



# PROFESSIONAL EDITING

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ENGLISH 3910

COURSE FORMAT:  
HYBRID

3 CREDITS

TIME/LOCATION:  
M/W 2:10-3:25  
CLAYTON HALL T222COURSE ID:  
20365

Instructor: Dr. Christopher Ritter

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EMAIL: [CHRISTOPHERRITTER@CLAYTON.EDU](mailto:CHRISTOPHERRITTER@CLAYTON.EDU) (ALWAYS USE OFFICE365 EMAIL;  
NEVER USE D2L EMAIL)

OFFICE: ARTS & SCIENCES G110M

OFFICE HOURS: MW 11:00-12:30 / 3:30-5:00, AND BY APPOINTMENT

OFFICE PHONE: 678-466-4879

COURSE WEBSITE: [HTTPS://CLAYTON.VIEW.USG.EDU/D2L/HOME/1052349](https://clayton.view.usg.edu/d2l/home/1052349)

## Course Catalog Description

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ENGL 3910 Professional Editing (3-0-3) 3 semester credit hours. This course focuses on editing documents from a variety of genres and authors. The course includes proofreading, copyediting, and formatting; offers instruction in recognizing and correcting grammar, punctuation, and mechanics in written documents. Pre-Requisite: Eng 1102 with a C or above. 3.00 credit hours.

## Dr. Ritter's Theme

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Are you pursuing a career in creative writing, technical communication, journalism, or marketing? If not, will your job (e.g. lawyer, manager, scientist) involve a lot of writing and/or reviewing of others' writing? If you answered "yes" or even "maybe," you're in the right place.

In this course, you will:

- Learn how to revise *any* kind of written document - in *any* field, genre, or medium.
- Learn how to revise writing on *every* level, from the words up to the ideas.
- Hone your skills on *real* documents for *real* clients, earning ***real experience you can put on your resume.***

## Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

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To be successful in this class, students must have an understanding of English grammar, be good spellers, be experienced in using D2L, and be knowledgeable about MS Word revision capabilities. (If you lack any of these skills, you'll need to devote extra time to the course to get up to par). Students will learn the strategies for developmental and substantive editing and proofreading; strategies for working with authors; and information about careers in editing.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain how editing works from the grammatical level to the idea level.
- Edit a variety of documents for grammar, voice, design, support, organization, and focus.
- Explain how to effectively work with authors and handle common challenges.

English major outcomes addressed:

- Analyze the ways in which language and literature are related to class, culture, ethnicity, gender, histories, race, and sexuality.
- Produce a variety of materials, including oral presentations, for a range of rhetorical contexts.

## Definition of Service Learning

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This course is affiliated with CSU's Partnering Academics and Community Engagement (PACE) initiative. Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

## Rationale for Service Learning

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Both collaboratively and individually, you will edit real documents for real organizations. This service labor has two purposes:

1. To establish and strengthen your relationships with your community.
2. To gain real-world experience that you can put on your résumé.

## Teaching Philosophies

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Here are the primary philosophies that inform my teaching, so you have an idea of what to expect from me and how our class will run on a daily basis:

- I am a teacher of rhetoric. I define *rhetoric* as “the systematic study and practice of all conscious communication, in all modes and media.”
- I am a teacher of literacies. I define *literacy* as “the ability to use communication tools to convey meaningful messages to specific people.”
  - There are three types of literacies my courses address:
    - Functional: the ability to use communication tools.

- Rhetorical: the ability to say meaningful messages to specific people.
- Critical: the ability to understand how and why specific people find their tools useful and their messages meaningful.
- Good learning is situated in real-life (or simulated) practice, not in abstract discussion.
- A good teacher is a “guide on the side” rather than a “sage on the stage.”
- People learn new things by connecting new information or skills with information/skills they already have (also known as “scaffolding”).
- Good learning is a back-and-forth process of hypothesizing about a new idea, trying it out, and reflecting on how that trial went. (This dialectical process is also known as “active and critical thinking.”)
- Students learn best when they’re engaged with the material. The ways that I try to engage my students are:
  - by giving you as much choice as possible about what you’ll study/create, and encouraging you to choose subjects that you’re excited about
  - by encouraging you to actively seek information rather than passively absorb it

## Required Textbook

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Rude, Carolyn D. and Angela Eaton. *Technical Editing*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Pearson, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-205-78671-8.

## Recommended Handbooks

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Although the textbook has a section on grammar, I recommend purchasing a handbook of some kind. (I have several examples of handbooks in my office, which you may peruse.)

I also recommend that you purchase the stylebook for your field or profession:

- Biology/agriculture: CSE
- English: MLA
- Government: U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual
- Journalism/blogging: AP
- Law: *The Bluebook*
- Medicine: AMA
- Psychology or social sciences: APA
- Publishing: Chicago

## Computer/Technology/Materials Requirements

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Each CSU student is required to have ready access throughout the semester to a notebook computer that meets faculty-approved hardware and software requirements for the student's academic program. Students will sign a statement attesting to such access. For further information on CSU's Official Notebook Computer Policy, please go to <http://www.clayton.edu/hub/itpchoice/notebookcomputerpolicy>.

## Desire2Learn (Online Classroom)

Online activity will take place in Desire2Learn, the virtual classroom for the course. You can gain access to Desire2Learn by signing on to the SWAN portal and selecting “D2L” on the top right side.

If you experience any difficulties in Desire2Learn, please email or call The HUB at [TheHub@mail.clayton.edu](mailto:TheHub@mail.clayton.edu) or (678) 466-HELP. You will need to provide the date and time of the problem, your SWAN username, the name of the course that you are attempting to access, and your instructor’s name.

Desire2Learn requires certain software to be running on your computer, and certain settings to be checked in your Internet browser. Go to the D2L System Checker web page to make sure your system is setup: <http://www.usg.edu/usgweb/d2lchecker/>

## Technical Support

In case something should go wrong with the learning management system, computer software, or computer hardware, contact CSU’s HUB for technical support: <http://www.clayton.edu/hub>

## Computer Skills Prerequisites

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Students enrolled in this course should possess the following technology skills:

- The ability to access information via the Internet
- The ability to use D2L and associated tools, including discussion boards, chat rooms, online testing and assignment submission features
- The ability to use word processing software and to save in alternate formats
- The ability to send, receive and include attachments using email
- The ability to demonstrate netiquette (appropriate online conduct)

## Course Work

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### Homework and Activities (30%)

To practice the techniques of editing, you'll do assigned exercises from the textbook and NoRedInk.com. Expect to do one or two of these assignments every night before class.

In class, we will do activities in D2L, relating to the homework assignments and projects.

### Communal Editing Project (30%)

In the first half of the course, we will all be working with a single organization, A Friend’s House, to edit documents of theirs that need revision. We’ll practice the techniques of editing together, in workshop format.

## Independent Editing Project (40%)

In this project, you (and possibly a partner) will take on your own service learning project, editing approximately 20 pages of documentation from an organization of your choice. Acceptable organizations include activist groups, school clubs, churches, startups, or businesses. This project will draw on your abilities to edit on multiple levels, and teach you the interpersonal tactics of working with authors. You'll turn in a portfolio of your edited documents as well as a reflective essay about your experience.

The quality of your work will be assessed by me and your client, together.

## Evaluation Key

Homework assignments will be graded for completion: complete attempts will earn full credit; partially completed assignments will earn half or no credit.

The editing projects will each have customized rubrics with criteria that are specific to each of them. The rubrics will be graded qualitatively, with the following scale.

Level	Description	Point values
<b>Exemplary</b>	<i>Exemplary communication</i> is marked by originality of expression, particularized strategies to engage the audience, and scrupulous attention to detail. <i>Exemplary communication</i> performs creatively, requiring little or no revision.	98-100
<b>Mature</b>	<i>Mature communication</i> is marked by an audience orientation, a clear grasp of the rhetorical situation, consistency, directness, strong supporting evidence, thorough editing, and an easy-to-follow structure. <i>Mature communication</i> performs fully, requiring only minor revision.	93-97
<b>Competent</b>	<i>Competent communication</i> is marked by clarity of purpose, workable organization (if somewhat mechanical), an effective general purpose, acceptable style, and no distracting errors in usage or conventions. <i>Competent communication</i> performs adequately, requiring limited revision.	85-92
<b>Developing</b>	<i>Developing communication</i> is marked by some serious weakness that, despite promising choices in other areas, ultimately prevents the communication from succeeding. This weakness may be in a faulty assumption about the situation or audience, underdeveloped content, a confusing organization, vague word choices, etc. This level could also be marked by excessive generality and predictability that fail to engage the audience. <i>Developing communication</i> performs inappropriately in some way(s), requiring focused revision.	75-84
<b>Beginning</b>	<i>Beginning communication</i> is marked by failure to address some key element(s) of the communication situation. For example, evidence may be scant and/or inaccurate. Expression is weakened by vague or inappropriate verbal or visual choices. Errors in conventions, tone, or documentation are distracting. The main point is vague, trite, or poorly developed. <i>Beginning communication</i> performs incompletely, requiring extensive revision.	65-74
<b>Basic</b>	<i>Basic communication</i> is marked by misunderstanding the demands and expectations of the communication situation, by focusing on self rather than audience, by blatant violations of conventions and audience expectations, and by inconsistencies and contradictions. <i>Basic communication</i> performs naively, requiring thorough revision.	55-64

<b>Unacceptable</b>	<i>Unacceptable</i> communication is incomplete or completed with disregard for the basic assignment instructions for preparing the document. A “U” is given to work that was clearly prepared without care, either because it is far too brief, too shallow, or missing basic components.	0-54
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## Grading Scale

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- A 90%\* and above  
 \* If you have an 89% at the end of the term, and you have completed every assignment, I will round your 89% up.
- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F below 60%

## Course Schedule

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See the live schedule at <https://goo.gl/IPwNLv> for up-do-date changes.

Week	Dates	Topic	Due
1	1/11-1/17		
2	1/18-1/24	[1/18: NO CLASS: MLK DAY] [1/21: NO-SHOW DEADLINE] Grammar/Proofreading	
3	1/25-1/31	Style/Voice	
4	2/1-2/7	Organization	
5	2/8-2/14	Design/Formatting	
6	2/15-2/21	Support	
7	2/22-2/28	Focus	
8	2/29-3/6	[3/4: MIDPOINT- LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH A W]	Communal Editing Project
	3/7-3/13	SPRING BREAK	
9	3/14-3/20		
10	3/21-3/27		
11	3/28-4/3		
12	4/4-4/10		
13	4/11-4/17		
14	4/18-4/24		
15	4/25-5/1		
16	5/2-5/8		

17	5/9-5/15	FINALS WEEK [5/2 LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH A WF]	Independent Editing Project
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## Mid-term Progress Report

The mid-term grade in this course, which will be issued on February 29th, reflects approximately 30% of the entire course grade. Based on this grade, students may choose to withdraw from the course and receive a grade of "W." Students pursuing this option must fill out an official withdrawal form, available in the Office of the Registrar, or withdraw on-line using the Swan by mid-term, which occurs on October 9<sup>th</sup>. Instructions for withdrawing are provided at <http://www.clayton.edu/registrar/withdrawal>.

The last day to withdraw without academic accountability is Friday, March 4, 2016..

## Things to Expect from a Client-Based Class

The presence of community partners as “clients” distinguishes this course from others you may have taken at Clayton State. Community partners are non-profit agencies, startups, and small companies that have partnered with my class in a mutually beneficial way. These partnerships are designed to produce usable communication deliverables for the client *and* to provide my students with opportunities to gain hands-on experience with real communication challenges. These partnerships also create a kind of course that may be unfamiliar to you. Most college courses rely on a two-party dynamic between instructor and students; students produce work mainly so that the instructor can assess what they have learned in the course. In this course, students produce work for a third party—the client—which is then assessed by the client to evaluate what they have produced, and the instructor to determine what they have learned. Before you proceed with this course, you should understand how this three-party classroom model differs from the two-party model:

### Multi-vector communication

In most college classes, communication flows on a two-way highway between two parties—the instructor and the students. Communication is more complex and interesting in this course, because students will also communicate with clients and their various stakeholders, all of whom work outside the confines of Clayton State.

### The client is king

In most courses, students work hard to satisfy the teacher’s expectations; in this course, you will also be working hard to satisfy a client. Grades on final client projects in this class are largely based on client satisfaction. The client participates directly in grading the work. If the client is happy with the work, the instructor is also happy.

### The class/workplace hybrid

This course creates a hybrid between a classroom environment and a workplace environment. This hybrid environment requires you to think “outside the box” of most college classrooms. For example, deadlines will not be set entirely by the professor in this class, as clients will also set deadlines.

## No more “one-size-fits-all”

In most college classes, instructors rigidly maintain fairness and equity in workload and expectations, following a “one-size-fits-all” approach. In this course, the client projects drive the workload and expectations for students. Each client project will have different expectations and requirements. Some students will have more demands put upon them than others; some students will work more hours than others.

# Standards for Professor Performance

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## Conduct

You can expect me to

- Be professional inside and outside the classroom
- Be prepared for every meeting
- Treat you like an adult
- Update D2L regularly
- Respond to emails within 24 hours (unless you email me on the weekend)
- Treat you in a professional, respectful manner at all times
- Be available during scheduled office hours
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Be a problem solver
- Offer thoughtful, constructive criticism on your work
- Be a mentor for professional development activities

You shouldn't expect me to

- Respond favorably to excuses of any kind
- Answer emails or phone calls from parents, guardians, or other third parties
- Be available outside my office hours without an appointment
- Respond favorably to any argument for missing my assignments because of activities in another class
- Make exceptions to my own policies and standards
- Grant make-ups
- Accept late work without a pre-arranged extension
- Answer emails on the weekends

## Uses for Your Work

All of the assignments produced in this class will be posted on the course website. In this way, our class will have a body of communication documents to study throughout the semester. I reserve the right to use your work, in whole or in part, as a teaching tool in this particular section, though I will do so by removing your name first. You will grant or deny me permission to use your work in future classes and/or my research in the first week of class.

# Standards for Student Performance

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## Attendance

Any student who fails to complete the scheduled assignments during the first week of class will be reported as a “No Show.”

## Attitude

Maintain a positive attitude – Excessive negativity is a liability in any collaborative effort. Because we will all be working together to satisfy the client, I expect students to approach the client project with positive energy and enthusiasm. This attitude will go a long way in my class.

Be a problem solver – working with real clients is not always easy. Problems and misunderstandings sometimes arise. The most productive posture towards these inevitable challenges is to be a problem solver rather than a complainer.

## Code of Conduct

Students must abide by policies in the [Undergraduate and Graduate Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Basic Undergraduate Student Responsibilities](#).

## Discrimination

I am committed to providing a safe class environment that is free of discrimination. In keeping with the professional nature of this course, only professional behavior is acceptable between the instructor and the students and between students. No harassment of any kind is allowed in class including but not limited to gender, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. That being said, ignoring our differences in an attempt to avoid conflict or discomfort can sometimes wind up reinforcing the same prejudices and conflicts we’re trying to avoid, so I will encourage the input each of you brings to the class based on the identities you’re comfortable speaking from.

## Due Dates

Homework assignments are always due at the beginning of class on their due dates. The projects’ due dates are TBA.

## Email

I will **only** respond to emails sent to [ChristopherRitter@clayton.edu](mailto:ChristopherRitter@clayton.edu) via Office365 Outlook. I will **never** respond to emails sent through D2L.

I will respond to emails within 24 hours, unless you email on or just before the weekend, in which case I will respond by the end of the next business day.

## Flexibility

Because the client relationship is so fluid and organic, students in this class should expect surprises and unanticipated events. Students will be evaluated in part based on their willingness to “roll with the punches.” I expect a high level of flexibility and a willingness to take on extra work if the client project demands it.

## Late Work

**I do not accept late work unless we have a prior arrangement** – i.e., you email me **at least 48 hours** before the assignment’s due date, and I grant you an extension. Again, you can turn in an assignment **only if you have requested an extension by Friday of the week the assignment is due.**

## Off-Campus Travel

Because the personal touch is critical to maintaining any client relationship, some travel to off-campus destinations will almost certainly be required in this course. The details of this travel will emerge as the client relationship evolves. If your client is located in Atlanta, you should expect to visit their site once or twice during the semester.

## Office Hours/Contact Information

One of the most valuable ways to improve your writing is through sustained, personal attention to your work. I offer this attention during office hours (listed at the beginning of the syllabus) or by appointment. In addition, you may email me to discuss specific questions you have about your writing, and I am happy to meet with you online for a face-to-face web chat.

## Online Etiquette (Netiquette)

Discussion, chat, and e-mail spaces within this course are for class purposes only, unless otherwise stated. Please remember to conduct yourself collegially and professionally. Unlike in the classroom setting, what you say in the online environment is documented and not easily erased or forgotten.

The following guidelines apply:

- Avoid using ALL CAPS, sarcasm, and language that could come across as strong or offensive.
- Use proper punctuation, grammar and be sure to edit your contribution before posting.
- Read all postings before posting your responses to discussion topics so as to not unnecessarily repeat information.
- Keep chat comments brief and to the point.
- Focus on one topic at a time when chatting or posting to discussions.
- Remember that unlike in face-to-face learning environments what you say in discussions and chats is documented and available to be revisited. Choose your words and discussion topics carefully.
- E-mail should only be used for messages pertaining to the course. Please refrain from sending forwards, jokes, etc. within e-mail.

## Plagiarism

If you consult outside sources in order to supplement or advance or generate your own ideas, you need to give credit to the author(s), whether you directly quote them or not. You're all aware that intentional plagiarism is wrong, and that it has dire consequences. Most students who intentionally plagiarize do it because they're pressed for time and feel too stressed to write their own paper. My advice: come talk to me if you have any problems getting the work done, or if you're confused about documentation. I'm here to help you, not catch you.

### **Guidelines for Writing from Sources and Consequences of Plagiarism**

The following descriptions are designed to help explain plagiarism and its consequences to help you avoid it in your writing for this course. We will devote class time to learning and understanding how to use sources in your writing, how to research and take notes effectively, how to use and cite electronic resources, and how to get help from various writing aids and resources.

#### **Problems in Writing-from-Sources:**

**Inaccurate Citation: Mechanics and Format:** Students are expected to cite both written (print and electronic), oral, and visual sources consulted in papers and presentations. All borrowed ideas—both direct quotations and paraphrasing from another's work—require accurate citation, and direct quotations require quotation marks. Students should learn and use correct format for block quotes, quotations, and in-text parenthetical documentation. Source material should be introduced fully, and all borrowed ideas should be cited; Works Cited pages should be formatted correctly. Drafts of papers with inaccurate citation, mechanical citation problems, and/or minor Works Cited inaccuracies will require mandatory revisions; final papers with these problems will receive a letter grade deduction.

#### **Plagiarism:**

**Insufficient Citation: Patchwriting and Derivative Papers:** Students should fully introduce and cite borrowed material. Cutting and pasting passages from your source into your own paper without citation and turning in the paper as your own is plagiarism, as is directly quoting without using quotation marks. Undocumented paraphrasing is plagiarism: fully cite the source of your ideas. In addition, students are expected to paraphrase and summarize using their own stylistic features, not the source's, to avoid patchwriting (also called stylistic plagiarism). If your summary is too close to the original in a draft, keep working to synthesize it fully. In addition, students are expected to develop their own framework for their papers rather than borrowing their source's argument wholesale (even if acknowledged). Drafts with several examples of insufficient citation, papers that fail to develop original arguments, papers lacking a Works Cited page, or papers that exhibit patchwriting will earn a lowered grade and will require mandatory revision; final papers will receive a 0 for the assignment for failure to meet the minimum requirements of papers in 1101/1102, and students will face disciplinary action as per the CSU Office of Student Affairs and [Community Standards](#).

**False Submissions, Ghostwriting, or Fraud:** Students are expected to write their own original papers for each assignment, from development of ideas and research to revision. Plagiarized papers include papers written by someone else (i.e. acquired or bought through the Internet, an organization, friends, family members, or another student); papers in which much of the material is cut-and-pasted from sources without correct documentation; and papers submitted by the student for another course/assignment. If such a paper is submitted for a rough draft, the student will receive a 0 for the draft and be required to do a mandatory revision and/or new rough draft before submitting a final paper. If students turn in such papers as final papers, the student will receive an F for the course and face disciplinary action as per the CSU Office of Student Affairs and [Community Standards](#).

If you have any doubt about whether or not you're plagiarizing, talk with your professor before submitting your paper.

## Plagiarism Detection Software

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You should submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included.

## Schedule Changes

By necessity, our schedule may change according to the needs of the projects. I will announce changes on D2L, but you are responsible for knowing and following them. See the live schedule for up-do-date changes.

# Resources for Students

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## Operation Study

At Clayton State University, we expect and support high motivation and academic achievement. Look for Operation Study activities and programs this semester that are designed to enhance your academic success such as study sessions, study breaks, workshops, and opportunities to earn Study Bucks (for use in the University Bookstore) and other items.

## Accommodations for Students with Special Needs

Individuals with disabilities who need to request accommodations should contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Student Center Room 255, phone 678-466-5445, or email: [disabilityservices@mail.clayton.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@mail.clayton.edu).