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# Course Design

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# ETC 408/508: Technical Editing

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ETC 408/508: Technical Editing is a cross-listed undergraduate and graduate course at Missouri Western State University, an open admissions public university with approximately 6,000 students. 508 is an elective course for students in the Master of Applied Arts in Written Communication degree and highly recommended for those in the Technical Communication and Writing Studies options. 408 is a required course for students pursuing the Bachelor of Arts in English with a Technical Communication emphasis. Prior to Fall 2011 the course's content had been combined with an existing undergraduate course in technical documentation (ETC 420). This was also the first semester it was taught for graduate credit. The program's website describes the course as emphasizing "the role of the editor in organizational settings, including creating successful writer/editor collaboration" ("Course Descriptions"). Stated course objectives include "practice in editing documents for grammar, syntax, organization, style, emphasis, document design, graphics, and user-centered design" ("Course Descriptions"). An unstated course objective for this semester was teaching future composition instructors strategies for responding to student writing and dealing with "correctness" issues.

## Institutional Context

The creation of ETC 408/508 was a product of multiple needs within the department. Faculty in composition, rhetoric, and professional writing decided to split the pre-existing course in technical documentation and editing for two reasons. First, the material covered in the course had grown too large for a single semester and the dual objectives of the course inevitably meant that one subject area was slighted in the scheduling and assignments. Second, students in the professional writing program began to receive lower scores from the outside evaluators brought in to critique their graduation portfolios. Comments on student writing indicated a decreased attention to multiple levels of editing from the grammatical and mechanical to rhetorical and argumentative problems. An internal assessment of these comments and the portfolios themselves suggested that our students in professional writing would benefit from increased exposure to editing practices.

As an open admissions institution where a high percentage of entering students are placed into developmental writing programs, we try to place a special emphasis on developing students to be more effective communicators. This may be especially true in the professional writing section, which includes emphases in areas such as technical communication, public relations,

journalism, and convergent media. Many of our students are first-generation college students from families without professional backgrounds in similar fields. Students need to be familiarized with occupational expectations for writers, including the role of the editor.

The Master of Applied Arts (MAA) program is less than five years old and currently includes approximately a dozen students, most of whom are either working professional writers looking for an advanced degree as a gateway to promotion, or students interested in teaching composition at the community college level. While numbers have increased, administrative and budget pressures to maximize faculty teaching loads have resulted in courses being cross-listed at the undergraduate and graduate level so that the courses would not be cancelled due to low enrolment. Graduate faculty have discussed this as a challenge to maintaining an appropriately rigorous graduate curriculum, as well as a negative factor under accreditation and program review rubrics. However, programmatic and fiscal realities have entwined these two sections into one.

Experiences with the first three graduate theses in the MAA program led to concerns not dissimilar to those raised by the undergraduate writing portfolios. Namely, students seemed to have difficulty editing their own writing in academically and professionally appropriate ways. Though they conducted interesting studies into topics such as the integration of e-book readers into local libraries, the use of blogging in the composition classroom, and teaching rhetorical concepts to first-year composition students through graphic novels, these theses had not been rigorously edited. Students had difficulties with editing errors from the mechanical to document design to audience and tone. Many students were encouraged to enrol in ETC 508 as preparation not only for their future professional roles as technical editors and composition instructors, but as apprentices in academic research writing.

This last issue, the need for apprenticeship in academic research writing, could be seen as a fundamental separation between the undergraduate and graduate populations for the course. While undergraduate students took the course largely as preparation for the senior portfolio and for workplace editing roles, graduate students were also being prepared to edit their own theses and seminar papers. Though not unrelated fields, professional writing and academic writing have different genres, readers, and expectations. Balancing these two broad categories of writing and editing would be difficult.

## Theoretical Rationale

One of my major concerns in designing ETC 408/508 was to balance what I saw as the two major programmatic needs for this course. First, we had a stated curricular need. Students planning to enter professional writing needed to be introduced to the role of editing within that occupational environment. Students planning to teach at the community college level needed to be introduced to editing as it applied to their own career goals and responding to student writing. Second, we had the needs of our par-

ticular student population. Negative editing feedback on both the senior writing portfolios and the MAA theses indicated that students needed editing practice not only for professionalization but also in order to become more polished and self-reflective writers themselves. Yet even here I sensed a problem. If merging the undergraduate and graduate courses was already a complicating factor, these two objectives only added to the problem. Students were to be treated as apprentices, professional writers, and teachers all at once.

As a teacher in both composition and technical communication, I was also concerned that the course follow disciplinary standards for editing, reflecting both professional and educational conventions and academic research on the topic. I found through talking to several students prior to the semester that many students came to the course with preconceived notions of what editing is. Some of these were principles with which many writing instructors would agree; i.e., editing is collaborative and/or might involve some version of peer review, editing is a slow and careful process. Other student preconceptions were more problematic; i.e., editing is equivalent to proofreading or is only about grammar, editing is about "correctness" or "placing blame for mistakes" on authors. I knew that one aspect of the course would have to be self-definition. As we worked through the semester, we would work on expanding our definition of what editing is and what editors do.

Of course editing has been central to Composition Studies for decades as process theory stressed the key role such revision-oriented tasks were to play in a reconsidered pedagogy for freshman English. Richard Gebhardt's 1984 essay in *Rhetoric Review* was already able to frame the terms of the debate, as well as many of the names that would become central to later research, such as Sommers, Perl, Flower and Hayes, and Faigley and Witte. True, what has tended to be called "editing" in technical communication is more often termed "responding" or "reviewing" or "commenting" in Composition Studies. Yet these are closely related bodies of theory and practice. For example, consider this passage from Sommers' classic essay "Responding to Student Writing":

> Theoretically, at least, we know that we comment on our students' writing for the same reasons professional editors comment on the work of professional writers or for the same reasons we ask our colleagues to read and respond to our own writing. As writers we need and want thoughtful commentary to show us when we have communicated our ideas and when not, raising questions from a reader's point of view that may not have occurred to us as writers. We want to know if our writing has communicated our intended meaning and, if not, what questions or discrepancies our reader sees that we, as writers, are blind to. (148)

There is a basic similarity between the roles of professional editor, composition teacher, and even peer or student reviewer. All of these commentators are concerned primarily with how the meaning of a text is communicated

to its intended reader and in what ways revision might make this communication even more effective or audience-focused. As Sommers points out, the key difference between the professional editor and the teacher is the pedagogical role played by the latter (148). While editors are most concerned with the professionalism of the final product, teachers are invested in seeing students internalize these processes and apply them in different educational and "real world" contexts. This course, with its dual audience, would have to bridge that gap of motivation and purpose.

After looking through both classic and more contemporary research, textbooks, and handbooks on editing, I began the process of writing the syllabus by writing down what seemed to be commonly accepted principles of approaching editing within composition and technical communication:

- Editing is a skill which develops with practice; editing can help writers to recognize their own errors and weaknesses (Pianko and Radzik 220).
- Editing should be approached as a complex and multi-levelled process (Rude xxiv-xxv).
- Editing is a key part of the writing process, not simply an end-of-line or product-oriented skill (Podis and Podis 91).
- Editors should be self-reflective about their practices and should encourage writers to be self-reflective in their own practices (White 122–126).
- Editing should not be approached as simply error correction, especially since that "correctness" can vary given the situation and the reader (Shafer 66–67).
- Editors should move towards a more complex relationship with grammar than simply the "rules" and standards of formal grammar instruction (Hartwell 107–108).
- Editing is about audience; good editors critically reflect on both the writer and the text's intended audience and students need practice thinking of themselves as potential editors and reviewers (Wyngaard and Gehrke 67–70).
- Editors need to identify the goals and objectives of the text in order to comment on it with effective rhetorical strategies and the complexities of the writer/reader relationship are key to negotiating and communicating the meaning of a text (Ede and Lunsford 167–170).
- Editing and writing are field-specific; writers and readers need to understand the role of disciplinary and professional conventions and how different disciplines conceive of writing and the writing process (Carter 385–387).

These would serve as my own stated principles for editing on the syllabus and in course lectures. In-class and portfolio assignments would be struc-

tured to reflect these principles, as would the grading rubrics given to students with the assignment sheets.

Even here the issues of cross-listing and of disciplinary differences (technical communication vs. composition, workplace writing vs. academic writing) were present. The principles listed here and on the syllabus were discussed in class mostly because they represented broad overlaps between the disciplines involved. Yet, as students noted themselves, these principles are not as complementary as they may seem. For example, while Pianko and Radzik approach editing as a learned and developed skill, Podis and Podis define it primarily as a process (223; 91). While some writers stress a more personal or rhetorical examination of the individual reader (e.g., Wyngaard and Gehrke), others stress how fields and disciplines dominate discussions of documents (e.g., Carter). Simply put, while process theory and constructivism have clearly come to dominate discussions of editing in both composition and technical communication, there are still tensions both within and between these fields. Given the course description and the focus on "levels of edit" (see below), there was an implied preference for certain of these principles. A course explicitly focused on editing for the workplace is more likely to be invested in Carter's idea of disciplinary and profession-specific standards of editing than a typical advanced composition course might be. Discussions in the course did attempt to problematize some of these assumptions and to point out how some of the internal contradictions here (for example, the skill/process split) could be troubling.

Scholarship in technical communication has tended to stress the "levels of edit" approach to editing far more than the process-oriented model in composition with its brainstorming, multiple drafts, and peer review. This approach was popularized by Robert Van Buren and Mary Fran Buehler's 1980 Society for Technical Communication publication *The Levels of Edit* but radically adapted by later writers. In general terms, texts are reviewed over several passes instead of in a single pass meant to cover every potential concern. Each pass is dedicated to a specific aspect of the text, though textbooks and handbooks have developed their own systems. For example, one textbook might have three passes: the first focused on mechanics, the second focused on content, and the third focused on document design. The textbook for the course was chosen because of its dedication to this approach and because it presented a simple but effective three-pronged approach (essentially passes dedicated to mechanics, then document design and visual readability, and then overall content and organization).

The three major editing assignments were structured around this approach. For each assignment the students were given an example document to be edited and a "level of edit" upon which to focus. In order to stress editing's connection to the "real world," all of the example documents were actual documents used with the authors' permission in need of editing for correctness, visual readability, or effectiveness. I began looking for these documents by examining existing workbooks and textbooks on editing and

by asking colleagues for examples. When those documents did not meet my requirements, I broadened by using a search engine and using the desired genre (for example, example proposals, example recommendation reports) as my search term. After combing through several pages of documents in the genre, I located documents which I felt to be structurally sound (that is, they fit the basic expectations for what a proposal or a recommendation report would look like) but which had major editing problems in one of the three levels (for example, grammatical or mechanical issues). I made certain that none of these documents were marked as proprietary or confidential and that they contained contact information for the authors. I then e-mailed the authors with a request to use the document, explaining the purpose of the assignment and attaching a copy of the syllabus. Though I expected some resistance–I was, after all, using these as documents to be revised, not as positive models–I found that these writers were uniformly receptive as long as they could be guaranteed anonymity for both themselves and their employers. I removed personally identifiable information from each and sent them back to the writers for final permission. Once that was granted, they were posted as assignments.

Selecting the documents proved to be difficult, given the broadness of course goals and the multiple audiences within it. I decided that the presence of students focused on composition teaching precluded any highly technical or documentation-based genres, which would stray too far from the types of writing assigned in composition. For example, I considered that genres such as equipment evaluations or lab reports were too far removed from typical persuasive writing since they were designed to be expository and objective in tone. However, the genres selected also had to be within established technical writing patterns in order to prepare majors for this type of workplace editing. The grant proposal seemed a natural fit, as it is both a staple of technical writing programs (in fact, our technical communication MAA requires a graduate course in grant and proposal writing) and stresses typical composition features such as audience, persuasion, and tone. The technical definition also bridged between technical communication and composition, where the similar genre of the "extended definition" is still a common assignment in freshmen textbooks. Finally, the recommendation report, while it did not have an easy analogue in composition assignments, seemed to have strong enough rhetorical aspects (that is, the explanation and justification of a course of action) that it would connect to both disciplines.

Students were shown how to use commenting features such as the Comment and Track Changes functions in Microsoft Word, and even Dropbox in order to introduce them to common technological tools for collaborative writing and editing, as well as introduced to theories on marginal commenting and end-note commenting. These were first modelled in class, both in class lectures with practice documents and during in-class group work with short texts in need of editing. The nature of the class demanded that the example documents for the major assignments fit into recognized technical

communication genres (namely, a recommendation report, a progress report, and a proposal) but I also included more common student writing genres such as the essay exam and research report during in-class exercises to familiarize future teachers with editing and commenting on these types of texts.

Students were encouraged to think of editing as a key part of the writing process and as a rhetorical skill. Class discussions and group exercises stressed that the specific exigencies of the given writing situation were the first questions to be asked. Students were asked to go beyond the text to think about why it was written, who it was written for, and what the intended audience was meant to do with the document. Using "real world" documents was particularly helpful here, as they illustrated actual exigencies. Lectures and in-class practice stressed the positive and negatives of specific writing response strategies, such as paired praise-critique or criticism-suggestion models. Comments left on the major assignment documents were expected to fit one or more of these strategies.

In addition, for the first two major writing assignments students were asked to write an accompanying memo to the text's original writer. This memo was meant to serve multiple purposes. First, it encouraged students to adopt a "patterns of error" or "minimal marking" approach similar to those found in much composition theory (Haswell 600–603). The student writer would highlight key or consistent errors and discuss strategies for dealing with these errors in the future, as well as contemplating why these errors might occur and how intended audiences would perceive them. Students were asked to think rhetorically about these choices and to consider what tone and audience approach might best communicate their concerns to the writer, whether they were a student or a co-worker. At the same time, these memos were meant to sponsor self-reflection. Students were instructed to mull over the challenges of editing and how their approaches to editing were changing with increased practice. Finally, class discussions sought to bring this self-reflection back to writing. While they were gaining experience editing other people's documents, were they also gaining experience with their own documents?

Peer review was meant to serve multiple purposes. Most importantly, it was meant to reinforce the idea of editing and commenting as crucial to the writing process. It also gave students practice interacting with the people whose work they were helping to edit. Since one of the major goals of the course was to encourage active reflection on the rhetorical situation and the relationship between writer and editor, this was crucial. Students were asked to pay careful attention to the memos, as this is where the relationship between the writer and the editor became most crucial.

I realized going into the course that cross-listing might create tensions both with peer review and with the presentations. Students would come to the table with widely varying levels of educational and workplace experience. While many in the graduate technical communication track had years of workplace writing behind them, the undergraduates in particular tended to

lack this background. I worried that peer review and the question-and-answer sessions after presentations could easily devolve into inexperienced students being told anecdotes by their more "expert" peers about the "real world" of writing. Even in the best situation, where more experienced students were trying to serve a mentoring function, this would create an unfortunately two-tiered classroom. One way I tried to deal with this in theorizing the course and picking out the editing principles to be highlighted was by laying stress on the individuality of each document and each reader. If editing was to be seen not as a universal skill that was learned once and applied assembly line-style to each and every document but as a process that took different contexts into account, then workplace experience could be both a positive and a negative. Students would be encouraged to talk about their own workplace but also challenged to recognize that each workplace is different and that the writing and editing processes of workplace change from place to place and even across time.

Two assignments at the end of the semester were departures from most of the technical editing courses I had examined at other institutions while preparing my own syllabus. For the third major writing assignment, which focused on overall content and organization, students were asked to make a short oral presentation to the class. In this presentation they would deliver their take on the strengths and weaknesses of the example document while treating their fellow students as the document's writers. These presentations were meant to mirror both the classroom and the workplace environment, where teachers or editors might comment on general writing trends and offer suggestions following office or in-class workshops. Students were trained to anticipate questions about their editing processes and decisions. This assignment was also meant to reinforce the collaborative nature of editing, where both the editor and the writer are involved in negotiations over the final shape of the text.

The final assignment for the course was the style guide. While most technical editing courses covered the idea of corporate and organizational style guides and presented them as valuable reference documents meant to set standards for mechanics, style, and organization within a community of writers, few courses seemed to encourage the actual writing of a style guide. I thought this was a crucial exercise for both the future technical communicators and future teachers in my classroom. Presented with an example organization and a list of style rules to be set down (from comma usage to preferred spellings), technical communicators were meant to reflect on writing standards within the workplace. Confronted with a document which required them to both set certain standards for writing and to explain clearly and concisely the reasons for those standards, teachers were meant to think about how they would approach composing materials such as assignment sheets, peer review guides, and grading rubrics in the future.

## Critical Reflection

I used three major tools to assess student outcomes from this course in order to determine whether I had met my original stated objectives. These tools were the students' own writing portfolios, discussions with students immediately following the semester, and the students' instructor evaluations. All three tools seemed to indicate that the course had been at least somewhat successful in meeting my objectives, though there were serious challenges to both my theoretical assumptions and my course design.

Student evaluations and their comments in post-semester discussion were largely positive but did consistently note one major problem at the heart of my assignment structure. While students adopted the principle of levels of edit, they felt that the major assignments actually confused the issue. As I have said, each of the first three writing assignments was dedicated to a different level of editing, such as visual readability. Students found it difficult to keep their comments on the assigned level of edit and were frustrated when comments focused on a different level of edit (for example, comments on mechanical errors during the visual readability assignment) were questioned by the professor. Curiously, this seemed most true of students who had some workplace experience with editing themselves. They felt that this restriction to one level at a time was not reflective of the "real world" and seemed "artificial" in comparison to their own work experience. Ironically, too much attention to "one level at a time" undermined the prevailing idea that the levels of edit were ultimately meant to complement each other and work together. They felt that comments from the professor on their own editing feedback could sometimes be less than helpful in this regard. Rather than focusing on the heuristic process of editing, they became concerned about whether they would be criticized for noting a particular mistake on the "wrong" level. Future composition teachers worried that this "levels of edit" approach might not be directly applicable to their writing classrooms, where factors such as document design tend to be secondary. They were far more interested in and receptive to discussions of response strategies and how to approach student writing to encourage student buy-in.

The course simply served too many constituencies and perceived gaps in the curriculum. While the course editing principles stressed how writing and editing are field-specific and how different types of writers and situations require different feedback strategies, the course itself failed to follow those principles. Students on the Writing Studies side, with their focus on teaching college composition in the future, appreciated in-class exercises with student essays and especially seemed to value peer review. They questioned the style guide's place as the final assignment for the course, since its connection to genres like assignment sheets and grading rubrics seemed more tangential. Upon reflection, I agreed with them on this point and decided that the final assignment would be better split into two options, with students in technical communication completing the style guide while students

in composition studies would complete an assignment in writing a detailed grading rubric for an example essay assignment. Students on the technical communication side, with their focus on workplace writing, grew frustrated with non-workplace writing genres. However, they seemed to appreciate the oral presentation far more than their counterparts. Many discussed it as good practice for the sorts of small group critiques or employee workshops they might need to conduct in the future.

The most evident progress was in the goal of building a more collaborative writing environment and in making students more reflective about their own writing. Over the course of the semester peer review sessions grew both more supportive and more analytical. While students had at first struggled with presenting their comments and feedback in constructive ways, later peer reviews were both more honest and better received. Practice approaching writers on paper and in the class presentation seemed to have given them a greater awareness of the rhetorical situations an editor or teacher faces. Students who had at first struggled with the levels of edit (particularly the mechanical aspects) had grown more comfortable with them. By the time we had peer review for the style guides students who had difficulty defining terms at the beginning were throwing out example sentences and suggested corrections during group discussion. The memos were progressively better edited themselves as students paid more attention to how their writing would be received by the class and the professor.

One curious note was the role of undergraduates in the course. Cross-listing had been one of my major concerns at the outset and one of the reasons I severely limited external readings, presenting theories and principles of editing like those listed in the section above in lecture format rather than through discussion of theory-driven articles. At the beginning of the semester I had been careful to divide up the students when they went into in-class group work and made certain that at least one graduate and one undergraduate student were in each group. After the first peer review, however, those distinctions began to vanish. The graduate students were impressed by the undergraduates' work. When I had students submit comments on each of the oral presentations, the overwhelming favorite for the best presentation was an undergraduate. In the end, I believe that the cross-listing played an accidental but positive role in the classroom. The mixes of educational and workplace experience in the room mirrored the differing levels of expertise and comfort with writing present in almost any classroom or workplace. While I had worked hard to introduce different kinds of texts and writers into editing practice, the students themselves modelled my point far better than the texts.

My final impressions of this course are mixed. On the one hand, I believe that students did an incredible job creating a collaborative writing and editing environment in which different levels of expertise and comfort were welcomed. On the other hand, I believe that some of the flaws in the course were driven by the syllabus. In the future I have decided to re-write

the major assignments so as not to segregate the levels of edit and confuse students about the complementary nature of this approach. Most importantly, while each document for revision would still focus on a particular level (e.g., editing for visual readability), students would no longer be penalized for making comments about another level (e.g., editing for correctness) while editing. Punishing students for trying to deal with all of the problems they recognized in a document seemed both counter-productive and a violation of some of the editing principles stressed by the syllabus. I will continue to think about the ways in which the two major audiences of this course can both benefit from its principles—by bifurcating the final assignment by discipline as discussed above and perhaps by including an example of student writing in the major assignments. I will also expand the theoretical basis of the course by including more theory-driven readings in the assignment schedule. While aspects of editing such as ethics and cultural awareness were touched on, they deserve far more attention. In an age of mixed media and global audiences, it has become more important than ever for our future professional communicators and teachers to learn how to respond and how to help shape the texts which surround us.

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## ETC 408/508: Technical Editing

## Course Overview

The course will focus on the role of the editor in organizational settings, including creating successful writer/editor collaboration. Students will gain practice in editing documents for grammar, syntax, organization, style, emphasis, document design, graphics, and user-centered design. The course will provide an introduction to technology for creating, publishing, and distributing technical documents.

*Principles of Editing*

- Editing is a skill which develops with practice; editing can help writers to recognize their own errors and weaknesses.
- Editing should be approached as a complex and multi-levelled process.
- Editing is a key part of the writing process, not simply an end-of-line or product-oriented skill.
- Editors should be self-reflective about their practices and should encourage writers to be self-reflective in their own practices.
- Editing should not be approached as simply error correction, especially since that "correctness" can vary given the situation and the reader.
- Editors should move towards a more complex relationship with grammar than simply "rules" and standards.
- Editing is about audience; good editors critically reflect on both the writer and the text's intended audience.
- Editors need to identify the goals and objectives of the text in order to comment on it with effective rhetorical strategies and the writer/reader relationship is key to negotiating the meaning of a text.
- Editing and writing are field-specific; writers and readers need to understand the role of disciplinary and professional conventions.

*Required Texts*

Amare, Nicole, Barry Nowlin, and Jean Hollis Weber. *Technical Editing in the 21ˢᵗ Century.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2010. Print.

*Major Assignments and Grading*

There will be four major projects. Each is worth 200 points (20% of the final grade).

The first project will involve mostly sentence-level editing, focusing primarily on grammar, mechanics, and usage (what the book terms "Editing for Correctness"). You will be given an example recommendation report and

asked to edit it using Word Comment and Track Changes. You will then write a memo to the original writer indicating his or her key "patterns of error" as discussed in class.

The second project will involve mostly editing related to document design and graphics, focusing on texts as visual artifacts (what the book terms "Editing for Visual Readability"). You will be given an example progress report and asked to edit it using Word Comment and Track Changes, as well as making small corrections to the text itself. You will then write a memo to the original writer discussing his or her key "patterns of error" in terms of visual readability and accessibility.

The third project will involve editing related to whole document issues, such as style, organization, coherence, and usability (what the book terms "Editing for Effectiveness"). You will then create a short oral presentation for the class in which you offer feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of this document, including suggestions for improvement.

The fourth project will involve the creation of a style guide, touching on websites and other forms of electronic publishing as well as technologies used to write and edit these texts collaboratively. It will also include concepts from our three levels of edit.

All four projects will be submitted for peer review by the class. Projects not submitted for peer review will not be graded.

Homework, quizzes, and class participation make up the remaining 200 points (20% of the final grade). Homework generally consists of short reading or writing assignments and completing in-class group and individual exercises.

Class participation does not mean simply attending class on a regular basis. It means coming prepared and taking an active and constructive role in class discussions and group work. People who seldom ask questions or make comments in class rarely receive the best class participation scores. If you attend every single class and come prepared and ready to contribute, your grade will reflect that. If you attend every single class but are unprepared and do nothing during discussions or group work, your grade will reflect that, too. This is meant to be a collaborative learning environment. Your participation is crucial. You have something to offer.

## Schedule

Week 1:    Introduction to technical editing, including an overview of the three levels of edit and a discussion of common strategies for responding to writing (praise-critique, etc.). In-class work: com-

menting on multiple sets of instructions for the same process ("how to tie a tie" directions from the Internet).

Week 2: Introduction to editing for correctness, including a review of key grammatical and mechanical concepts. In-class work: commenting on a student essay exam.

Week 3: Further practice with editing for correctness, including an overview of common technologies for responding to writing (Track Changes, etc.) and a discussion of the writer/editor or writer/teacher relationship. In-class work: commenting on a student research paper.

Week 4: Final practice with editing for correctness, including a discussion of "patterns of error" and other strategies for responding to student writing. In-class work: individual work on Project 1.

Week 5: Brief discussion of the role of peer review and collaboration in the editing process. In-class work: peer review of Project 1.

Week 6: Introduction to editing for visual readability, including a discussion of key document design concepts, as well as ethical and cultural issues in editing. In-class work: editing an example travel brochure.

Week 7: Further discussion of editing for visual readability, including a discussion of key document design concepts, such as accessibility and designing for readers with differing physical abilities. In-class work: editing an example technical description.

Week 8: Final practice with editing for visual readability, including more discussions of workplace and classroom exigencies and dealing with the rhetorical situations of writers. In-class work: individual work on Project 2.

Week 9: In-class work: Peer review of Project 2.

Week 10: Introduction to editing for effectiveness, including key concepts such as style, organization, and overall coherence. In-class work: employment correspondence (application letter, portfolio, self-evaluations, etc.).

Week 11: Further discussion of editing for effectiveness. Discussion of orally presenting feedback on writing. In-class work: critique of short example document, followed by short oral presentations of feedback to example document.

Week 12: Introduction to editing online publications, including websites and web-texts (editing and mark-up languages such as HTML). In-class work: peer review of Project 3 and oral presentations.

Week 13: Project 3 oral presentations, followed by group discussions of the presentations' strengths and weaknesses.

Week 14: Introduction to style guides, including a discussion of how the process might transfer to documents like assignment sheets and grading rubrics. In-class work: critiquing example style guides for effectiveness.

Week 15: Further discussion of style guides. In-class work: individual work on Project 4.

Week 16: In-class work: peer review of Project 4. Project 4 is due finals week.