Please complete this form and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses. Forward it as an email attachment to the Secretary of the Graduate Council. A printed copy of the form with signatures should be brought to the Graduate Council Meeting. Complete the Coordinator Form on page 2, if changes in this course will affect other units.

Please indicate:  

- NEW  
- MODIFY  
- DELETE

Local Unit:  English
Graduate Council Approval Date: 

Course Abbreviation:  ENGL  
Course Number:  501

Full Course Title:  Introduction to Professional Writing and Editing

Abbreviated Course Title (24 characters max.):  INTRO TO PROF WRTNG & EDTNG

Credit hours:  3  
Program of Record:  English M.A.

Repeattable for Credit? 

- D=Yes, not within same term  
- T=Yes, within the same term  
- N=Cannot be repeated for credit

Activity Code (please indicate):  

- Lecture (LEC)  
- Lab (LAB)  
- Recitation (RCT)  
- Studio (STU)  
- Internship (INT)  
- Independent Study (IND)  
- Seminar (SEM)

Catalog Credit Format:  3 : 3 : 0  
Course Level:  GF(500-600)  GA(700+)

Maximum Enrollment:  20  
For NEW courses, first term to be offered:  F ‘05

Prerequisites or corequisites:

Catalog Description (35 words or less):  Provides historical and theoretical background in professional writing and editing, including editing in the literary tradition and in organizational settings. Explores professional writing’s emergence as a field of scholarship and practice in seminar/practicum format.

For MODIFIED or DELETED courses as appropriate:

Last term offered:  Previous Course Abbreviation:  Previous number:

Description of modification:

APPROVAL SIGNATURES: 
Submitted by:  __________________________________ email:  ________________________

Department/Program:  __________________________________ Date:  ____________________

College Committee:  __________________________________ Date:  ____________________

Graduate Council Representative:  ________________________ Date:  ____________________
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Course Coordination Form

Approval from other units: NONE

Please list those units outside of your own who may be affected by this new, modified, or deleted course. Each of these units must approve this change prior to its being submitted to the Graduate Council for approval.

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Graduate Council approval: ____________________________ Date: __________

Graduate Council representative: ______________________ Date: __________

Provost Office representative: _________________________ Date: __________
English 501: Introduction to Professional Writing and Editing

Course Description

This course provides an historical and theoretical introduction to Professional Writing and Editing. We will explore a short history of editing in the literary tradition, focusing on such issues as the roles (and titles) of editors in publishing houses, author-editor relationships, etc. We will also address editing in organizational settings, as this occupation emerged in the twentieth century as part of industrial and business growth. Against this backdrop, we’ll inspect the rise of professional writing as both professional practice and scholarly field within Rhetoric and Composition with a focus on key theoretical issues. The course is conceptualized as both seminar and practicum, challenging students with writing tasks that probe the historical and theoretical issues being presented.

Students will complete the following writing projects:
- A response journal to weekly readings
- An end-of-semester reflective essay based on journal entries
- Regular postings to Townhall on weekly readings
- A term project investigating a topic in professional writing and editing in depth
- A portfolio (paper or virtual) of past and current writing projects, compiled against a backdrop of course readings and discussions

Sample Syllabus

Week 1: Course Overview, Introductions, Townhall setup, Journal Guidelines, Portfolio Guidelines

Week 2: Editing in the Literary Tradition
[Class visit by Roger Lathbury]

Readings:

Week 3: Editing in Business and Industry
[Class visit by Ralph Baxter]

Readings:

Week 4: Professional Writing and Editing as Rhetorical Action, Part I

Readings:
Bizzell and Herzberg, “Introduction,” *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*

- [http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.1.i.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.1.i.html)


- [http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/gallery/rhetoric/essay.html](http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/gallery/rhetoric/essay.html)
Townhall Posting: Define rhetoric and its implications for professional writing and editing for a colleague at work.

**Week 5: Professional Writing and Editing as Rhetorical Action, Part II**

[Class visit by Byron Hawk]

Reading:
Faigley, Lester. “Nonacademic Writing: The Social Perspective.” In Peeples
Miller, Carolyn. “What’s Practical about Technical Writing?” In Peeples
Slack, Jennifer Daryl, David James Miller, and Jeffrey Doak. “The Technical Communicator as Author: Meaning, Power, Authority.” *JBTC*

Townhall Posting: Discuss a passage from Faigley, Miller or Slack et al as compared with your experience as a writer and/or editor academic or professional.

**Week 6: Professional Writing and Editing as Organizationally Situated Social Practice**

Readings:
Driskell, Linda. “Understanding the Writing Context in Organizations.” In Peeples
Katz, Susan. “Writing Review as an Opportunity for Individuation.” In Peeples
Duin, Ann Hill, and Craig J. Hansen. *Nonacademic Writing: Social Theory and Technology*, excerpts

Townhall Posting: Interview a practicing professional writer (or if you are already a practicing professional writer, interview a colleague who writes or edits in another capacity) and post a comment on how some aspect of their work relates to this week’s readings.

In class: Bring Portfolios for Demonstration and Discussion.

**Week 7: Professional Writing and Editing as Ethical Action**

Readings:
Ornatowski, Cezar M. “Between Efficiency and Politics: Rhetoric and Ethics in Technical Writing.” In Peeples
Katz, Steven B. “The Ethic of Expediency: Classical Rhetoric, Technology, and the Holocaust.” *College English*
Porter, James E. “Framing Postmodern Commitment and Solidarity.” In Peeples

Townhall Posting: Reread the memo from Katz against the backdrop of Porter’s discussion of ethics. Post commentary on Just’s purview and ethics as culturally driven.

**Week 8: Professional Writing and Editing as Technologically Situated Action**

Readings:
Kalmbach, James R. “Publishing Before Computers” In Peeples
Howard, Tharon. “Who ‘Owns’ Electronic Texts?” *College Composition and Communication*
In Class: Brief workshop on HTML, virtual portfolios.

**Week 9: Professional Writing and Editing as Productive Art I: User-Centered Documents**

Readings:
National Cancer Institute’s Web Usability Guidelines: http://usability.gov/guidelines/
Reynolds, John Frederick, Carolyn B. Matalene, Joyce Neff Magnotto, Donald C. Samson, Jr., and Lynn Veach Sadler. *Professional Writing in Context: Lessons from Teaching and Consulting in Worlds of Work*, excerpts

Townhall Posting: Apply Nielsen’s guidelines to a web site of your choice and evaluate it.

**Week 10: Professional Writing and Editing as Productive Art II: Visual Rhetorics**

[Class visit by William Miller]

Readings:
Schriver, Karen A. *Dynamics in Document Design*, excerpts

In class: Bring an example of bad visual rhetorics in professional writing and editing to class. In groups of three, re-design the document.

**Week 11: Professional Writing and Editing as Productive Art III: Producing Social Spaces**

Readings:
Henry, Jim. *Writing Workplace Cultures*, excerpts

*Townhall Posting: Analyze your organizational position. If you are not employed, interview a professional writer or editor to discern where s/he fits in the organizational hierarchy and how different departments or divisions collaborate in “producing social spaces.”*

**Week 12: Digital Rhetorics and Professional Writing and Editing I: Hardware, Software, Wetware**

Readings:
Sullivan, Patricia, and Jennie Dautermann, eds. *Electronic Literacies in the Workplace: Technologies of Writing*, excerpts

**Week 13: Digital Rhetorics and Professional Writing and Editing II: Hypertext; Publishing**

Readings:
Landow, . *Hypertext 2.0: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology.*, excerpts
Johnson-Eilola, *Nostalgic Angels: Rearticulating Hypertext Writing*, excerpts
Week 14: Portfolio Presentations

Texts


