

# DRAFT SYLLABUS FOR ENC 4931, SPECIAL TOPICS: PROFESSIONAL EDITING • SPRING 2009

University of South Florida (USF) • Sarasota/Manatee Campus • Instructor: T. E. Roberts (thorsdag@comcast.net)

Website for this course: [http://www.tdroberts.com/USF/4931\\_welcome.htm](http://www.tdroberts.com/USF/4931_welcome.htm) • Date of this syllabus: **17 Nov 2008 (subject to change)**

## WELCOME TO ENC 4931, SPECIAL TOPICS: Professional Editing

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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 semester. Every student is expected to sign a statement indicating that he or she has read this syllabus and agrees to abide by its terms. The instructor's agreement is affirmed by the signature below:



T. E. Roberts, Instructor / Spring 2009

**PRINTING OF SYLLABUS.** If you need a printed copy of this document, prepare one on your own equipment or request one from me before the first class on Friday, January 9 at 6:00 p.m. on the Sarasota campus. The document is designed to be used as an electronic publication, without need for printing (except for last page). It contains full description of course content and procedures, Usage Tips, and a background information form (last page) that you will turn in on Jan. 9.

## I. COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE

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ENC 4931, Special Topics: Professional Editing, three hours credit, Spring 2009, USF Sarasota/Manatee  
Section 591, CRN 17672, 6:00 to 8:45 p.m. Friday (Classroom to be announced in OASIS)

**NOTE: This is a Distance Learning/Web-Enhanced course; except for required Sarasota campus meetings on Jan. 9 (course introduction) and Apr. 24 (final exam), all work will be completed via email and internet.**

## II. INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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Instructor: Thorold (Tod) Roberts. (Please refer to me as "Mr. Roberts.") To contact me, send email to [thorsdag@comcast.net](mailto:thorsdag@comcast.net). (Spell my email address accurately!) My office hours (by appointment only) will be on Friday from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. 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 6:00 p.m. (I prefer email because it produces a written record of our communications and because it gives students practice in using written English, a main purpose of the course.) 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. Every email you send must bear your last name and the course number in the SUBJECT line (for example: "Jones, Question on ENC 4931, Assignment 2"). If a student question or comment appears of general value or relevance, I will send it and my response to all students in the course. For information, see <http://www.sarasota.usf.edu/CAS/troberts/> or <http://www.tdroberts.com>. For past evaluations of my USF courses by students, see link on course website.

## III. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

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As a Special Topics course, this exploration of Professional Editing is designed to serve the needs of students preparing for careers in professional writing, editing, and communications. In general, ENC 4931 is intended to allow for wide-ranging academic and pragmatic study of subjects that the instructor and students agree will serve students well in the job market or advanced academic study. Our focus in this section of ENC 4931 will be on learning the difference between writing and editing, how to work with clients and employers as an editor, and gaining experience in meeting the stressful deadlines and demanding standards of quality that editors face.

**IMPORTANT:** Because this course is being presented for the first time, the instructor expects and encourages students to help shape specific assignments and other content. While this syllabus is based on that used in other communications courses presented by the instructor, Professional Editing will break new ground in helping students learn and perform tasks for which other courses allow insufficient time or attention.

## IV. COURSE GOAL

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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

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The learning objectives of ENC 4931, Professional Editing, are as follows:

1. To read, digest, interpret, and convert into clear written English the thoughts and messages that a client or employer wants to transmit to his or her selected readers
2. To help a client or employer define, structure, format, and choose an appropriate medium for messages
3. To use interviewing and research as a means of drafting, writing, and polishing an effective message
4. To develop confidence, knowledge, and experience required for serving a client or employer as a competent professional editor in a demanding work environment

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 involves textbook study, online lectures, email exchanges, and a final exam, as detailed in the Schedule of Weekly Assignments below. It also requires the use of computerized word processing, electronic communications, field interviewing, and research via print and internet. Each student must have access to a reliable computer and knowledge of how to use it for word processing, email, and internet browsing, and access to the password-controlled USF Blackboard online learning system ([my.usf.edu](http://my.usf.edu)).

## **VI. COURSE CONTENT AND METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

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**Course Content:** Students will perform assignments that require interviewing, research, editing, and writing. Assignments will include peer-to-peer activities in which students will interview and edit the work of one another. The instructor will act as a mentor to guide students and to clarify assignments and approaches as needed. The total number of words to be processed during the semester is estimated at 3,000 to 4,000. These will be distributed among short assignments of two or three pages and longer, more demanding projects of 10 to 15 pages. The instructions for assignments will be announced via email and posting on the course website. A short-essay final exam (around 750 words) will be held on April 24. **You must be present on the Sarasota campus for this exam.** Selected readings from printed and electronic text will supplement lectures and online information exchanges.

**Method of Email and Online Presentation:** Students will perform in a distance-learning and web-enhanced environment, with guidance from the instructor. Details about course objectives and procedures will be presented in the first class meeting on campus on Jan. 9. 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. It is essential to check your email at least daily and to note whether I have acknowledged receiving your written assignments.

**Lectures:** As noted on the course website, you will download two lecture files (MP4 and PowerPoint) each week. Listen to the spoken lecture as you display the PPT slides on screen, and take careful notes. The lectures provide important information on written assignments and on content which will be covered in the final exam. **IMPORTANT: Each spoken lecture will contain embedded code words which you must send to me via email by a stated deadline (normally with the submission of written assignments).** This will ensure that you are listening to the lectures soon after they are posted, and not letting them accumulate for later listening. Regular listening is vital to your success in the course. Failure to send the audio codes by deadline will result in penalty to your final grade.

**Workflow and Procedures:** All written assignments except the final exam must be prepared on a computer (Macintosh or PC) using Microsoft Word software. NOTE: If you use MS Works or WordPerfect or any software package other than MS Office, you must create and save a document as a WORD file (ending in .doc or ending in .rtf, Rich Text Format). If you are using MS Word 2007, you must save your documents using the older .doc extension (not .docx). (See instructions on the course website for this.) You will not receive credit for work that I cannot read using MS Office 2004 on the Macintosh. If you lack MS Office for your personal use, you may also use a free program called OpenOffice ([www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org)), but you may find it limited compared to the Microsoft version.

Instead of turning in a printed copy of your assignment, you will send me the electronic version as an email attachment. I will evaluate and grade your work electronically and, as explained below, return it to you by email.

Be sure to indicate your preferred email address if it is not obvious from your message. 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\_4931\_X.doc** (no spaces), where X refers to the assignment number. Do not send your work with a generic name such as "Assignment4.doc" or "EditingProject.doc." Orderly procedures are essential because I serve around 90 students per semester who submit more than half a million words of gradable work to me. (I receive 200 to 300 student emails per week.)

**VERY IMPORTANT: Make sure you receive my acknowledgment of your submission. If you do not receive such a message within a few hours, 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](http://www.todroberts.com/USF/Email_Headers.pdf).)**

**Email Issues:** 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](mailto:thorsdag06@yahoo.com) -- the 0 is a zero, not the capital letter "O"). If you do not receive my prompt response to an emailed assignment or a question, contact me via phone as soon as possible. Each email requires a subject line with your name, the course number (4931), and a brief topic such as "Assignment 2 question." I exchange hundreds of emails with students in a semester, so without such information, your message is likely to get lost. Make sure your USF email account is working, especially if you have messages forwarded from there to a different address. (If you have any doubt, send a test message to yourself and to me early in the semester to be sure.)

**Format for Written Assignments:** Formatting guidelines will be included with the detailed instructions for each assignment.

**Course Website:** [http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4931\\_welcome.htm](http://www.todroberts.com/USF/4931_welcome.htm). Links to syllabus, assignments, lectures, and helpful resources are available on this site. Students should visit this page **at least daily**. You are expected to visit and read all relevant links on this page before the end of the semester.

**Student Conduct:** You are expected to function like a professional, not like a student -- submit work on time, read all assigned text material, listen to and take notes on lectures, and ask questions about assignments that are unclear to you. 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 in performing an assignment. In line with the objective to understand an editor's need to work with others, your submissions are subject to being distributed to all students in the class.

**Computer Procedures:** All professional writing and editing today require use of a computer and the internet for document preparation and revision, research, and communications. Back up your work on a USB flash drive, CD-ROM, or online archive. Send a copy of your work 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.**

**USF Academic Calendar, Spring 09** (for details, see <http://www.registrar.usf.edu/enroll/regist/calendt.php>)

January 5: Spring, first day of classes	April 24: Spring, last day of classes
January 19: Martin Luther King, Jr.	April 25 - May 1: Spring Final Exams
March 16 - 21: USF Spring Break	May 2: Spring Commencement, Tampa

**Weekly Schedule:** Detailed directions for all assignments will be sent via email and posted on the course website. Assigned readings will be announced by email. **This schedule is subject to change. Check your email regularly for announcements.** Note that 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, by Friday (if not earlier). Posting of lectures will be announced by email.

DATE	EVENT OR TASK	DETAILED CONTENT
Jan 9 (Fri)	WEEK 1 LECTURE <b>ON CAMPUS</b>	Introduction, course objectives and assignments, use of computer and internet; submit student background information (see blank form at end of syllabus); show student ID cards.
Jan 16 (Fri)	WEEK 2 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
<b>Jan 19 (Mon)</b>	<b>Assignment 1 due Mon 6 pm</b>	<b>Assignment 1, instructions to be announced; send Week 2 audio codes</b>
Jan 23 (Fri)	WEEK 3 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
Jan 30 (Fri)	WEEK 4 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
Feb 6 (Fri)	WEEK 5 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
<b>Feb 9 (Mon)</b>	<b>Assignment 2 due Mon 6 pm</b>	<b>Assignment 2, instructions to be announced; send audio codes for Weeks 3, 4, 5</b>
Feb 13 (Fri)	WEEK 6 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
Feb 20 (Fri)	WEEK 7 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
Feb 27 (Fri)	WEEK 8 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
<b>Mar 2 (Mon)</b>	<b>Assignment 3 due Mon 6 pm</b>	<b>Assignment 3, instructions to be announced; send audio codes for Weeks 6, 7, 8</b>
Mar 6 (Fri)	WEEK 9 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
Mar 13 (Fri)	WEEK 10 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
<b>Mar 20 (Fri)</b>	<b>WEEK 11 - SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>No lecture -- take a break!</b>
<b>Mar 23 (Mon)</b>	<b>Assignment 4 due Mon 6 pm</b>	<b>Assignment 4, instructions to be announced; send audio codes for Weeks 9, 10</b>
Mar 27 (Fri)	WEEK 12 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
Apr 3 (Fri)	WEEK 13 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
Apr 10 (Fri)	WEEK 14 LECTURE	Lecture topic relevant to current assignments
Apr 17 (Fri)	WEEK 15 LECTURE	Summary of ENC 4931 and final exam preparation
<b>Apr 20 (Mon)</b>	<b>Assignment 5 due Mon 6 pm</b>	<b>Assignment 5, instructions to be announced; send codes for Weeks 12, 13, 14, 15</b>
Apr 24 (Fri)	FINAL EXAM <b>ON CAMPUS</b>	Final exam (two hours) and end-of-semester course evaluation (15 minutes). Final grades will be posted on Blackboard by May 1.

## VII. TEXT AND OTHER REQUIRED 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 other sites (not at university bookstore).
- Access to computer and Microsoft Office (Macintosh or PC) (**avoid Office 2007 unless you know how to save documents in pre-2007 format -- see [http://www.todroberts.com/USF/word\\_2007\\_info.htm](http://www.todroberts.com/USF/word_2007_info.htm)**)
- Access to Internet and an email account plus ability to exchange email messages and attachments
- Collegiate dictionary (American Heritage is recommended)
- 8-1/2" x 11" smooth-edge writing paper and blue or black pen for final exam
- 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)

## VIII. GRADING AND EVALUATION

Your work will be graded within one week of its submission to me. The grade you earn on an assignment will be a numerical score, not a letter grade. For assignments in this course, 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 turned in = minus 10 points. The meaning of grades is explained below.

## Definitions of Grades

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

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

**C** = meets objectives but just barely; no more than four major errors in language usage, sentence structure, organization, or format; some lapses in logic; often, a cautious effort to "give the instructor what he wants"

**D** = tries but fails to meet objectives; no more than five major errors in language usage, sentence structure, organization, or format; jumbled, weak organization; confused understanding of the assignment

**F** = failure to meet objectives of the assignment

**NOTE:** A "major error" is defined as **one that weakens the authority and credibility of your message**. This includes, but is not limited to, comma splices, sentence fragments, fused or run-on sentences, pronoun/antecedent disagreement, punctuation mistakes, spelling errors, and misused words (for instance, using "service" as a verb when the correct word is "serve" or the word "affect" when the correct word is "effect"). Note also that an accumulation of several "minor" errors may cause as much harm as a few "major" errors. Although spelling, punctuation, and adherence to formatting instructions may appear of little importance to you, they are one of the most visible features of professional writing. If you mistakenly use "then" when you mean "than" or write "moral" when you mean "morale," your readers (especially your boss) will assume, fairly or not, that you are simply incompetent and uneducated; worse yet, you may drive away customers and clients who expect nothing less than complete professionalism. Despite the dumbing-down of communication through instant messaging, email, social networking, and weak reading skills, most employers still operate as conservative bastions of old-fashioned correctness in speech and writing. ENC 4931 gives you an opportunity to understand and succeed in that stressful environment. **Memorize the USAGE TIPS at the end of this syllabus by using old-fashioned flash cards.**

**Final Grade in Course:** Your final grade in the course will be computed using the following weighted formula:

- 75%: Written Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 (15% each)
- 25%: Final exam (Five short-essay questions on content of the course, 750 words max)

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

**Grade Penalty for Missing an Assignment Deadline:** Because deadlines for on-the-job professional writing are taken seriously by clients and employers, deadlines in this class will be treated the same way. An assignment loses one entire grade -- for example, from a "B" (85) to a "C" (75), a total of ten points -- for each 24-hour period (or portion thereof) it is late (including Sundays and holidays). A penalty for late submission begins at the hour when the assignment is due (6:00 p.m., via email, on the deadline day). 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. You must present written, verifiable documentation in order to have the penalty waived. This means sending the information via U.S. mail to my home address (3428 Riviera Dr, Sarasota FL 34232), or scanning and sending it as an email attachment. (Indicate clearly for which assignment you are requesting a waiver.) If investigation proves that the documentation is inauthentic, it will not be accepted (in fact, it will probably be turned over to a university disciplinary committee). NOTE: you are always much better off turning in a late assignment than none at all. The mark of "F," at a grade of 59 points, will be less damaging to one's final course grade than a score of minus 10 points for a missing assignment.

**Grade Penalty for Failing to Send Lecture Audio Codes 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 2 lecture by matching a specific code to a specific slide (*EXAMPLES: Slide 3: document, Slide 7: edit, Slide 11: submit*). You will lose two points from your final 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 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+).*

**Inability to Complete Course Requirements:** A mark of "Incomplete" is allowed only in rare cases such as a documented health crisis. You must submit a Medical Form to the Academic Regulations Committee (available at <http://www.registrar.usf.edu/index.php>; click on the link labeled "Registrar's Office Forms"). 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"; (2) all required assignments must usually be finished within six weeks of 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 be converted into the grade earned by all work finished in the course.

**Grading Process.** I will return each assignment with detailed marks and comments within one week of receiving it from you. You are free to revise and return any assignment for enhanced practice and learning, but revising will not change the original grade. The filename of an optional returned submission should read **Lastname\_4931\_X\_revised.doc**, where X = the number of the assignment in question.

**Grievance Procedure for USF Students:** The Undergraduate Catalog, pages 43-45 (<http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0708/arcsgap.htm>), "Student Academic Grievance Procedures," emphasizes that a student must first contact the course instructor before filing a grievance:

**III. Resolution at the Department Level**

*A. 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 40 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, talk 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 talked with me in person, by phone, or by email about specific issues lacks credibility. Such a person demonstrates immaturity, ignorance, gossip-mongering, cowardice, and indifference regarding professional and ethical standards of conduct. If you display such behavior in the professional workplace, you will eventually be fired and have a very hard time finding another job.

The time to focus on your grade, if you worry about such a thing, is during the term, 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 or to communicate with me individually should not be surprised at a weak final grade. You have five written assignments and a final exam to build a satisfactory final grade. Communications via email or phone between student and instructor are especially important in an online course because we meet face-to-face for discussion in a classroom on campus only once.

Contrary to some 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, professional judgment, and workplace expectations. There is nothing personal in this process; it is simply a matter of defining, meeting, and applying professional criteria. I am not judging your appearance, ethnicity, philosophy, politics, religion, personal values, aesthetic taste, or social status. I am interested only in your academic performance and your demonstrated improvement thereof.

## **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 minus 10 points on an assignment (the same as if no assignment were submitted at all),
- Failure in a course (the student's USF transcript may bear the grade of "FF" to indicate academic dishonesty),
- Dismissal from school, or
- Prosecution for theft of intellectual property.

USF's policy on Academic Dishonesty is stated on pages 46-48 at <http://www.ugs.usf.edu/pdf/cat0809/08acapol.pdf> and in the printed catalog. Every student must read and follow this policy. Before you stoop to stealing someone else's words or ideas, ask yourself: "Would I accept this behavior in other students if it helped them and harmed me?"

**WARNING:** Plagiarism from online and other sources is easy for me to detect using the USF-supplied *SafeAssign*<sup>™</sup> software and other means of analysis. I have taught thousands of students, and those who violate the rules will tell you that the experience of being caught by me in an act of plagiarism is something they regret 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 it is my duty to protect the rights and expectations of honest students who work hard to earn a grade based on ethical practices in research, writing, and editing.** 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>).

## PROPOSED SUBJECTS FOR ASSIGNMENTS (Detailed instructions will be provided via email)

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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 assignment 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 combination 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 merely 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. In between the lowest and highest editing functions are gradations in which both shallow and substantive editing occurs, sometimes under stressful conditions.

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 of diverse functions (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 repair, quantitative analysis (using math, chemistry, physics, biology, and similar knowledge), and creative expression (music, visual arts, and video) will make your work increasingly valuable and in demand.

4. **So what exactly does an editor do?** The course will try to teach you how to 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. 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 job market -- as an editor, or writer, or both?** We will examine opportunities in the job market that may not be explicitly labeled with traditional titles of “writer” or “editor.” I will relay tips that I have used myself and have helped others use in identifying a seemingly 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 computer programming, engineering, 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.