

COMM 2305-001, News Editing

Fall 2024

Texas A&M University-San Antonio

MEETING TIMES AND LOCATION

2-3:15 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Room 321 of the Central Academic Building

INSTRUCTOR

Teresa Talerico, clinical assistant professor of communication

Phone: 210-784-2810 **Office:** Room 319B of CAB **Email:** ttalerico@tamusa.edu **Office hours:**

Virtual office hours available by appointment.

Description: Editing and layout processes, with emphasis on accuracy, fairness and AP Style.

Required textbooks, tools and resources:

- Free digital textbook, available through our University Library: “Contemporary Editing.” Cecilia Friend, *et al.*, Routledge. ISBN: 978-0415892810
- Free Associated Press (AP) Stylebook offered by the University Library. If you want a print edition, you can buy one for \$34.95 at the following link. Please get the **57th edition**: <https://www.apstylebook.com/>
- The cost is \$29.95 for a new subscription for the semester to Newsroom 101, online quizzes for spelling, grammar and word usage.

Objectives

This course will introduce copy-editing skills including copy reading and editing, news judgment, headline writing, photo editing and design. Specific course goals include:

- To instill fastidiousness in the use of language, grammar and AP Style
- To nurture sound news judgment
- To help you identify and improve writing that is disorganized, unclear, inaccurate, libelous, a threat to privacy or in poor taste
- To impart strong headline writing skills

EVALUATION

- Homework and Class Exercises —35%
- “Read for ...” Editing Steps—15%
- Online Discussions — 10%
- Quizzes — 10%
- Newsroom 101 — 15%
- Final exam — 15%

ASSIGNMENT CATEGORIES

Homework and Class Exercises: Students will complete assignments based on our textbook, class lectures and other materials.

Quizzes: Quizzes will cover chapter readings, class lectures and AP Style handouts. They are due on the Sunday after class.

Discussions: These will cover the AP Style handouts. Your post and a response to a classmate are due on the next Wednesday.

Newsroom 101: Students must buy a subscription for \$29.95. This is a self-paced online program to improve spelling, grammar and word usage. (We will **not** use the AP Style or punctuation sections.) **You cannot make up missing Newsroom 101 assignments.** You **must** meet the weekly deadlines for Newsroom 101. I will not go back and grade late submissions. I have assigned 10-16 quizzes a week. They take anywhere from five to 15 minutes

each.

Final Exam: The final will review what we have learned throughout the semester.

COURSE POLICIES

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE / ChatGPT

Just don't. Writing, analytical and critical thinking skills are the backbone of our communication courses. All writing assignments must be prepared by students in their own words. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Look at it this way: You are learning to be a professional communicator. Writing is the bedrock of this profession, whether it's a news article, photo caption, radio spot, press release, narrative of a TV story or film script. If you can't write, why should an employer hire you when they can just use ChatGPT? Therefore, submissions generated by ChatGPT or other AI composition software are not permitted in my courses. I reserve the right to ask to see evidence of your original drafts, rewrites, etc.

I also will incorporate, where appropriate, personal reflections into your non-story assignments, such as asking you to relate your own personal experience to a particular topic.

COMM 2305 assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

ATTENDANCE AND ETIQUETTE

Show up to our class meetings on time and stay the whole period. Punctuality and attendance are crucial in journalism. Those arriving more than 20 minutes late are counted absent. Those who leave early are counted absent.

I will allow four absences for any reason. I drop your letter grade by 5 percent for each additional absence. Read this course syllabus closely. You and the instructor must follow it as a legal contract. Knowing its contents will greatly enhance your likelihood of success. If you have questions or need help, contact me by email or in person. Follow assignment directions to the letter. **Journalism is a deadline-driven business. Meeting deadlines is extremely important. I deduct 10 points a day for late assignments.**

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

To receive credit, assignments **MUST** be submitted in Blackboard. Grades consider adherence to AP Style, content, word usage, mechanics and spelling. Proofread your work with care. Students should maintain copies of all assignments submitted. **Do not submit PDFs. Do not submit text entries.** I prefer Word or Google docs.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Students should read and follow the Student Rights and Responsibilities and Student Code of Conduct available [here](#). I will follow all procedures outlined in the code. Don't plagiarize. Your work shows your character. Make it your own. The instructor does not allow students to:

- use cell phones/personal electronics for non-academic use in class.
- work on anything other than class material during course time.

TENTATIVE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- Assignments and quizzes are due the Sunday after our Wednesday class, unless otherwise indicated.
- Discussion posts and Newsroom 101 are due a week after our Wednesday class.
- The four "Read" for exercises will be done in class and are due the Friday of that week.
- You will have either a quiz **or** a discussion post due each week.

***Please see the Weekly Modules in Blackboard for homework, quizzes, discussions, Newsroom 101 and other exercises.*

WEEK 1: AUG. 26, 28

Day 1: Course Overview. Chapter 1/Fundamentals: The Editor Within and pages 277-286 of Chapter 12.

Day 2: Chapter 3. Review copy-editing symbols. Start "Olympics" exercise. Do as much as you can. We will review it together in class next week.

WEEK 2: SEPT. 2, 4

Day 1: No classes. Labor Day.

Day 2: Finish Olympics exercise and Chapter 3 PowerPoint.

WEEK 3: SEPT. 9, 11

Day 1: Lede Exercise and Chapter 2 News Values

Day 2: **Read for Understanding Edit**

WEEK 4: SEPT. 16, 18

Day 1: Review Olympics editing, "affect vs. effect" and "Barbacoa and Big Red" in the Discussion Forum.

Chapter 4: Parts of Speech through Pronouns/Multiple Antecedents. News Writing Tips 2 Refresher for Editors.

Day 2: Chapter 4: Pronouns/Gender Bias through Active vs. Passive.

WEEK 5: SEPT. 23, 25

Day 1: Chapter 4: Verb Tenses through Periods/Semicolons

Day 2: Chapter 4: Commas through Parentheses.

WEEK 6: SEPT. 30, OCT. 2

Day 1: Compose/comprise and check in/check out. Discuss Chapter 5. Work on Pair-Up Chapter Exercise.

Day 2: Check in/check out. News Writing Tips 1. Chapter 4 Practice/Quiz in class.

WEEK 7: OCT. 7, 9

Day 1: Discuss Chapter 6: PowerPoint and "More on Headlines" handout

Day 2: **"Read for Organization and Focus" Edit**

WEEK 8: OCT. 14, 16

Day 1: Discuss Chapter 7. Take the AP and Mesquite Style quiz in Kahoot.

Don't forget the "F is for fact-checking" discussion is due Wednesday.

Don't forget Newsroom 101: Pronouns is due Wednesday.

Day 2: Chapter 4 practice and quiz

WEEK 9: OCT. 21, 23

Day 1: Chapter 9. "Corazon" exercise.

Day 2: Start Chapter 9 homework: death row story

WEEK 10: OCT. 28, 30

Day 1: Discuss Chapter 11. Do Chapter 11 assignment in class.

Day 2: **Read for Accuracy.**

WEEK 11: NOV. 4, 6

Day 1: Discuss Chapter 12.

Day 2: Review Chapter 12 homework. Discuss "Dropped Word Endings."

WEEK 12: NOV. 11, 13

Day 1: Discuss Infographic Assignment.

Day 2: ABCs of AP Style

WEEK 13: NOV. 18, 20

Day 1: Designing a News Page. Begin homework assignment: Design a Front Page.

Day 2: Catch-up Day

WEEK 14: NOV. 25, 27

Day 1: **Read for Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation and Style.**

Day 2: No class. Study Day.

WEEK 15: DEC. 2, 4

Day 1: Review for final exam. Editing Practice.

Day 2: No class.

WEEK 16: FINALS WEEK

Important Dates:

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|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Sept. 2 | Labor Day holiday. No classes. |
| Sept. 3 | Last day to register |
| Sept. 11 | Census Date |
| Nov. 11 | Last day to drop with an automatic W |
| Nov. 19 | Last day to withdraw from university |
| Nov. 27 | Study Day. No Classes |
| Nov. 28-30 | Thanksgiving holiday |
| Dec. 5 | Last day of classes |
| Dec. 6 | Study Day. No Classes |
| Dec. 7-13 | Final exams |
| Dec. 16 | Grades due by noon |

The complete academic calendar is available online:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of

Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Anti-DEI Bill: SB17: [Texas Senate Bill 17](#), the recent law that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer to peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.

Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>.

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any

assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots’ Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio’s Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any

such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).