SJSU School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Journalism 133, Section 1
Editing and News Management
Fall 2026

Contact Information

Instructor:	Richard Craig
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Telephone:	Contact via email
Email:	profcraig@profcraig.com
Office Hours:	Wednesday 3:00-6:00 p.m., or by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday-Thursday 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.
Classroom:	DBH209 (Spartan Daily newsroom)

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 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.

Library Liaison

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications' library liaison is Estella Inda. She will be available to help you with any research tasks or other questions about gathering information for stories. Estella can be reached via email at estella.inda@sjsu.edu.

Required Texts/Readings

Associated Press Stylebook, digital edition or print 2024 edition (or newer).
Either print or digital edition is fine, but you'll occasionally need access to it during 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.

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 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 Tuesday class and turned in or presented on Thursday, but this may change depending on how the semester unfolds.

Midterm exam: This will be held **Thursday, October 22** 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 **Thursday, Dec. 3**.

Special note about AI: As noted in the syllabus supplement, **you may not use any AI technology (ChatGPT, etc.) to perform writing or editing tasks for any assignment in this class.** The reason you're here is to develop your own skills in writing and editing. Don't even try it – **I <u>will</u> catch you and you <u>will</u> fail the class.**

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 stories to work on, 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 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

ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies

The SJSU Journalism Department is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). The Department strives to have all of our major-required courses help students meet the ACEJMC's 12 Professional Values and Competencies, which are described here under **Professional Values and Competencies**: https://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/principles/.

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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	Aug. 25-27	Editor as reader and writer The role of the copy editor: Grammar, spelling and general cleanup
2	Sept. 1-3	Using Track Changes in Word Clarity and focus; Accuracy, readability, organization
3	Sept. 8-10	AP style: Valuable consistency and guidance or a crutch? Common errors; abbreviations and acronyms, capitalization
4	Sept. 15-17	Editing for content: Clarity, conciseness, correctness Fact checking: NO "FAKE NEWS"
5	Sept. 22-24	Story structure and flow
6	Sept. 29- Oct. 1	Writing effective leads
7	Oct. 6-8	Story body and organization
8	Oct. 13-15	Writing headlines and other text to engage readers
9	Oct. 20-22	Reporting scenarios **OCTOBER 22: MIDTERM EXAM**
10	Oct. 27-29	The reporter's voice vs. the editor's job Job of the assigning editor: Traditional vs. new functions
11	Nov. 3-5	Working with reporters Polishing writing
12	Nov. 10-12	Sidebar and follow-up stories
13	Nov. 17-19	Final project assigned Work on final projects
14	Nov. 24-26	Work on final projects **NOVEMBER 26 – THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**
15	Dec. 1	Work on final projects
Final Project	Thursday, Dec. 3	**FINAL PROJECT DUE** Brief in-class presentations of projects