

SYLLABUS FOR ENC 4212: BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL EDITING • FALL 2011

University of South Florida (USF) • Sarasota/Manatee Campus • Instructor: T. E. Roberts (thorsdag@comcast.net)
Website for this course: http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4212_welcome.htm • Date of this syllabus: **17 Aug 2011**

WELCOME TO ENC 4212.521, Business & Technical Editing

This syllabus is a contract. It sets forth expectations, responsibilities, instructions, and policies that obligate both instructor and students. Read and consult it throughout the Fall 2011 semester. **Every student is expected to submit via email a signed information sheet indicating that he or she has read this syllabus and agrees to abide by its terms; this form also functions as a record of first-class attendance in this online course. If it is not received by Saturday, Aug. 27, 6 p.m., the student will be reported to the registrar as “not attending” and will be dropped from enrollment.** If you find an error or inconsistency in the syllabus, please accept my apology and notify me immediately. To download the student information sheet and the most current version of the syllabus, please see the course website:

http://www.todroberts.com/USF/3242_welcome.htm. In cases where information in this document differs from what appears on the course website, the website should be regarded as the most current and authoritative source.

I. COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE

ENC 4212.521 (CRN 91822), ALL-ONLINE COURSE. There will be no meetings on campus at all. However, this is not a “correspondence course” in which you merely write assignments. You will also need to hear lectures, read text, and communicate via email regularly. Your first task will be to send me a brief background statement available on the course website at http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4212_welcome.htm. This also functions as a record of first-class attendance and must be received by 6 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 27 to avoid being dropped from enrollment. There will be a final exam taken via Blackboard on Tuesday, Dec. 6, plus a total of five written assignments.

II. INSTRUCTOR CONTACT AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Instructor: Thorold (Tod) Roberts. (Please refer to me as “Mr. Roberts.”) To contact me, send email to thorsdag@comcast.net. (Spell my email address accurately!) Most of our communications will be via email, but if necessary, please phone me at 941-927-2898 (Sarasota) between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. I prefer email because it creates a written record of our communications and because it gives students practice in writing, a primary purpose of the course. Because I am rarely on campus, do not leave a message on my campus phone or in my campus mailbox. If you would like to meet in person, please contact me to arrange an appointment. You have no restrictions on the length or number of emails you may exchange with me, but please use good judgment in this matter so that our work is productive. Because of the large volume of email I process, every message you send must bear your last name and the course number in the SUBJECT line (for example: “Jones, Question on ENC 4212, Assignment 2.”) If a student question or comment appears of general value or relevance, I will send it and my response to all students. For information on my background, see <http://www.todroberts.com> or <http://www.sarasota.usf.edu/academics/CAS/faculty/TRoberts.php>. For students’ numeric scores and comments on my past USF courses, see http://www.todroberts.com/USF/Roberts_Evaluations.htm.

For help with Blackboard, USF email, OASIS, or other technology tools see <http://it.usf.edu/>, send an email (help@usf.edu), or call 866-974-1222 (toll-free).

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This course is designed to serve the needs of students preparing for careers in business and technical writing, editing, and communications. ENC 4212 covers wide-ranging professional and pragmatic challenges that will serve students well in the job market or advanced academic study. Our focus will be on learning how to distinguish between writing and editing, how to work with clients and employers as an editor, and how to meet the stressful deadlines and demanding professional standards that editors face. **PREREQUISITE:** At least one of the following courses or equivalent, or instructor’s permission: ENC 3250, ENC 3310, ENC 4260, ENC 4311.

IV. COURSE GOAL

To help the student advance in knowledge and practice of skills, tools, and insights needed for working effectively as an interpreter, translator, editor, and writer using written and spoken English in business, industry, organizations, and technical occupations.

V. COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A: DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

OUTCOME A1: Demonstrate competence in understanding the nature of business and technical editing as it is applied in the workplace.

OUTCOME A2: Demonstrate proficiency in developing and practicing skills in research, analysis, writing, editing, and communications strategy that will be vital for success in the student’s future career.

OUTCOME A3: Become familiar with the nature and application of traditional and electronic media and types of publications or projects which a student concentrating in business and technical writing will be expected to understand and use before taking subsequent BTW courses and working in a professional environment for clients and employers.

B: CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

OUTCOME B1: Demonstrate competence and efficiency in understanding and applying the intellectual skills needed to use technology, communication tools, concepts, media, and vocabulary and applying those skills to business and technical editing assignments.

OUTCOME B2: Develop the creativity needed to understand and exploit yet-unknown communications technology and concepts on the basis of time-tested historical principles known to experienced writers and editors.

C: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

OUTCOME C1: Demonstrate an ability to read, interview, interpret, and apply the forms of expression and knowledge required to serve as a bridge between advanced business and technical professionals (also known as Subject Matter Experts, or SME's) and non-specialist users and readers of those professionals' communications.

VI. COURSE CONTENT AND METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

The assignments draw on the instructor's experience as a professional writer and editor serving clients and employers in diverse business settings and as a university teacher of writing. In addition to written assignments, the course requires familiarity with a textbook, writing handbooks, online lectures, basic website design, and email exchanges, as detailed in the Schedule of Weekly Assignments below. It also requires the use of computerized word processing using MS Word software, electronic communications, and internet-based research. Each student must have access to a reliable computer and knowledge of how to use it for word processing, email, internet search, and access to the password-controlled USF Blackboard online learning system (my.usf.edu).

Course Content: Each of the first four writing assignments will be around 500 words long; Assignment 5 will consist of a 1,000- to 1,500-word prose document. Selected readings from the course textbook, the internet, and other sources will supplement web-posted lectures. A final exam will be presented via Blackboard on December 2. All students are required to submit an evaluation of the course via OASIS at the end of the Fall semester (dates and instructions for this will be announced by email).

Written Assignments: Students will perform assignments that require interviewing, research, editing, and writing. The instructor will act as a mentor to guide students and to clarify assignments, analytical tasks, and technology as needed. The total number of words to be processed during the semester is estimated at 3,000 to 3,500. These will be distributed among four short assignments of two or three pages each and a longer, more demanding project of eight to 12 pages at the end of the semester. The instructions for assignments will be announced via email and posting on the course website. A final exam covering all course content will be presented via Blackboard on Tuesday, December 6. Selected readings from electronic sources will supplement lectures, course textbook, and online information exchanges.

Students with Disabilities: ADA Statement -- Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with the Office of Student Disabilities Services (<http://www.sarasota.usf.edu/Students/Disability/>) in order to receive special accommodations and services. Please notify the instructor via email during the first week of classes (Aug. 22-26, 2011) if a reasonable accommodation for a disability is needed for this course. A letter from the USF Disabilities Office must accompany this request.

Policy on Religious Observances: Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, by Aug. 26, 2011. (In this online course, which holds no on-campus class meetings, this policy may -- at the instructor's discretion -- apply to deadlines for assigned work which fall on a religious holiday. Please consult with the instructor regarding individual circumstances.)

Emergency Operations at USF: In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Blackboard, Elluminate, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It's the responsibility of the student to monitor the Blackboard site and USF email for each class for course-specific communication, and the main USF, College, and department websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information. The toll-free phone number for updated USF emergency information is **1 (800) 992-4231**.

Method of Presentation: Students will perform in a distance-learning environment, with guidance from the instructor. Course objectives and procedures will be presented in the first lecture to be posted at http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4212_welcome.htm before the Fall 2011 semester begins on Aug. 22, 2011. Your official USF email address will be used for most communications; if you forward mail from there to your personal address, be sure you are receiving all messages. An individual student's questions and my emailed responses will be sent to all students if the questions and answers appear to be generally relevant and helpful. I welcome student emails about assignments, lectures, or other aspects of the course as long as they are focused, literate, and relevant. **Treat your messages to me as you would those to your employer or client, using correct usage, complete sentences, concise language, and logical thinking.** I try to answer all email promptly.

Lectures: As noted on the course website, you will download two lecture files (MP4 audio and PowerPoint slides) each week. You can hear the MP4 files on your computer using either Apple QuickTime or VLC Media Player (see links for these free downloads on course website). **Do not try to hear the lecture audio as a streaming file over the internet -- you may find it interrupted.** Just download and listen to it on your computer while viewing the PowerPoint slides. The lectures provide important information on written assignments and course content. To simulate in an online environment the required tracking of student attendance expected in an on-campus class, each audio lecture will contain **embedded spoken code words** which you must send to me via email by deadlines noted in the Weekly Schedule below. Submitting the codes will ensure that you are listening to the lectures soon after they are posted, and not letting them accumulate for later listening. Regular listening to -- and note-taking on -- lectures are vital to your success in the course. Failure to send the audio codes by deadline may result in two unpleasant consequences: (1) ignorance about assignment instructions leading to weak performance and (2) a penalty to your final grade in the course. You must cite the specific slide number where each audio code occurs. (This will be explained in the introductory course lecture.)

Email Messages & Submitted Work: You will send me all assignments attached to email messages as MS Word files with the .doc (**NOT .DOCX**) file extension. I will evaluate and grade your work electronically and, as explained below, return it to you by email upon request. I will

normally use your USF email address for messages unless you request otherwise for a valid reason. I will acknowledge, via email, the receipt of your email message and attachment. All of your written work must bear a filename in this format: **Lastname_4212_X.doc** (no spaces), where X refers to the assignment number (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5). Do not send your work with a generic name such as "Assignment2.doc" or "TechReport.doc." The first time you do this, I will ask you to fix it. If this happens again, your submission will simply be counted as missing and will be penalized accordingly. Orderly procedures are essential because I serve scores of students who submit hundreds of thousands of words of gradable work to me. (I receive and answer, on average, 150 to 200 student emails per week during a regular 16-week semester.)

Email Problems: Occasionally a student or instructor or both may experience problems with email. If this happens, notify me by phone (941-927-2898) and, if necessary, send a message to my alternative email address (thorsdag06@yahoo.com -- the 0 is a zero, not the capital letter "O"). **DO NOT SEND TO THE YAHOO ADDRESS WITHOUT PHONING ME.** If you do not receive my prompt response to an emailed assignment or a question, contact me via phone as soon as possible. As noted above, each email requires a subject line with your name, the course number (4212), and a brief phrase such as "Assignment 2 question." **Make sure your USF email account is working, especially if you have messages forwarded from there to a different address. USF email is the official point of contact in this online course.**

VERY IMPORTANT: Make sure you receive my acknowledgment of your assignment submission. If you do not receive such a message by 9 p.m. following a 6 p.m. deadline, send the document to me again. Otherwise, your work will be penalized for being late or missing. I will normally use the email header time-stamp to determine whether you have met the deadline or not. (See Section VIII, Grading and Evaluation, for information on the penalty for late submissions; for information on email headers, see <http://www.todroberts.com/USF/Email-Headers.pdf>.) I am too busy to acknowledge all submissions as they arrive, so please do not call or email me about your submission if you send it before the 6 p.m. deadline. I will usually acknowledge submissions AFTER the 6 p.m. deadline, not before.

Last Day to Withdraw from a Fall 2011 Course Without Academic Penalty: Saturday, Oct. 29, 2011. Confer with instructor and/or your academic advisor before this date if you have a question. **If you are not submitting required work but remain in the course, you will earn an F.**

Format for Written Assignments: Formatting Instructions will be included with each set of assignment directions. Formatting is an important element of professional writing and editing and as such will play a role in your learning experience and grade. All written assignments must be prepared on a computer using Microsoft Word or equivalent software. You must save your documents using the older (pre-2007) .doc extension (not .docx) or the .rtf extension. If you lack MS Office for your personal use, you may use a shareware program called OpenOffice (www.openoffice.org), but you may find it limited compared to the Microsoft version.

Computer Procedures: Put all work for the course (assignments, drafts, email messages, syllabus, bookmarks, and notes) into a separate folder labeled **4212_Fall11**. Back up that folder at least weekly (daily is better) on a USB flash drive, CD-ROM, or online archive. Send a copy of your messages and attachments to your secondary email address for safe-keeping. **An assignment lost as a result of carelessness or ignorance will diminish your learning experience and grade.** If an assignment calls for the use of unfamiliar tools such as PowerPoint for slides or advanced application of MS Word or Excel, budget the time and effort required for you to learn them. For help with Microsoft Office, see <http://www.uwec.edu/help/>. Those seeking a career in any professional communications field cannot survive without such knowledge.

Course Website: http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4212_welcome.htm. Links to syllabus, assignments, lectures, and helpful resources are available on this site. Students should visit this page **at least daily**. Read **all links on this page** before the end of the Fall 2011 semester. Specific links of most relevance to the final exam will be highlighted a short time before the exam.

Student Success in This Course: To succeed in ENC 4212, **think and act like a professional, not like a student**. Put learning ahead of grades and challenge yourself to work beyond your comfort zone. Read and respond to email, submit work on time, read all assigned material, listen to and take notes on lectures on schedule, keep an open and inquisitive mind, and ask questions. If you are like most USF Sarasota-Manatee students, you are probably not only studying for a degree but also earning a living and perhaps caring for a family. Thus, to succeed in ENC 4212, prioritize your time and effort wisely. As the instructor, I am eager for you to experience an excellent return on your investment of time, money, and intellectual energy.

Attendance, Absences, Making Up Work, Extra Credit: Because this course is delivered as a 100 percent online experience, conventional attendance records are irrelevant. However, as noted above, the required submission of audio codes for online lectures functions as a simulated means of checking "attendance." The specific rules regarding audio codes are explained above (see "Lectures"). **There is no provision for re-doing an assignment already submitted, or for grade forgiveness, grade rounding, extra credit, or makeup work.** (In my opinion, such options have no place in upper-division undergraduate courses.) Penalties for late submission of student work are specified below in Section IX, "Grade Penalty for Missing an Assignment Deadline."

USF Academic Calendar, Fall 2011 (for details, see <http://www.registrar.usf.edu/enroll/regist/calendtp.php>)

Mon Aug 22: first day of classes	Fri Nov 11: Veteran's Day
Mon Sep 5: Labor Day	Thu-Fri, Nov 24-25: Thanksgiving holiday
Sat Oct 29: Last day to drop class without academic penalty	Fri, Dec 2: Last day of classes
	Sat-Fri, Dec 3-9: Final exam week

VII. ENC 4212 SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS, FALL 2011

Detailed directions for all written assignments will be provided to you via email and website posting. Assigned readings will be announced via lecture and/or email. Most written assignments are due to me on Mondays by 6:00 p.m. Lectures discussing assignments and course content will be posted on the course website as both PowerPoint slides and as audio recordings in MP4 format, usually by Wednesday or Thursday of each week. Instructions for downloading lectures are presented on the course website. You must send lecture audio codes via email as noted below.

This schedule is subject to change because of circumstances beyond my control. Check your USF email at least daily for messages and announcements.

DATE	EVENT OR TASK	LECTURES & WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS
Aug 22 (Mon)	WEEK 1 LECTURE	Course objectives and procedures; send background information via email by Aug 29
Aug 31 (Wed)	WEEK 2 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Sep 5 (Mon)	Assignment 1 Mon 6 pm	Assignment 1 - topic to be announced; send codes for Weeks 1 + 2 (15% of grade)
Sep 7 (Wed)	WEEK 3 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Sep 14 (Wed)	WEEK 4 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Sep 21 (Wed)	WEEK 5 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Sep 26 (Mon)	Assignment 2 Mon 6 pm	Assignment 2 - topic to be announced; send codes for Weeks 3, 4, 5 (15% of grade)
Sep 28 (Wed)	WEEK 6 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Oct 5 (Wed)	WEEK 7 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Oct 12 (Wed)	WEEK 8 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Oct 17 (Mon)	Assignment 3 Mon 6 pm	Assignment 3 - topic to be announced; send codes for Weeks 6, 7, 8 (15% of grade)
Oct 19 (Wed)	WEEK 9 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Oct 26 (Wed)	WEEK 10 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Oct 31 (Mon)	Assign 4 Mon 6 pm	Assign 4 - topic to be announced; send codes for Weeks 9 + 10 (15% of grade)
Nov 2 (Wed)	WEEK 11 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Nov 4 (Fri)	Assignment 5 outline, Fri 6 pm	Send outline of Assignment 5 (required but not graded)
Nov 9 (Wed)	WEEK 12 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Nov 16 (Wed)	WEEK 13 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments; readings will be assigned via email
Nov 23 (Wed)	WEEK 14 NO LECTURE	Thanksgiving holiday -- no lecture
Nov 28 (Mon)	Assignment 5 Mon 6 pm	Assignment 5 - Three options (to be discussed in lectures and emailed directions); send Week 11, 12, and 13 codes (1500-2000 words, 30% of grade)
Nov 30 (Wed)	WEEK 15 LECTURE	Final lecture - exam preparation tips; send course evaluation (deadline and instructions TBA)
Dec 2 (Fri)	End of Fall semester	Classes end; final exams are held Dec 3 through Dec 9
Dec 6 (Tue)	ENC 4212 Blackboard Final Exam	45 minutes; covers syllabus, website links, readings, assignments, + lectures (10% of grade); final grades will be posted by Mon, Dec 12

VIII. TEXT AND OTHER RESOURCES

- **Required Textbook:** *The Longman Guide to Technical Editing*, by Carolyn D. Rude, Longman Publishing Group, 2005, ISBN 978-0321365798, \$24.95 (list). Available at amazon.com and at USFSM campus bookstore. (See optional texts listed on course website.)
- Access to computer and Microsoft Office (Macintosh or PC)
- Access to Internet and an email account plus ability to exchange email messages and attachments
- Collegiate dictionary (American Heritage is recommended)
- Competence in English grammar, vocabulary, spelling, sentence structure, and document organization
- Handbook of English usage, either online or on paper (see links on course website)
- Miscellaneous web-based and paper-based information (syllabus, assignment directions, formatting instructions)

IX. GRADING AND EVALUATION

The grade you earn on an assignment will be a numerical score. For assignments in this course and for the Fall semester total score, numerical values are equated with letter grades as shown below:

A = 100-95	B = 85.999-84	C = 75.999-74	D = 65.999-64
A- = 94.999-90	B- = 83.999-80	C- = 73.999-70	D- = 63.999-60
B+ = 89.999-86	C+ = 79.999-76	D+ = 69.999-66	F = 59.999-0

No assignment submitted = zero (0) points; note that this scale differs from the generic scale on Blackboard, just as students and instructor differ from their “generic” counterparts.

Definitions of Grades

A = exceeds objectives of the assignment; three or fewer major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; clear, logical thought; originality, creativity, and maturity

B = meets objectives of assignment; no more than four major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; logical but uninspired thought; no major surprises

C = meets objectives but just barely; five or more major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; some lapses in logic; often, a cautious effort to “give the instructor what he wants”

D = tries but fails to meet objectives; six or more major errors in language usage, sentence structure, or organization; jumbled, weak flow of ideas; confused understanding of the assignment

F = complete failure to meet objectives of the assignment

NOTE: A “major error” is defined as one that creates confusion or an impression of unprofessional practices; this includes, but is not limited to, comma splices, sentence fragments, fused or run-on sentences, pronoun misuse, punctuation mistakes, spelling errors, and misused words (for

instance, using “service” as a verb when the correct word is “serve”). Note also that an accumulation of several “minor” errors may cause as much harm as a few “major” errors. A misspelling of “moral” for “morale” (or vice versa) may appear minor, but your reader may find it grounds for doubting your knowledge, skill, and credibility. Such errors may even cause you to lose a job. Although some students may believe that strict standards of correctness in speech and writing are passé, they will be in for a major surprise when a boss or client explodes in a fury over a “simple misspelling.” For more details about the definitions of grades, see http://www.todroberts.com/USF/grade_penalties.pdf. Use old-fashioned flash cards for learning the Usage Tips at the end of the syllabus.

Final Grade in Course: Your final grade in the course will be computed on Blackboard using the following weighting formula:

- 60%: Assignments 1, 2, 3, and 4 (15% each, about 2,000 words total)
- 30%: Assignment 5 (1,500 to 2,000 words)
- 10%: Final exam (multiple-choice & T/F test covering course content, via Blackboard on December 6, 2011)

Your grade will be reported to the registrar on the plus-and-minus scale shown below:

A+ or A = 4.00	B = 3.00	C = 2.00	D = 1.00
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	D- = 0.67
B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D+ = 1.33	F = 0.00

The final grade, as noted below, will be reduced by penalty points (if any) for failing to send lecture audio codes on time.

Student Evaluation of Instructor and Course: All students are required to submit via Blackboard a fair and complete evaluation of the course by the end of the Fall semester (specific dates to be announced). Instructions for this will be announced via email and website.

Grade Penalty for Missing an Assignment Deadline: Because deadlines for on-the-job writing are taken seriously by clients and employers, deadlines in this course will be treated the same way. An assignment loses one entire grade -- for example, from a “B” (85) to a “C” (75) -- for each 24-hour period (or portion thereof) it is late (including weekends and holidays). A penalty for late submission begins at the hour when the assignment is due (usually Monday at 6:00 p.m., via email). The clock time noted by your outgoing email server will determine whether you have sent the submission by the deadline. **** IMPORTANT: IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE MY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF YOUR SUBMITTED ASSIGNMENT, SEND IT AGAIN. OTHERWISE YOU RISK A PENALTY FOR LATENESS. **** As mentioned previously, I am too busy to acknowledge all submissions as they arrive, so please do not call or email me about your submission if you send it before the 6 p.m. deadline. I will usually acknowledge submissions AFTER the 6 p.m. deadline, not before.

Penalty Waiver: To extend a deadline without penalty, you must present compelling evidence of need as defined by the instructor. This varies in individual circumstances, but such leniency is more likely for a student who has demonstrated a desire to work hard and succeed in the course. NOTE: you are always much better off turning in a late assignment than none at all. The grade of “F,” at 59 points, will be far less damaging to one’s final course grade than a score of zero points for a missing assignment. If you’re inclined to regard this as a harsh penalty, here’s a thought to ponder: *Lateness in meeting a deadline on the job usually results in your being demoted or even fired.*

Grade Penalty for Failing to Hear Lectures On Time: The codes embedded in the lecture audio files must be sent to me via email along with your written assignments, as shown in the weekly schedule noted above. For example, your email transmission of Assignment 1 will not only include your attached submission with .doc file extension, but also in the body of your email you will note the audio codes for the Week 1 and 2 lectures by matching a specific code to a specific slide (*EXAMPLE: Slide 3: document, Slide 7: edit, Slide 11: submit*). You will lose two points from your final Fall semester grade calculation for each missing set of codes and one point for each set sent late. This will be computed manually at the end of the Fall semester. *EXAMPLE: your total points earned on assignments are 86 (B+), but you sent three lecture code sets late and failed to send two sets at all. This means you would lose seven points from your total, resulting in a final grade (to be reported to the registrar) of 79 (C+).*

REALITY CHECK: Any student who rushes through a lecture’s audio file merely to grab the audio codes and thus ignores the content of the lecture would be wise not to take this course at all. If you have no more interest in learning than this, drop out of school and do something else so you can make room for a serious student. You apparently lack the ethics and motivation needed for earning a college degree.

CONTINUE HERE

Inability to Complete Course Requirements On Time: A mark of “Incomplete” is allowed only in rare cases such as a documented health crisis or family emergency. You may be required to submit a Medical Form to the Academic Regulations Committee (available at http://www.registrar.usf.edu/data_display.php?link_type=Forms). Work to remove the “Incomplete” must be finished under these conditions: Work to remove the “Incomplete” must be finished under these conditions: (1) you must be passing the course at the time you request the “Incomplete” and must have only “a small amount of work” yet unfinished; (2) all required assignments must usually be finished within six weeks after the end of the semester or session in which the “Incomplete” occurred; (3) you must meet the terms of a contract signed by the instructor and the student; and (4) you must meet all USF academic and procedural requirements.

If these conditions are not met, the “Incomplete” will, after two semesters or by graduation (whichever comes first), be converted into the grade earned by the work actually completed during the course (this is, of course, often a failing grade). Allowing an “I” grade is up to the instructor’s discretion; it must be requested in writing. The policy as stated on page 43 of the 2011-2012 USFSM undergraduate catalog is as follows:

“I” Grade Policy

An “I” grade indicates incomplete coursework and may be awarded to graduate and undergraduate students. (Undergraduate rules apply to non-degree-seeking students.) It may be awarded to an undergraduate student only when a small portion of the student’s work is incomplete and only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade. Until removed, the “I” is not computed in the GPA for either undergraduate or graduate students. The time

limit for removing the "I" is to be set by the instructor of the course. For undergraduate students, this time limit may not exceed two academic semesters, whether or not the student is in residence, and/or graduation, whichever comes first. "I" grades not removed by the end of the time limit will be changed to "IF" or "IU," whichever is appropriate. If an instructor is willing, he or she may accept work from a student after an "I" grade has changed to an IF or IU grade, and assign the student a final grade in the course, unless the student has graduated. Whether or not the student is in residence, any change to "IF" grades will be calculated in the cumulative GPA and, if applicable; the student will be placed on appropriate probation or academically dismissed. Students are not required to re-register for courses in which they are only completing previous course requirements to change an "I" grade. However, if a student wants to audit a course for review in order to complete course requirements, full fees must be paid.

See complete USFSM Undergraduate Catalog here: http://www.sarasota.usf.edu/Academics/Catalogs/UG/USFSM_UG_11_12.pdf.

Grading Process. I do not return your graded submission to you except upon your request. You have two options in this process:

Option 1. If you want the submission returned with detailed marks and comments, **you must agree to rewrite or revise the entire paper** in response to those comments and marks. The revision is due to me no later than one week after you receive the marked paper from me. If you choose this option, the submission you send must be labeled **Lastname_4212_X_markup.doc**, where "X" refers to the assignment number. You will receive from me a document labeled **Lastname_4212_X_graded.doc**. You will then rewrite/revise this and return it to me labeled **Lastname_4212_X_revised.doc**. Omit spaces and insert underscores in filenames exactly as shown. Leave all of my original marks and comments in place and insert your revisions nearby in blue boldface text so that I can quickly compare the original and the revision. (See detailed revision instructions and sample revision on course website, http://www.tdroberts.com/USF/4212_welcome.htm.)

Option 2. If you want your grade simply posted on Blackboard with no marks, comments, or returned submission, just name your file **Lastname_4212_X.doc**.

The rewriting/revision process is entirely your option, not a requirement. You may choose to revise one or more of Assignments 1 through 4. (Assignment 5 occurs too late in the term to allow revision; however, I will provide an optional comment on it upon request. Use this filename: Lastname_4212_5_comment.) I do not evaluate your work carefully, but I provide detailed comments only for those papers on which students are willing to perform the extra work needed for revising the submission. **IMPORTANT: Submitting the revised/rewritten submission will NOT result in a change in your grade except under this condition: If you request the detailed mark-up, you must submit the revised/rewritten work within one week of receiving it graded from me. If you do not, your grade will be dropped by one grade (10 points) -- for example, from a B+ to a C+ -- for each day or portion of a day you miss the deadline.**

Reason for This Grading Process: Because of my heavy teaching load (hundreds of thousands of words of graded student writing per semester), I lack the time needed for marking all student work in detail as a regular procedure. My grading process therefore offers a compromise. It recognizes that some students are content merely to pass a course in order to satisfy a graduation requirement. This usually means they are willing to improve their writing/editing skills and are willing to settle for an "acceptable" grade. A student's definition of "acceptable" varies, but based on my experience, many students are satisfied with anything from a "C" to an "A." Students who are enrolled just to satisfy a graduation requirement will likely have personal reasons for not wanting to submit a complete revision. They may be too busy with other courses, jobs, or other responsibilities, or they may simply regard the revision process as not worth the required work. However, this opportunity is open to every student.

The amount of effort for me as instructor to prepare a detailed mark-up (typically requiring 30 to 40 minutes per submission per student) is commensurate with the extra effort required by the student to revise it. This effort is understandably beyond what some students prefer to do or have time to do. However, I do not discriminate in any way against those who do not want to perform this extra work. I merely offer an opportunity for this expanded learning experience to those who see value in such an approach.

IMPORTANT: Students have no obligation to take advantage of the rewriting process and will suffer no direct penalty for not participating in this additional work. It should be obvious to you, however, that optimal learning is more likely with, than without, the revision.

Special Note for Students Concentrating in Business and Technical Writing (BTW): Students concentrating in this discipline should not enroll in this course merely to satisfy a graduation requirement. They should be serious about honing their skills to the level required of a professional who can earn a living using the knowledge and experience gained in this field of study at USF. They are therefore expected (but not required) to request detailed markup and to submit revisions of their work. **Word to the wise:** any BTW student who fails to request detailed markup should be aware that this fact will be noted as negative feedback on future Letters of Reference prepared by the instructor.

Grievance Procedure for USF Students: The 2011-2012 USF-SM Undergraduate Catalog, pages 48-51 (USF Policy 10-002, "Student Academic Grievance Procedure": http://www.sarasota.usf.edu/Academics/Catalogs/UG/USFSM_UG_11_12.pdf), emphasizes that a student must first contact the course instructor before filing a grievance:

III. Statement of Policy

A. Resolution at the Department Level. 1. The student shall first make a reasonable effort to resolve his or her grievance with the instructor concerned, with the date of the incident triggering the start of the process (i.e. the issuance of a grade; the receipt of an assignment) and the instructor shall accommodate a reasonable request to discuss and attempt to resolve this issue.

If, after conferring with the instructor, the student believes he or she is justified in filing a formal grievance, the procedures outlined in the USF Undergraduate Catalog must be carefully followed. A grievance is an extremely grave matter that requires many hours of attention from the student, the faculty, and USF administration. Therefore, pursue it only when other means of redress have completely failed.

Advice About Grades: A grievance will not automatically or necessarily result in a change of grade for an assignment or a course. In more than 44 years of teaching thousands of college students, **two** of my students have filed formal grievances (1974 and 1997), and in both cases my original grade and teaching approach were upheld by a grievance committee of students and faculty.

I take seriously my duty to be not only a competent and effective teacher but also **to help you succeed, not fail**. If you believe I am not meeting your objectives as a student, confer with me. I will listen to your perspective and seek a mutually satisfying solution to problems. Any student who writes an anonymous negative review of my teaching or course content at the end of a term but who has never communicated with me in person, by phone, or by email about specific complaints lacks credibility. Such a person demonstrates indifference regarding professional and ethical standards of conduct. That person should in turn expect the same treatment from others.

The time to focus on your grade, if you worry about such a thing, is during the semester, not at the end after you receive the final grade calculation. Students who complain about final grades but who have made little if any sincere effort to excel on each assignment can count on little response from the instructor. You have five written assignments (for four of which you are invited to receive detailed markups and to prepare revisions) to build a satisfactory final grade, and you are encouraged to communicate with me at any time regarding your work.

Contrary to many students' view, a grade is earned by you, not given by me. Your job is to perform as well as possible. My job is to evaluate your performance fairly, based on experience, judgment, and workplace expectations. There is nothing personal in this process; it is simply a matter of defining, applying, and meeting professional criteria. I am not judging your appearance, gender, sexual preference, ethnicity, philosophy, politics, religion, personal values, or social status. I am interested only in your writing/editing performance and your demonstrated improvement thereof.

Please don't ask for a grade to be "rounded" to a higher mark. The grading system is designed to record your achievement accurately to three decimal places, so the effect of rounding has already been considered. Grades are calculated by the Blackboard system based on the instructor's individual scale, but if you believe a mathematical error has occurred, notify me immediately.

Read carefully and repeatedly the definitions of grades in this syllabus so you have a clear understanding of the standards that students are expected to meet. If you are confused, simply ask me for clarification. Education begins with you, not with a university, course, or teacher. I recommend also that you read the following links so that you have a clear understanding of my approach to teaching:

- [Student evaluations of all my USF courses from 2003 through Spring 2011](#)
- [A Perfect Storm in Undergraduate Education, Part 1](#)
- [From Students, A Misplaced Sense of Entitlement](#)
- [Student Evaluations, Grade Inflation, and Declining Student Effort](#)

IX. PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

The use of others' words, images, sounds, ideas, or expressive work regardless of medium, without permission and/or without providing proper credit, is **PLAGIARISM**. Taking credit for another person's work, or submitting your own work as that of another person, is **CHEATING**. Both activities constitute a serious breach of ethics that harms other students and society in general. The penalty for such an act may include any or all of the following:

- **A score of zero (0) points on an assignment (the same as if no assignment were submitted at all), with no opportunity to resubmit the plagiarized work**
- **Failure in a course (the student's permanent USF transcript may bear the grade of "FF" to indicate academic dishonesty),**
- **Dismissal from school, and/or**
- **Formal prosecution for theft of intellectual property.**

USF's Policy 3.027 on Academic Integrity of Students is stated at http://www.sarasota.usf.edu/Academics/Catalogs/UG/USFSM_UG_11_12.pdf (pages 54-59) and in the printed catalog. Every student must read and follow this policy. Before you stoop to stealing someone else's words, images, or ideas, ask yourself: "Would I accept this behavior in other students if it helped them and harmed me?" The student code of conduct and related documents are also available here: <http://sarasota.usf.edu/students/SRR/>.

WARNING: Plagiarism from online and other sources is easy for me to detect using the USF-supplied *SafeAssign*® software and other means of analysis. Students who violate the rules will tell you that the experience of being caught by me in an act of plagiarism is something they regret now and probably for the rest of their lives. Potentially exemplary careers can be and indeed have been ruined by such short-sighted, unethical behavior.

I take plagiarism and cheating seriously because I have a duty to protect the rights and expectations of honest students who work hard to earn a grade based on ethical practices in research and writing. If your work appears unusually better than I might reasonably expect it to be based on your academic or workplace experience, I may suspect plagiarism and will investigate. You may be required to submit complete citations and copies of all source material consulted for a given assignment.

Note that in addition to listing all references used in your work under the heading "Sources Consulted" at the end of a submission, you must also provide **parenthetical citations** within the text to any direct or indirect quote, idea, or words derived from a work other than your own. The Modern Language Association (MLA) format for parenthetical citations and listing of references is explained through a link on the course website (<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/research/mlaparen.html>).

USF Official Statement regarding use of SafeAssign®: *The University of South Florida has an account with an automated plagiarism detection service which allows instructors to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism. I reserve the right to submit assignments to this detection system. Assignments are compared automatically with a huge database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers. The instructor receives a report showing exactly how the student's paper was plagiarized.*

X. CONCEPTS AND TOPICS TO BE COVERED IN ENC 4212

1. **Peer editing versus lone-eagle editing:** Many companies expect members of a department or project (peers) to “edit” one another’s work. In this course we will explore the advantages and drawbacks of this approach and compare it to what I call “lone-eagle editing.” This is a term I invented to describe the professional editor who acts as a combined coach, traffic cop, copy editor, publishing guru, translator/interpreter, and sometimes beleaguered defender of orthodox and clear English. It is a fortunate (and usually progressive) company that has both the resources and good sense to hire and nurture a professional editor.

2. **Levels of edit:** This term is used to describe the varying types and degrees of professional editing. At the lowest and most basic level, an editor (whether a professional person with this job title or simply a project team member who edits) is proofreading for errors in language, format, calculation, and overall content. At higher levels, an editor functions as a senior professional who contributes ideas to a project, challenges the existing approach or assumptions, and provides expert assistance in crafting the final message that will go to the ultimate readers and users. In between the lowest and highest editing functions are gradations in which both shallow and substantive editing occurs, sometimes under stressful conditions. This term is derived from the work linked here: <http://www.todroberts.com/USF/Levels-Of-Edit.pdf>. Download and consult this required text frequently in this course.

3. **Editor as researcher and idea generator:** In some companies and industries, an editor is seen as a valuable resource for researching business development ideas, preparing business proposals, and working as an equal with specialists and Subject Matter Experts (SME’s) of diverse functions such as design, engineering, graphic communications, product development, procurement, marketing, distribution, human resources, training, legal affairs, research and development, promotion, public relations, and advertising. If you are fortunate to work for a company that gives you as editor an opportunity to prove your enhanced value to the enterprise, you will find satisfying opportunities to grow professionally and intellectually. Your ability to learn and solve problems in such areas as software application, programming, machinery design and maintenance, quantitative analysis (using math, chemistry, physics, biological sciences, and similar knowledge), and creative expression (for example, performing and visual arts) will make your work increasingly valuable and in demand.

4. **So what exactly does an editor do?** The course will help you answer this question concisely and to demonstrate the value of competent editing to every business and organization, regardless of industry or for-profit/nonprofit status. Stated simply, an editor is responsible for shaping, correcting, and optimizing the work of writers who generate original research and written copy. We will also explore the supreme importance of high energy, restless intellectual curiosity, mental agility, and willingness to challenge experts well outside your academic training and way above your pay grade. (People who are most comfortable doing the same thing in the same way for the same reasons day after day tend to be both unhappy and ineffective as editors.)

5. **How do I present myself to the professional marketplace -- as an editor, or writer, or both?** We will examine opportunities in the job market that may not be explicitly labeled with titles of “writer” or “editor.” I will relay tips that I have used myself and have helped others use in identifying a seemingly unexpected or inappropriate opportunity (for example, “web and technical documentation designer”) as a perfect place for you to apply your skills and to help a company grow and prosper. We will also examine skills and background knowledge in such technical and business activities as accounting, computer programming, engineering, architecture, information technology (IT), marketing, promotion, advertising, and laboratory sciences that you may want to consider acquiring to expand your professional opportunities. Like most satisfying careers, the work of an editor is dynamic, demanding, challenging, and sometimes full of surprises. I recommend you review the outlook for this profession on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos320.htm>).

Please contact me via email (thorsdag@comcast.net) if you have a question about this syllabus.

ENC 4212 • ENGLISH USAGE TIPS: MEMORIZE AND APPLY THESE IN ALL ASSIGNMENTS

Listed here are some common errors found on student submissions. Details may be found in the online handbook (<http://ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>) and in standard writing manuals. While some errors result simply from writing in a hurry or missing a mistake in proofreading, others may represent a deeper misunderstanding. A respect for language customs is the mark of a person who understands and observes the basic civilities of a free and educated community. My tolerance for these and other errors will diminish as the course proceeds. I allow some leeway on the first assignment so that students can become familiar with expectations in the course. Every student is expected to prepare flash cards for these tips and to commit this information to memory.

PUNCTUATION

- **Comma splice:** this means joining two independent clauses together with a comma; this often happens when the word “however” is used. An easy fix is to begin a new sentence with “However” and separate this word from the other words with a comma. “However, he missed the plane.”
- **Apostrophe:** this seemingly unimportant punctuation mark can create confusion if not used correctly. If used in “it’s,” it means “it is.” When referring to possession, “its” **never** has an apostrophe.
- **Hyphen:** this is needed in compound modifiers such as “end-of-century art movement” or “Bush-influenced domestic policy.”
- **Dash:** a space plus two hyphens and a space (--). This can be used to introduce an amplifying phrase, or to join two clauses. Example: “The student saw a major opportunity in graduating early -- he could begin his career immediately.”

WORDINESS: Writing concisely takes perception to see alternative ways to express a thought, and practice to eliminate unnecessary words. In addition to passive-voice verbs, common phrases that contribute to wordiness are these:

- due to the fact that	- there (is) (are)
- in light of the fact that	- under these circumstances
- being that	- the reason is because

PRONOUN REFERENCES: A common error in student writing is the use of *they*, *their*, *them* when a singular pronoun (*he*, *his*, *him*) is needed. This often occurs after indefinite pronouns such as *anyone*, *someone*, *no one*, *each one*. Each of these is singular and requires a singular reference. Modern teachers and editors, recognizing concerns about “sexist language,” may insist on the awkward *he/she*, *his/her*, *him/her* combination in such cases, but I find these forced pairs awkward and bureaucratic-sounding. Use either the masculine or feminine, but not both. Contrary to some feminists’ claims, the masculine *he/him/his* historically has nothing to do with male biological identity; it simply refers to “a person.” It appears “masculine,” but only in an archaic sense of grammatical gender. This is still evident in languages such as German, which assigns a masculine gender to “moon” (*der Mond*); the French do just the opposite, calling the moon feminine (*la lune*). Considering these “genders” in the same way a person is male or female is absurdly ignorant.

Better yet, convert the reference into a plural to eliminate the problem. Instead of “Any person who goes into business for himself/herself ...” write “People who go into business for themselves ...” Another pronoun reminder: in formal professional writing, use *that* or *which* to refer to ideas and objects and *who* or *whom* to refer to persons.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT: In U.S. English, a collective noun such as “group” or “band” takes a singular, not plural, verb. It also takes a singular, not plural, pronoun. Other collective nouns treated as singular include *company*, *organization*, and *management*. Example: “The management of ABC Corporation has ensured its survival by use of the golden-parachute tactic.”

PARALLELISM: When listing items using bullet points or as a series in a sentence or paragraph, put these items in parallel grammatical form. Don’t mix verbs and nouns in such a list.

GENERAL USAGE TIPS

- In prose, spell out as words all numbers ten or smaller; use the word *percent*, not the percent sign (%). An exception to this practice is allowed in a table or chart.
- Use *either/or*, *neither/nor*, and *between* only with two items of comparison, never three or more. Use the word *among* for three or more.
- Differentiate *ensure*, *insure*, and *assure*. We *ensure* a result, we *insure* an auto against damage, and we *assure* a person of his safety.
- Distinguish between the verbs *serve* and *service*. The latter refers to the process of having the oil changed in your car ... or to bringing a bull and cow together in unholy matrimony. If you say your company *services* customers, you may lose business.
- Learn how the verbs *effect* and *affect* differ. To *effect* means to bring about: “The dean *effected* an important change in the way office space was allocated.” To *affect* means to influence: “The actor’s performance in *Hamlet* deeply *affected* me.” Don’t confuse the noun forms of these words! (See dictionary.)
- Spell out an acronym the first time it is mentioned in your submission so the reader knows what it refers to.
- Alot vs. a lot: The first is a common misspelling of the second; it’s too informal for professional writing.
- Between you and I vs. between you and me: The pronoun “me” is required because it is the object of a preposition; using “I” in writing or speaking will brand you as ignorant.
- Lay vs. lie: These verbs are confused even by supposedly educated speakers and writers, so those who understand their proper use will be a step ahead; “lay” is normally used as a transitive verb (one that takes a direct object); for instance, “If you lay your head on the pillow, you’ll Spring asleep”; “lie” is an intransitive verb and thus cannot have a direct object (“If you lie down on the bed, you’ll Spring asleep”). More confusion: “lay” is the past tense of “lie”: *today he lies in a ditch -- yesterday he lay in bed.*
- Hopefully vs. it is hoped or I hope: This confusion is commonplace but still a sign of ignorance; “hopefully” means “full of hope,” as in “She looked hopefully upon the teacher as a source of forgiveness for her goofing off all semester.”
- Who’s vs. whose: The first one is a contraction of “who is” or “who has”; the second is a possessive relative pronoun.
- There vs. their vs. they’re: these homophones are commonly confused; the first is an expletive or adverb; the second is a third-person plural possessive adjective; the third is a contraction of “they are.”
- Your vs. you’re: The first is a second-person possessive adjective; the second is a contraction of “you are.”
- Number vs. amount: The first is used as a collective noun referring to countable items (as in “the number of hours in a day”); the second is a collective noun referring to uncountable items (as in “the amount of lust generated by excessive testosterone”).
- Different from vs. different than: The first is standard in U.S. English; the second is preferred by the British. (And don’t spell “than” as “then”!)
- Verbal vs. oral: The first refers to any communication expressed in words, whether written or spoken; the second refers only to communication expressed in speech. “Verbal agreement” in reference to a spoken agreement is simply wrong.
- Imply vs. infer: Only a speaker or writer can “imply”; only a reader or listener can “infer”