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Office Hours:  
During the summer, my office  
hours are by appointment  
and on a drop-in basis.  
Feel free to meet with me.

VIBS 685.328  
**DIRECTED STUDIES: SCIENCE EDITING**  
Summer 2011

Tuesdays and Thursdays (see schedule that follows)  
2:00 to 4:45 p.m.  
Room 326A VMA

This course is designed mainly to help you become more adept at editing written material on science. It also is intended to help you build a foundation for continuing to develop your editorial skills. An additional goal is to help you explore career opportunities in science editing. You also may find that the course improves your writing. In keeping with the course designation "directed studies," you will have substantial responsibility for your own learning.

The course focuses largely on editing for segments of the public. However, it also addresses editing for readers in scientific and technical fields. Although the course provides guidance mainly on editing text, it deals briefly with illustrations and design as well. In addition, it touches on print production and business aspects of editing.

The course includes discussions, readings, editing exercises, and projects. It also will include a guest session, and it might include a field trip. The main books are

- Einsohn, Amy. *The Copyeditor's Handbook: A Guide for Book Publishing and Corporate Communications*. 2nd edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Montagnes, Ian. *Editing and Publication: A Training Manual*. Manila: International Rice Research Institute, 1991. (available at <http://books.irri.org/getpdf.htm?book=9712200094>)

Other reading materials for the course include a version of the *Science News Stylebook*. Core reading assignments are listed on the schedule below, and additional readings will be noted in class.

This course can be taken for one, two, or three credits. If you take the course for three credits, your final grade will be constituted as follows:

Exercises	30%
Project #1: editing a piece for the public (due 6/30)	15%
Project #2: editing a scientific paper or such (due 7/14)	15%
Final project (presentation due 7/26; written version due 8/2)	30%
Class participation	10%

If you take the course for two credits, you may omit either the first two projects or the final project; 45% of your grade will be based on the exercises, 40% on the project(s) you submit, and 15% on class participation. If you are taking the course for one credit, you will not be required to do the projects; 70% of your grade will be based on the exercises, and 30% will be based on class participation.

Most exercises and other written assignments are listed on the schedule

that follows. Further information will be provided in class.

The success of a course such as this one depends on contributions from students as well as from the teacher. Suggestions for making the course more educational and more enjoyable are appreciated at any time.

#### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Main Activities and Assignments</u>
5/31 (Tues)	<p>Introduction to the Course</p> <p>Discussion: Meanings of "Editor" and "Edit"</p> <p>Discussion: Reasons to Edit Manuscripts</p> <p>Presentation: Editing and Proofreading—Some Basics</p> <p>Overview: Niches in Science Editing</p> <p>(If time permits: some editing exercises)</p>
<p>(Note: There is a 2-week interval between the first and second classes. Using this time to get ahead on the reading may be helpful.)</p>	
6/14 (Tues)	<p>Discussion: Editors and Editing—Some Basics</p> <p>Discussion: Common Editing Marks; Basics of Online Editing</p> <p>Discussion: Levels of Editing</p> <p>Exercises: Levels of Editing; Light Editing</p> <p>Discussion: Using Reference Works (Including Specialized Dictionaries and Style Manuals) in Science Editing</p> <p><b>Main Reading Due:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Why We Edit" by Elizabeth Whalen (<i>American Journal of Roentgenology</i> 1989;152:647-9)</li> <li>• Montagnes: Preface, Chapter 1 ("Author, editor, reader")</li> <li>• Einsohn: Preface, Chapter 1 ("What editors do"), Chapter 2 ("Basic procedures"), Chapter 3 ("Reference books and resources"), and "Glossary of copyediting terms"</li> <li>• handouts on standard editing marks and levels of editing (courtesy of Elizabeth Whalen)</li> </ul> <p><b>Main Exercises Due:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• worksheets: Chapters 1, 2, and 3 in Einsohn</li> </ul>
6/16 (Thurs)	<p>Discussion: Readings for Today</p> <p>Review of Exercises Due Today</p> <p>Presentation: Editing with the User in Mind</p> <p><b>Main Reading Due:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Editing within the Pure Sciences" by Barbara Gastel. In: Murphy A J, ed. <i>New Perspectives in Technical Editing</i>. Amityville, NY: Baywood Press, 2010, pages 127-153</li> <li>• Montagnes: Chapter 2 ("Getting the most out of words") and Chapter 3 ("The editor's many tasks")</li> </ul> <p><b>Main Exercises Due:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exercises: light editing of paragraphs</li> </ul>

- 6/21  
(Tues)
- Review of Exercises Due Today  
 Discussion: Editing for the Nonspecialist  
 Introduction: First Project  
 Discussion: Editorial Style: Punctuation  
**Main Reading Due:**
- Montagnes: Chapter 5 ("Reaching the nonspecialist")
  - Einsohn: Chapter 4 ("Punctuation") and "Glossary of grammar terms"
- Main Exercises Due:**
- selected exercises from Montagnes workbook (*Editing and Publication: A Handbook for Trainers*)
  - worksheet: Chapter 4 in Einsohn
- 6/23  
(Thurs)
- Discussion: Editorial Style—Spelling and Hyphenation  
 Discussion: The Author-Editor Relationship  
 Progress Reports: First Project  
 Walk-Through: *Science News Stylebook*  
**Main Reading Due:**
- Einsohn: Chapter 5 ("Spelling and hyphenation")
  - Selected readings on the author-editor relationship
  - *Science News Stylebook*
- Main Exercises Due:**
- worksheets: Chapter 5 in Einsohn
  - punctuation exercises from draft of AMA workbook
- 6/28  
(Tues)
- Discussion: Editing for the Specialist—An Introduction  
 Discussion: How Journals Function/Editing Journal Articles  
 Progress Reports: First Project  
 Discussion: Editorial Style—Capitalization  
 Discussion: Editing Material by and for Non-Native Speakers of English  
**Main Reading Due:**
- Montagnes: Chapter 4 ("Editing for the specialist")
  - Einsohn: Chapter 6 ("Capitalization")
- Main Exercises Due:**
- Editing for conformity with *Science News* style
  - worksheet: Chapter 6 in Einsohn
- 6/30  
(Thurs)
- Discussion: Project Due Today  
 Discussion: Editing a Scientific Paper—An Example  
 Presentation/Discussion: Editing Grant Proposals  
 Introduction: Second Project  
**Main Reading Due:**
- draft of chapter on editing for books and journals (prepared by Mary Lenn Dixon and Barbara Gastel)
  - editing a scientific paper—an example
  - annotated grant proposal
- Main Exercises Due:**
- organization of a journal article
  - organization of an introduction
- Project #1 Due: Editing Material for Nonspecialists**  
 (For instructions, please see end of syllabus.)

- 7/5  
(Tues)
- Discussion: Exercises Due Today  
 Discussion: Editorial Style—Numbers and Numerals  
 Discussion: Editing References  
 Progress Reports: Second Project  
**Main Reading Due:**
- Einsohn: Chapter 7 ("Numbers and numerals"), Chapter 11 ("Editing references"), and "Checklist of editorial preferences"
- Main Exercises Due:**
- worksheets: Chapters 7 and 11 in Einsohn
  - editing material by non-native speakers of English
- 7/7  
(Thurs)
- Discussion: Exercises Due Today  
 Discussion: Editorial Style—Quotations; Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols; Tables, Graphs, and Art  
 Progress Reports: Second Project  
 Field Trip to an Editorial Office or Printing Company (tentative)  
**Main Reading: Due:**
- Einsohn: Chapter 8 ("Quotations"), Chapter 9 ("Abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols"), and Chapter 10 ("Tables, graphs, and art")
- Main Exercises Due:**
- worksheets: Chapters 8, 9, and 10 in Einsohn
  - exercise: numbers and numerals
  - exercise: editing references
- 7/12  
(Tues)
- Guest Session on Proofreading  
 Susan Aiello, DVM  
 WordsWorld  
 Discussion with Dr. Aiello: Career Perspectives
- 7/14  
(Thurs)
- Discussion: Project Due Today  
 Discussion: Illustrations and Design  
 Discussion: Ethical and Other Issues in Science Editing  
 Introduction: Final Project  
**Main Reading Due:**
- Montagnes: Chapter 6 ("Illustrations")
- Project #2 Due: Editing a Scientific Paper, Technical Report, Grant Proposal, or Book Chapter**  
 (For instructions, please see end of syllabus.)
- 7/19  
(Tues)
- Discussion: Front and Back Matter; Typesetting  
 Discussion: Aspects of Print Production; Basics of the Business Side  
 Discussion: Book Editing  
 Discussion: Editing Tests for Employment  
**Main Reading Due:**
- Einsohn: Chapter 12 ("Front and back matter") and Chapter 13 ("Typesetting")
  - "Keys to Success on Copyediting Tests" by Elizabeth Whalen (*CBE Views* 1992;15:51-5)

7/21 Discussion: Language Editing (Part 1)  
(Thurs) Discussion: Selected Other Topics in Science Editing  
Progress Reports: Final Projects

**Main Reading Due:**

- Einsohn: Chapter 14 ("Grammar: principles and pitfalls")
- selected articles from *Science Editor* magazine

7/26 Discussion: Language Editing (Part 2)  
(Tues) Oral Reports: Highlights of Final Projects  
Wrap-Up Exercise(s)  
Presentation: Some Editorial Humor

**Main Reading Due:**

- Einsohn: Chapter 15 ("Beyond grammar")

**Final Project Due: either a substantial piece of science editing or a paper on a topic or issue in science editing**  
(For instructions, please see end of syllabus. Today you are to give a presentation based on your final project. If you wish, you may have an additional week, until August 2, to submit the final written version of your project. The presentation will count for one third of your grade for the project.)

*The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services in Cain Hall, Rm. B118, or call 845-1637.*

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As the Aggie Honor Code states, "An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do." It is expected that you will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on work in this course. All writing for this course must be your original work. For Texas A&M Honor Council Rules and Procedures, please see [www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor](http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor).

## **Projects: JOUR 685 (Science Editing)**

### **Project #1: Editing Material for the Nonspecialist**

Drawing on material presented in this course, please do one of the following:

(A) Identify a manuscript or published or posted article that is intended for nonspecialists and would benefit from considerable editing. (The World Wide Web is a good place to find such items.) Then (1) list the main strengths of the piece, (2) list the main ways the piece could be improved, and (3) edit the piece.

(Note: The piece you choose should be about 1000 words long. Before proceeding, please show it to the instructor for approval.)

(B) Rewrite the patient handout "Sclerotherapy," which is available from the instructor. In doing so, be sure to keep the reader in mind. Rewriting the handout may include reorganizing and reformatting the material as you see fit. However, you should not add content. Please submit a double-spaced manuscript of the rewrite.

(Note: Option B is adapted from homework for the American Medical Writers Association workshop "Improving Comprehension: Theories and Research Findings." The instructor, Thomas A. Lang, has granted permission to use the material.)

### **Project #2: Editing a Scientific Paper, Technical Report, Grant Proposal, or Book Chapter**

Drawing on material presented in this course, please do one of the following:

(A) Find a scientific or technical piece that needs editing, and then edit it. You may find the piece of writing either on your own or with the instructor's help. The piece should be about 10 double-spaced pages long; if you find it on your own, please show it to the instructor to make sure it is suitable. You should both edit the piece and write a cover memo to the author.

(B) Edit a scientific manuscript available from the instructor. (Note: A course in research writing will be given June 27 through July 15. This course could be a good source of material to edit.)

### **Final Project**

Please do one of the following:

(A) Complete a substantial piece of science editing: The material you edit can be for either nonspecialists or specialists. It should total about 15 double-spaced pages. If you wish, the instructor can work with you to find material to edit; in any case, the instructor should approve the material as suitable. You should both edit the piece and write a cover memo to the author.

(B) Write a paper on a topic or issue in science editing:

This paper should be substantive but concise; it should run about 2000 to 3000 words (about 8 to 12 double-spaced pages). The paper should do one of the following:

- look in more detail at an aspect of science editing considered in class
- discuss editing in a specific field of science or technology
- deal with an aspect of science-editing careers
- consider an ethical issue, or set of ethical issues, in science editing
- address another aspect of science editing that interests you

If you choose to write a paper, please have the instructor approve your topic in advance. If papers seem to be of publishable quality, students will be encouraged to submit them to *Science Editor* or elsewhere.

You are required to present orally in class the highlights of your final project. The presentation will count for one third of your grade for the project.