



**COM 303:
CROSS-PLATFORM EDITING**

DR. BRIAN CARROLL

**LAUGHLIN 100
BC@BERRY.EDU**

SPRING 2012

9-9:50 a.m.

**M in LAU 111
W, F in LAU 113**

Berry catalog description

Selection, editing and preparation of written and visual materials for online publications, newspapers, magazines and related media. Also studied are the ethics of journalism. Laboratory included.

Pre-requisite: COM 301.

I. Introduction

Course Purpose & Objectives

Wherever people use language – and they use it everywhere, all the time – they need editors (see right; Barack Romney?).

Students will learn to write, revise and edit accurate, relevant and timely news articles, feature pieces, and other communications.



There will be an emphasis on grammar, spelling, syntax, style, electronic editing and other elements of complete, concise and accurate publishing. Current events, online news environments, and editing in and for digital media, including converged or convergent media, also will be emphasized.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, my goal is for students to:

- Know how to gather, select, organize and evaluate information, including information obtained via online and digital sources.
- Successfully edit news stories and multimedia content on deadline.
- Demonstrate improved news selection and judgment, critical thinking skills, professionalism and ethical decision-making.
- Better understand the legal and ethical contexts of journalism, especially as these contexts have changed because of the rise of digital publishing.

- Know how to conceive of stories across media and to edit specific to certain media.

II. Stuff you need to know

Instructor: Dr. Brian Carroll
 Office: Laughlin 100
 Office phone: 368.6944
 E-mail: bc@berry.edu OR bc@unc.edu



Home page: www.cubanxgiants.com
 Class home page, with calendar:
www.cubanxgiants.com/berry/com303.html
 Office hours: MWF 10-noon; MW 2-4 | walk-ins welcome
 Course Blog >> <http://berryonline.blogspot.com>

III. What you will need (required)

- *Writing for Digital Media*, Brian Carroll (New York: Routledge, 2010).
- *Associated Press Stylebook* (whatever version you bought for 301 is fine)
- Print subscription to the *New York Times* (\$35 for the semester)

IV. What you may want (not required, but recommended)

- George T. Arnold, *Media Writer's Handbook: A Guide to Common Writing and Editing Problems*
- Lauren Kessler and Duncan McDonald, *When Words Collide: A Journalist's Guide to Grammar and Style*
- Andrea Lunsford, *The Everyday Writer*
- William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*
- Lynne Trusse, *Eats Shoots & Leaves*
- William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*

V. Class format

This course is *hands-on* and interactive. The classroom is our newsroom. Students will edit copy, check facts, write headlines, make news judgments, create timelines and interactive maps, and a whole lot more. On any given day, students might:

- be given **quizzes** on news events, spelling, grammar and style.
- conduct a budget meeting to determine content for our next newspaper issue, web update or twitter feed
- collaborate with COM 301 students on reporting projects and videography packages.

- receive presentations, with plenty of discussion.
- encounter **new material**, go over previous exercises, or perhaps partner with fellow students in peer editing.
- create a Googlemap, interactive timeline or word cloud.
- **write and edit . . . a lot.**

VI. Policies

- Attendance: Attendance is a part of your grade. **Be here every day on time**, just as you would be for surgery, a job or even a haircut. One absence is forgiven and forgotten. Two might be. More are penalized, one percentage point per unexcused absence, and that's a point off your final total grade. Unexcused lateness, too, is similarly penalized.
- I am easily distracted. Ringing cell phones, therefore, will be lobbed out of the classroom window and run over with a truck. Late arrivals will be stared down unmercifully. People who text will be publicly humiliated. In short, be professional, civil and FOCUSED. If you are unclear about the meaning of these terms, I would be more than happy to elaborate. In short, though, during class and labs, no e-mail or texting, Facebooking or surfing. These activities prevent you from getting the information you need, and they are distracting to your classmates and to me.
- Preparation: Complete the assignments and be ready to tackle the activities of the day. Be ready to discuss and debate ideas, approaches and opinions.
- Academic integrity: Because academic integrity is the foundation of college life at Berry, academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure on the assignment in question. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, fabrication, submitting the same work in multiple courses, and aiding and abetting in any of the previous infractions. Students who are sanctioned for violating the academic integrity policy forfeit the right to withdraw from the class with a grade of "W."



VII. How you will be graded

Dailies (lots of them: editing assignments, quizzes)	50%
Midterm	20%
Final exam	20%
Professionalism/participation	<u>10%</u>
	100%

To compute your final grade, add up your point totals, apply the appropriate percentages, then refer to the Communication department grading system, summarized here:

A = 93-100	A-= 90-92	B+=88-89	B=83-87
B- = 80-82	C+= 78-79	C=73-77	C-=70-72
D+= 68-69	D=60-67	F=59 and below	

Definitions of the grades can be found in the Berry College Catalog. “A” students will demonstrate an outstanding mastery of course material and will perform **far above** that required for credit in the course and **far above** that usually seen in the course. The “A” grade should be awarded sparingly and should identify student performance that is relatively unusual in the course. Practically, “A” editing produces copy that could be published.

Extra credit? Students have a standing invitation to bring in errors found in **major** (or national) **print** media (big newspapers, weekly news magazines, literary magazines). This invitation does not extend to online media, online publications, the *Campus Carrier*, the *Rome News-Tribune* or your textbooks. I will award 1 or 2 points for each error spotted and submitted, up to 20 total points. These points are added to your point total for dailies. Submit the exhibit, or a copy of the exhibit or error, along with a typed up and printed out, corrected version.

VIII. Viking Honor Code

It is not just policy. The honor system is foundational to the academic environment we enjoy and in which scholarship thrives. It is in force in this classroom and during all lab sessions. For the complete Viking Code, please consult the student handbook. In short, each student is “expected to recognize constituted authority, to abide by the ordinary rules of good conduct, to be truthful, to respect the rights of others.” The College’s mission, in part, commits to a community of integrity and justice. During an era when ethics are sometimes suspect, there seems no higher goal toward which students ought to strive than that of personal honor.

IX. Assignments and Tests

There are two tests during the course of the semester. These tests could include multiple-choice, short answer and writing and editing on deadline. They will focus on the *practical*. Deadline pressure is an important dimension to the testing. The final exam will be comprehensive.

Assignment rules

- **Quizzes:** What resources students may use will vary. Before each quiz, I will tell the class whether the quiz is open book. Students will be free to use the *Associated Press* stylebook in most cases.
- **In-class/in-lab assignments:** Unless otherwise instructed, you can and should use reliable references, including stylebooks, dictionaries and online sources. Be careful with information found on the Web, however.
- **Collaboration:** I support collaboration, but any graded work must be the student's own. Generally, students should operate under the assumption that they are accountable for their own work. *When in doubt, ask.*

Deadlines

- When an **in-class/in-lab assignment** is due, it is due. Late in-class assignments will not be accepted unless permission for extension had been granted prior to deadline. Turn in whatever has been done by deadline.
- Late **out-of-class assignments** will be accepted no later than the next class period, but the assignment grade will be lowered.
- **Please note:** If a student misses a class when an assignment is due and that student has a legitimate excuse, I will accept the late assignment without penalty. I define what constitutes a legitimate excuse and reserve the right not to grant full credit for assignments turned in under these circumstances. The same holds true for exams.

Format for all assignments

Double-space, 12-point type for all work. Avoid exotic fonts and odd page layouts. Improper format will result in point deductions. ***Do not submit handwritten work.***

X. Students with special needs

If you have special needs of any kind, including learning disabilities, please let me know. Come discuss it with me. I want to make sure on the front end that we prevent any problems associated with the course. From Martha Van Cise, director of the Academic Support Center: *"Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodation in this course are encouraged to contact the Academic Support Center in the library as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion."*

Finally, I believe we are here for a good time, not a long time, so let's have some fun.

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