



The University of New Mexico

# Copy Editing and Layout

C&J 372 Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR: Dennis Herrick, M.A.  
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Spring semester, 2010  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
3:30 to 4:45 p.m., Windows Computer Pod, C&J 134

*Office hours: 10 to 11 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays or by appointment.*

*Drop-ins are welcome anytime.*

Course Web site at [unm.edu/~herrick/cj372](http://unm.edu/~herrick/cj372)

## An Opportunity to Build Editing Skills

The skills, knowledge, resources and attitude it takes to be a respected copy editor can be utilized to edit either your own writing or another person's writing.

It takes a detail-oriented person to be a good copy editor, and this class will emphasize and constantly reinforce this need for constant attention to detail through in-class exercises, tests and lectures.

Students will be expected to become experts in their knowledge and implementation of AP Style, so the AP Stylebook and textbook are required references. Students must bring both AP Stylebook and "Editing Today" to each class.

Students also are strongly encouraged to use a storage medium or their university e-mail account's storage area for downloads and to save their work for future reference.

Your grade will be based on the following percentages:

"Stop the Press" exercises .....	5 percent
AP Stylebook quizzes .....	15 percent
Mid-term, portfolio, assignments .....	30 percent
Publication research oral project .....	15 percent
Newspaper page design project .....	2 percent
Final Exam.....	33 percent

Many journalists spend part of their working careers as copy editors. Many seek editing jobs as a means of advancement. The skills you learn in this course will provide a foundation for your future career as an editor and as a writer — expertise in one field will improve performance in the other.

**TEXT:** "Editing Today" by Ron F. Smith and Loraine M. O'Connell (Second Edition). Students also will need a copy of the AP Stylebook. Students are required to read the Albuquerque Journal or another daily newspaper every day. (Newspaper reading assignments are rotated every few weeks.) Each student needs to be able to save to a UNM account or onto a USB drive.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- To teach you the skills of copy editing and headline writing, with some familiarization in the concepts of page design.
- To polish and expand your knowledge of AP Style and grammar.
- To build awareness and understanding of professional writing standards regarding truth, accuracy, fairness, objectivity and deadlines.
- To build critical thinking and evaluation skills in editing, writer-coaching and design, and to prepare you for a print media position.

For a complete listing of the course mission and objectives, see the course description adopted by the faculty on the last page of this syllabus.

### COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course will require you to edit a lot of copy and write numerous headlines. Be sure I can read any editing you do by hand. If I cannot read it, then I must count it wrong. You are expected to learn and use standard copy-editing symbols in corrections done by hand, as presented by the instructor.

It is imperative that you come to class prepared. You must have read the daily newspaper assigned to you by the start of each class, and you must have read the day's assignments. All students must bring the textbook, AP Stylebook and a storage medium to class. Any assignment for the day must be ready to be turned in.

There are no opportunities for extra credit. Because exercises or quizzes will be done in every class, it is impossible to achieve a good grade without consistent attendance.

# Miscellany

**ATTENDANCE:** Even if you have an excused absence, it is your responsibility—not the instructor’s—to find out what you missed in any class and complete any missed assignments before the next class meeting. Pop quizzes and unannounced in-class exercises that are missed cannot be made up without advance notice to the instructor and an excused absence. Excessive absences will result in a student being dropped from the class. Assignments are due for everyone at the same time regardless of whether you are in attendance. **E-mail your assignments if you cannot be present, or they will be given a late penalty.**

**PLAGIARISM:** Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language defines plagiarize as “to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and pass them off as one’s own.” It can get you fired from a future job, and it can get you a failing grade on an assignment or the entire course here.

**ASSISTANCE:** Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in other formats upon request.

**DIVERSITY:** This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as sexual orientation, gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion and other relevant cultural identities. This course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating.

**ETHICS:** The course emphasizes ethical practices and perspectives. Above all, students and instructors should strive to communicate and act, both in class interactions and in assigned coursework, in a manner directed by honesty, personal integrity and respect for self and others. Included in this focus is the need for academic honesty by students as stated by the “UNM Pathfinder.” Students need to do original work and properly cite sources. For example, be aware of plagiarism. Directly copying more than three or four words from another author without quoting (not just citing) the author is plagiarism. Further, course content will encourage the ethical practices and analysis of print journalism.

**COMPLAINTS:** Procedures for students with a complaint about any member of the teaching staff are described in the “UNM Pathfinder.” Basically, a student should try to resolve the matter with the instructor first. If the complaint is not resolved to the student’s satisfaction, the student can appeal the matter to the departmental chair and then, if

necessary, to the associate dean of the college.

**LATE PAPERS:** As in a real newsroom, which this course attempts to emulate, assignments are due on the deadlines stated. Non-submitted stories will receive a zero.

**PUBLICATION RESEARCH PROJECT:** All students will present an oral and written report in the 15th week on an analysis of a newspaper, magazine or online site. They will present examples of good and bad headlines, textual mistakes found, notation of things both liked and disliked, etc.

In addition, each student will create a mock-up of a broadsheet newspaper page in the fourth week.

**DISTRACTIONS:** In the interest of preserving an effective learning environment, as free from as many disruptions as possible, all mobile telephones, pagers, iPods and similar devices shall be turned off while in the classroom.

Use of the computers for e-mail or Internet surfing during class time is forbidden without specific permission from the instructor each time. Violations will result in you being penalized in grades on that day’s assignment and your final grade. Computer games are never allowed. The ban on snacks and drinks in the lab is re-emphasized here.

**I AM AVAILABLE:** If you are having problems in this course, don’t hesitate to contact me. I check my e-mail several times a day. I also am available for drop-ins or by appointment. I am always willing to work with any student, so don’t wait until the end of the semester to ask for assistance.

It is your responsibility to learn the material in this course with the intention of preparing yourself for working in a newsroom. It is my responsibility to help you achieve the skills, perspective and knowledge to help you succeed.

## ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Dennis Herrick is a full-time lecturer in journalism at the University of New Mexico. He taught journalism for more than two years at the University of Iowa.

He was owner and publisher of weekly newspapers and a shopper in Iowa for 12 years before selling his company in 1997. His newspapers won several awards for news coverage, photography and newspaper design during his ownership. He also worked as a reporter for more than 11 years with daily newspapers in Michigan, and he was chief of staff for a member of Congress from 1977 to 1985. He has won several individual newspaper writing awards at the state and national levels.

*The instructor acknowledges the contributions of many other educators. Their collective creativity is reflected in this syllabus. Especially helpful was the syllabus for this course by a former instructor, Steve Brown, who contributed many details used in this syllabus.*

# Class Schedule for C&J 372

(subject to changes announced in class)

- Week 1: Jan. 19 and Jan. 21:  
Orientation, introductions, First Amendment,  
role of editors, syllabus proofing  
**Newspaper assignments made**
- Week 2: Jan. 26 and Jan. 28:  
**In-class exercises and/or quizzes every class**  
Life on the copy desk  
Overview of history and typography  
In-class editing assignments  
THIS WEEK  
Read chapters 2 and 12
- Week 3: Feb. 2 and Feb. 4:  
The basics of page design  
THIS WEEK:  
Read chapter 14  
Know A of AP Stylebook
- Week 4: Feb. 9 and Feb. 11:  
The basics of page design (continued)  
THIS WEEK:  
Continue chapter 14  
Newspaper layout exercise due on Thursday  
Newspaper design test on Thursday  
Know B and D (not C) of AP Stylebook
- Week 5: Feb. 16 and Feb. 18:  
Grammar  
THIS WEEK:  
Read chapter 3  
Know C of AP Stylebook  
Grammar exercises
- Week 6: Feb. 23 and Feb. 25:  
**Newspaper assignments switched**  
Punctuation  
THIS WEEK:  
Punctuation exercises  
Read chapter 4  
Read “Punctuation Guide” of AP Stylebook  
Know E–F of AP Stylebook
- Week 7: March 2 and March 4:  
Looking for holes and other problems  
THIS WEEK:  
Read chapter 5  
Know G–H of AP Stylebook  
“Jimmy’s World” exercise due on Thursday
- Week 8: March 9: Review  
March 11: Mid-Term exam
- Week 9: March 14 and March 16  
NO CLASS — Spring Break
- Week 10: March 23 and March 25:  
Editing stories  
THIS WEEK:  
Read chapters 6 and 8  
Know I–J–K of AP Stylebook
- Week 11: March 30 and April 1:  
Writing headlines  
THIS WEEK:  
Read chapter 10  
Know L–M of AP Stylebook
- Week 12: April 6 and April 8:  
Writing headlines (continued)  
THIS WEEK:  
Know N–O of AP Stylebook
- Week 13: April 13 and April 15:  
Writing headlines (continued)  
THIS WEEK:  
Continue chapter 10  
Headline writing graded exercise  
Know P–Q of AP Stylebook
- Week 14: April 20 and April 22  
In-class editing assignments  
Editors, law and ethics  
THIS WEEK:  
Read chapter 11  
THIS WEEK:  
Know R and T (not S) of AP Stylebook
- Week 15: April 27 and April 29:  
Publication research oral presentations  
THIS WEEK:  
Know U–V of AP Stylebook
- Week 16: May 4 and May 6:  
THIS WEEK:  
Review and in-class editing assignments  
Mock final for practice  
Know W–X–Y–Z of AP Stylebook
- FINAL EXAM: 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday, May 13.**

Grading for all work turned in as follows:		
100 = A+	94-99 = A	90-93 = A-
87-89 = B+	84-86 = B	80-83 = B-
77-79 = C+	74-76 = C	70-73 = C-
67-69 = D+	64-66 = D	60-63 = D-
Below 60 = F		
Assignment not turned in = Zero		

## C&J 372

3 credit hours

# COPY EDITING AND LAYOUT

## DESCRIPTION

It takes a detail-oriented person to be a good copy editor, and this class will emphasize and constantly reinforce this need for constant attention to detail through in-class exercises and discussion, homework assignments, tests and lectures. Students will be expected to become experts in their knowledge and implementation of AP Style.

## MISSION

Develop skills to provide a foundation for each student's future career as an editor and/or as a writer—expertise in one field improving performance in the other.

## OBJECTIVES

- Learn to *write clearly and accurately* through study and practice of established conventions in grammar, AP Style, story structure, interviewing and handling *data and statistics*.
- Build awareness and understanding of professional writing standards regarding *truth, accuracy and fairness* through the skills of copy editing and headline writing, with some familiarization in the concepts of page design.
- Polish and expand each student's knowledge of AP Style and grammar.
- Exercise *creative and analytical thinking* in editing, writer-coaching and design.
- Build awareness of the *history and role of the media* including typographical elements.
- Learn techniques of *research and critical evaluation* in editing the work of others and making decisions of news judgment.