



Department of Literature, Journalism, Writing, and Languages

JRN 3045: Editing

3 Units

Fall 2025

Tuesdays 12:15–2:45 p.m.

Bond Academic Center (BAC) 104

Final Exam: Tuesday, Dec. 16, 1:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Instructor title and name:	Bethany Mavis, Adjunct Professor
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Office location and hours:	Tuesday, 11:15-12:15 p.m., BAC 117, or by appointment

PLNU Mission Statement: To Teach. To Shape. To Send.

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

LJWL Department Mission Statement

Embodying the core values of a Christian liberal arts education in the Wesleyan theological tradition, and focusing on the power of language and story to shape us and our world, the LJWL Department and programs provide students with knowledge, skills and experiences to equip them to understand, interpret, analyze, evaluate, and create texts as linguistic and/or artistic expressions of diverse human experiences. We value reading, writing,

researching, speaking, and discussing as profound means of participating in the redemptive work of God in all of creation.

Course Description and Goal

Designed to develop the student's ability to improve and clarify all forms of written expression. Genres include newspapers, magazines, books, Internet, as well as other forms of storytelling.

This class is designed to teach the fundamentals of editing for a variety of print and digital media, from newspaper articles to infographics to blog posts. It intends to teach best practices for editing any type of material with the intention of equipping you to be a successful editor regardless of your area of expertise. It will focus on practical applications intended to prepare you for your future careers in journalism, writing or content creation. To accomplish this goal, we will learn primarily by doing.

Course Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, you will be able to do the following:

- Apply the fundamental principles of being an effective editor
- Demonstrate mastery in grammar, spelling, style and writing
- Improve the quality of your own and others' writing
- Recognize errors in a variety of written material types
- Exercise your role as an editor by utilizing tools common in the industry

Required Texts

Students are responsible for having the required course textbooks (below) prior to the first day of class.

All supplemental materials posted on this course site (including articles, book excerpts, or other documents) are provided for your personal academic use. These materials may be protected by copyright law and should not be duplicated or distributed without permission of the copyright owner.

- *The Associated Press Stylebook 2024-2026 and Briefing on Media Law*, published by Hachette Book Group, July 2024. (Note: You may also use the 2022-2024 edition of *The AP Stylebook* if you already have one from a previous class.)
- *The Artful Edit: On the practice of editing yourself* by Susan Bell, published by W.W. Norton, 2007.

Assessment and Grading Breakdown

- Assignments (including papers and presentations): 30%
- Final exam: 20%
- Midterm: 15%
- In-class participation/exercises: 20%
- Quizzes: 15%

	B+ : 87 – 89	C+ : 77 – 79	D+ : 67 – 69	F : 59 or less
A : 93 – 100	B : 83 – 86	C : 73 – 76	D : 63 – 66	
A– : 90 – 92	B– : 80 – 82	C– : 70 – 72	D– : 60 – 62	

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Incompletes and Late Assignments

All assignments are to be turned in at the beginning of the class session when they are due, including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances. Assignments that are turned in late are subject to a reduction in the maximum number of points possible.

Spiritual Care

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests, you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the U.S. Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. Professors are able to view a student's approved accommodations through Accommodate.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive, so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars, we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including AP, MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of

language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination.

Course Core Values

Respect, kindness and openness are essential to making our time together effective. We will value all opinions, points of view, writing styles and genres. We will treat all with kindness, and craft our comments or critiques carefully with thoughtful consideration. We will be open to feedback. We will not be defensive or closed off. We will be motivated to grow and improve, and we will support each other in our common goal. This will be a public discourse and safe environment.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade.

Class Attendance Policy

Be on time. Be present and engaged. This means no devices, except for specific in-class assignments and during class breaks. Timeliness and attendance speak volumes about how much you care. If something comes up, please communicate with me in advance if you are going to miss class or have to leave early for some reason. Keep in mind that 20 percent of your course grade is tied to participation (including attendance) and in-class exercises.

Class Schedule & Assignments

Below is an outline of the expected topics and assignments we'll be covering in class this year. This information is also published in Canvas. These assignments, quizzes and topics are subject to change, so refer to Canvas for the most up-to-date information.

Week 1:

- Introductions
- Course Interview
- On Being an Editor: Editing philosophy and best practices

Homework:

- Editorial Philosophy Paper #1
- Read *The Artful Edit* pages 1-23 and answer reflection question

Week 2

- Macro-Editing: Evaluating intention, structure and rhythm in writing
- Marks & Mark-ups: Editing symbols, tools for marking up writing

Homework:

- Read: *The Artful Edit* pages 23-51 and answer reflection question
- Study for Quiz #1

Week 3

- Quiz #1: Editorial Roles, Macro-editing and Copyediting Marks
- A Matter of Style: What is style? Style guidelines, AP style review & recent AP style changes
- Common Errors: Misused and confused words

Homework:

- Read: *The Artful Edit* pages 52-66, 69-77 and answer reflection question

- Complete personal style guide exercise

Week 4

- Style & Common Errors: Apostrophes, commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, parallelism, modifiers, capitalization, subject-verb agreement, bulleted lists, compound modifiers
- Grammar Review: Parts of speech, punctuation, hyphens/dashes, Q&A, connective adverbs, conjunctions, sentence structure

Homework:

- Select article for presentation
- Read *The Artful Edit* pages 77-90 and answer reflection question

Week 5

- Editing for the web: Best practices for editing web content, SEO basics
- Guest speaker: Meghan Roos, News Editor, *Real Estate News*
- Clear & Concise Writing, Part 1: Wordiness, repetition

Homework:

- Read *The Artful Edit* pages 91-105 and answer reflection question
- Study for Quiz #2

Week 6

- Clear & Concise Writing, Part 2: Active voice, sentence structure/variety
- Quiz #2: Common Errors, AP Style & SEO
- Guest Speaker: Nicki Miller, Co-Editor, *Bluedot Living*

Homework:

- Read *The Artful Edit* pages 106-119 and answer reflection question

Week 7

- Student Presentations
- Midterm exam review

Homework:

- Study for midterm exam

Week 8

- Midterm Exam

Homework:

- Read *The Artful Edit* pages 120-129 and answer reflection question

Week 9

- Self-Editing: Best practices for editing your own work
- Self-Editing Exercise and Presentations
- AP Stylebook Game
- *Mid-semester grades due*

Homework:

- Read *The Artful Edit* pages 129-155 and answer reflection question

Week 10

- 1-on-1 Professor Meetings re: Self-Editing Assignment
- Digital & Social Media: Social media, infographics, banner ads, landing pages

Homework:

- Read *The Artful Edit* pages 155-168 and answer reflection question
- Study for Quiz #3

Week 11

- Marketing & Advertising: Brochures, ads, flyers, event communications, SEM
- Guest speakers from *San Diego Magazine*
- Quiz #3: AP style & common errors

Homework:

- Read *The Artful Edit* pages 168-181 and answer reflection question
- Print article for partner in-class editing exercise

Week 12

- Pair exercise: Partner in-class editing exercise & presentations
- Custom & Sponsored Content: How to approach paid content
- Guest speaker from IRONMAN

Homework:

- Read: *The Artful Edit* pages 182-197 and answer reflection question
- Study for Quiz #4
- Macro-Editing Exercise

Week 13

- No Class! Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 14

- Citations/References: Credible vs. non-credible sources, formatting, legal considerations
- Pitching & Assigning Stories: How to work with freelance writers
- Quiz #4: TBD

Homework:

- Read *The Artful Edit* pages 197-215 and answer reflection question
- Editing Philosophy Paper #2

Week 15

- Miscellaneous Student-Chosen Topics
- Final Exam Review

Homework:

- Study for Final Exam

Week 16

Final Exam, 1:30–4:00 p.m.