either print or digital edition is fine, but you'll occasionally need access to it during online class meetings.

The style guide will be used for reference and not as the backbone for each day's class instruction. **The textbook will be supplemented by readings on the class Web page. Please get in the habit of regularly checking for new readings.**

Textbook is available from the Spartan Bookstore and numerous online outlets. Other required online readings will be posted on the class home page throughout the semester. You will receive advance notice for all additional readings.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Students will be required to participate in in-class exercises involving news writing and editing. This includes self-editing and peer editing.

Due to the online-only nature of assignments this semester, all students will be required to use a word processing program that contains the "Track Changes" function. The easiest way to handle this is through Microsoft Word, which is available at a discount through the university. **Please take care of this ASAP** because we will use it regularly from the start of the semester.

Class time will be dedicated to lecture and discussion as well as individual and team exercises in story development, writing and editing.

Grading:

- **In-class (online) assignments: 40 percent**
- **Midterm exam: 20 percent**
- **Final project: 25 percent**
- **Class discussion/participation: 15 percent**

In-class assignments: Exercises involving writing and editing will most commonly be assigned in the Monday class and turned in or presented on Wednesday. **As with all work normally assigned in class, the online adaptation of these assignments will evolve throughout the semester.**

Midterm exam: This will be held **Wednesday, March 24** online at the usual class time. Please clear your schedule – the exam will only be available during this time.

Final project: This will involve teams of students being assigned to write and edit an in-depth story over the last week or two of class. You will receive a handout on this in the coming weeks. These projects will be turned in and presented **Monday, May 17**.

See syllabus supplement for information on attendance, deadlines, academic honesty and other issues not covered here.

Editing, Writing and Group Activities

Because this class introduces you to working with writers as an editor, and because editors need material to edit, at times you will be called upon to write material for others to edit. This is a normal part of the process – every editor also needs to know how to write well.

You will also periodically be assigned to work with classmates in groups. I'm aware of the pitfalls of group projects – one person can sometimes end up doing all the work while others disappear. With this in mind, for each group assignment you will be **required** to fill out and submit the **Group Activities Form**, available on the class home page. This allows for accountability – everyone should be honest about their own contributions as well as those of others. It also provides me with some context in case there are disputes. The form should be submitted within 24 hours of completion of each group assignment.

Class Meeting Protocol

This class is designed to prepare you to operate and lead within a newsroom setting, so please conduct yourself with some responsibility. Regular class participation in online discussions and exercises is required, as are assorted handouts and/or assigned online articles. If you must miss a class, please be sure to contact me beforehand and arrange to get notes from a classmate. Regular class attendance is vital – repeated unexcused absences will be noted and hurt your participation grade.

Diversity and Controversial Issues

Throughout the semester, we will discuss matters relating to differences in race, culture, social class, sexuality and many other issues. In the beginning, this may seem uncomfortable, but my goal is to create an environment where we can talk about such matters thoughtfully, frankly and with respect and empathy.

Likewise, we will deal with matters involving social standards of what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable by media audiences and society in general. The objective is to enlighten, not offend, but we will talk about why certain types of content might upset certain audiences and not others. The aim is to create an atmosphere of respectful discussion, where all can express their opinions. The class works best when we all feel free to contribute.

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 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>.

JOUR133: Editing and News Management, Spring 2021 Course Schedule

Schedule is subject to change; any changes will be announced a minimum of one week in advance, with students notified via e-mail.

Week	Dates	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Feb. 1-3	The role of the copy editor: Grammar, spelling and general cleanup; clarity and focus
2	Feb. 8-10	Accuracy, readability, organization
3	Feb. 15-17	AP style: Valuable consistency and guidance or a crutch? Common errors; abbreviations and acronyms, capitalization
4	Feb. 22-24	Editing for content: Clarity, conciseness, correctness Fact checking: NO "FAKE NEWS"
5	Mar. 1-3	Story structure and flow
6	Mar. 8-10	Leads, body and organization
7	Mar. 15-17	Writing headlines and other text to engage readers
8	Mar. 22-24	The reporter's voice vs. the editor's job MARCH 24: MIDTERM EXAM
9	Mar. 29-31	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
10	Apr. 5-7	Job of the assigning editor Traditional vs. new functions
11	Apr. 12-14	Generating story ideas Knowing your audience
12	Apr. 19-21	Working with reporters Polishing writing
13	Apr. 26-28	Sidebar Stories
14	May 3-5	Final project assigned
15	May 10-12	Work on final projects
Final Project	Monday, May 17	FINAL PROJECT DUE Brief in-class presentations of projects