Technical Editing
TECM 4190.002 | Fall 2025

Instructor: Ms. Lynn Bissett
Office: GAB 543
Office hours: Tu, 2:00 – 4:00 pm (in AUDB 307)
and by appointment
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Course description | Learning outcomes

TECM 4190 is designed to strengthen your writing, editing, and visual design skills through attention to detail and application of style, grammar, and usage principles. In this class, you will learn to do the following:

- Edit technical documents, from copyediting to developmental editing
- Revise for content, organization, style, and mechanics
- Communicate editorial decisions/queries to authors
- Describe the profession of technical editing
- Use and create graphics, and understand basic principles of layout and design

You will achieve these learning outcomes through the various formal and informal assignments and presentations.

Course materials and tools

- An active UNT email account (which you will check regularly)
- Access to a computer with MS Word (for Windows or Mac) [not "Word Light"]
- Colored pencils (optional, but highly recommended) or red pen (**required**)
- Access to the course Canvas site
- Einsohn, *The Copyeditor's Handbook*, 4th ed. (**required**)
- Straus, *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation* (**recommended** for those who are weak in grammar or punctuation and want a hard copy instead of online excerpts) [May be purchased from Amazon.com].
- *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. (2017) [May be accessed online through the UNT Libraries web page] (**required**)

Course policies

Number 1 rule

We act like professionals by respecting each other's knowledge, experiences, and time. The following qualities and behaviors signal respect (or the lack of it):

We will be
- Attentive by listening and being available to each other
- Helpful by offering aid to each other
- Humble by treating each other's viewpoints as valid
- Accountable to each other by completing our duties and apologizing for our mistakes.

I am willing to revise the above list if members of the class have different or additional ideas.

Number 2 rule

Assignments or exams not completed by the due date on the course schedule earn a zero. There are no make-ups available unless arrangements are made prior to due dates. Any exceptional circumstances that cause you to miss deadlines should be documented with the Dean of Students: Union 409 or 940-565-2648.

24/7 rule

I encourage you to see me if you have questions about your performance on graded assignments. However, all students must wait 24 hours after receiving a grade (on Canvas or hard copy) before contacting me. Any errors should be brought to my attention within 7 days after the grade is received (on Canvas or hard copy).

Attendance rules

While I may not track attendance at every class meeting, there will be a record of your engagement and participation in learning opportunities during class meetings. That record serves as input when I determine professionalism scores at the end of the semester. In-class activities cannot be duplicated outside of the class meeting. I do not review class meetings with students who miss class, so you should form a support network among your peers. In-class activities may not be made up for credit. Assignments are due whether you are physically in class or not.

Excessive absences (6 or more) may be interpreted as lack of engagement and may result in your receiving a grade of "F" for the course. If you have extenuating circumstances, communicate them!

If you are having difficulties managing your course responsibilities, let me know—early. There are many campus resources available to support you through the UNT Dean of Students.

UNT's criteria for excused absences

The only excused absences recognized by the University of North Texas are those wherein a student is representing the university in an official capacity. You must bring me appropriate documentation to have your absence excused. Athletes and other students who will miss class for an official university activity must advise me in writing at least 48 hours in advance of the absence and must produce documentation upon your return to class. Assignments are still due as scheduled for students who have excused absences.

Electronic devices

Use electronic devices only for course-related purposes during class meetings. All devices should be silenced and not on vibrate mode. Better still, turn them off.

Technology requirements

You must check your email and our Canvas site several times during the week for announcements or other updates related to the course. I will contact you through Canvas or through your official UNT email, which you may forward to another service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

Our classroom (AUDB 308) is a **BYOD** (bring your own device) classroom.

If you bring your own laptop, you need to have a full version of Microsoft Word (and perhaps Excel and PowerPoint) installed on it. If you prefer not to bring your own, you may check out one from the TECM Tech Lab each day. More information on this will be available at the Lab Orientation.

You will not be able to print from your laptop nor from one you check out from the Lab. To print, you will email your file(s) to the Teck Lab. More information on this will be available at the Lab Orientation.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the computer(s) and storage devices you use are functional and that you have backed up your data in the case of technological failure. As a student at UNT, you can back up data, up to 25 GB, through OneDrive. A corrupted disk or crashed hard drive does not constitute an excuse for late work. If you need to bring electronic files to class, please email them to yourself as attachments or use the OneDrive available through your EagleConnect account.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty

If I see evidence that you have cheated by using assistance not listed on our class schedule, plagiarized by using someone else's words without attribution, fabricated information, or assisted another student in any of the categories of academic dishonesty, you will earn no credit for the assignment. If you exhibit academic dishonesty on more than one course assignment, you will earn an F in this course. (See UNT Policy 06.003.)

Briefly, acts of academic dishonesty and their corresponding punishments are as follows:

- **Cheating** —using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves cheating.
- **Plagiarism** — the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgement. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves plagiarism.
- **Forgery** — altering a score, grade, or official academic university record or forging the signature of an instructor or other student. You will receive a final grade of F in the course for any act of forgery.
- **Fabrication** — intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves fabrication.
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty** — intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity. You will receive a grade of 0 for any assignment that involves facilitating academic dishonesty.
- **Sabotage** — acting to prevent others from completing their work or willfully disrupting the academic work of others. You will receive a final grade of F in the course for any act of sabotage.

All acts of academic dishonesty will be reported to UNT's Academic Integrity Office. You can read UNT's policy at http://tinyurl.com/nuwo42u. At the beginning of the semester, we will review the six acts of academic dishonesty and their related penalties. You must also complete a quiz on the subject, which will certify that you understand the policies and procedures.

Acceptable student behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive; it will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom, and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct (UNT Policy 07.012). The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, included university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code applies to your interactions with everyone involved in this course: the instructor, classmates, your project teammates, and invited guests.

Drop Dates

Please be aware of the below deadlines as well as the changes in grading policies. UNT students can no longer receive a grade of WF, and they can drop a course online without the instructor's signature. However, students have 5 business days to decide if they want to be re-instated in a dropped course. Any student who drops the course and chooses to be reinstated will immediately be responsible for submitting any work due during the period between the actual drop date and the date of reinstatement.

Date	Description
Aug. 30	Beginning this date a student may drop a course with a grade of W by completing the *Request to Drop Class* form and submitting it to the Registrar's Office. See link for complete instructions Dropping a Class.
Nov. 7	Last day for a student to drop a course (student receives "W").
Nov. 8	Beginning this date, a student who qualifies (75% complete and passing) may request an Incomplete, with a grade of "I."
Aug.17	Last day to withdraw (drop **all** classes—student receives "W") on my.UNT.edu.

Additional dates are available on the 2024–2025 Academic Calendar at www.catalog.unt.edu or at https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-registration-guide (see Spring Important Dates).

Medical Withdrawals

If a student must withdraw due to medical reasons, prior to the withdrawal deadline as indicated in the academic calendar, a student may do so through the regular withdrawal process. If a student is incapacitated or unable to make the request on his/her own, please contact the Dean of Students Office for assistance at 940-565-2648. For details regarding the withdrawal process, go to http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/withdrawals.

Support services

UNT Office of Disability Accommodation

In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation, please obtain a letter from the ODA and present it to me no later than the end of the second week of class. (See UNT Policy 16.001.)

Essential competencies for this course include the ability to do the following:
- Read and analyze technical documents
- Write clear, concise, and visually appropriate technical prose for the intended audience in response to various types of assignments
- Follow the rules of standard grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation
- Use word processing, email, and other applications as required
- Work effectively as part of a team to discuss, write, edit, and publish technical documents

Sexual discrimination, harassment and assault

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you or someone you know has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. (See UNT Policy 16.005.)

UNT's Dean of Students' web site offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate. She can be reached through email at renee.mcnamara@unt.edu or by calling 940-565-2648.

Individual assignments

Each major assignment will be posted on Canvas. The criteria for evaluation will be given with each assignment and/or will be discussed in class. Your grade will be determined based on how well you meet these criteria. Each assignment will also include due dates for assignment drafts when applicable.

Because employers expect professional work, all assignments (and homework) for this course must be printed, professional, and, when necessary, stapled. Make two copies of your assignments—one to turn in and one to retain. No handwritten work will be accepted (with the exception of original copies with editing marks and workbook pages). Because employers also expect you to meet company deadlines, no late assignments will be accepted unless you present a compelling reason with documentation at least one week in advance of the due date. The course schedule includes the due dates for major assignments and homework. All are always due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. This means that you need to physically turn in the assignment no later than five minutes past the official start of class time. Assignments will not be accepted via email unless arrangements are made with me ahead of time.

You will be given the opportunity to revise your writing (prior to the due date) with the benefit of feedback from your instructor and peers. This feedback is intended to develop your critical thinking skills and to help you improve your writing. You may visit during my office hours (or by appointment) to discuss in-process work. I prefer that you come with specific questions. I will answer your questions and give general comments about your work, but I will not "pre-grade" your work.

Team assignments

Because businesses and other employers often expect college graduates to understand how to negotiate the dynamics of a team environment, some of your assignments are group assignments. Some class time will be provided to work on these group projects, which should lessen the amount of time needed to coordinate meetings outside of class. Regardless of the number of people on your team, all work will be based on the same grading system. That is, the same high quality of work is expected whether you work with a team of three, four, or five people.

I realize that problems sometimes arise when students work in groups, and I strongly believe that all team members do not deserve the same grade if they have not contributed equally to the assignment. When grading your team assignments, I take into account the completed assignment, team member assessments, and my observations of your class performance. You may be fired from your team if you fail to do your fair share of work. If any of the following happens more than once, you may be fired from your team:

- You are unprepared.
- You miss a team deadline.
- You miss two or more in-class, out-of-class, or online team meetings.

If you are fired from your team, you may complete the assignment individually, but you may not use any of the work or ideas produced by the team.

Team assignments follow the same parameters as individual assignments. (See the second paragraph under "Individual assignments.") Due dates are included with the assignment and in the course schedule. Since no late team assignments will be accepted, be sure that every member of your team has a copy of the final version of each group assignment on the due date in case a team member is absent or arrives late for class.

Assignment submission and grading

Format
Major assignments and drafts must be submitted through Canvas unless otherwise noted. **Emailed assignments will not be accepted**.

Due dates

Assignments must be completed and uploaded to Canvas by the beginning of the designated class period (due date), unless specified otherwise. I do not accept late work unless you have documented extenuating circumstances related to university events or the observance of a recognized holy day.

It is your responsibility to turn in your work o time. Computer-related excuses will not be accepted (see Technology requirements.)

Finally, you may not use program templates (e.g. Word templates) to format any of your documents. These templates do not encourage you to learn the program and generally result in dull, unpersuasive documents.

Grading

Although I do not generally use rubrics for the basis of assessing work in this course, you will find the criteria for assessment included with each major assignment description, including the distribution of points for elements comprising any given assignment.

Assignment grading standards and evaluation policy

Grade	Standards
A **90–100 %**	A manager would be very impressed and would remember the work when a promotion is discussed. In this course, that means work that is a pleasure to read, with excellent content, grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and visual design. In addition, work is thorough, complete, coherent, well organized, supported sufficiently, and demonstrates a superior understanding of audience, purpose, rationale, and technical style.
B **80–89 %**	A manager would be satisfied with the job, but not especially impressed. This means that papers are well written and well produced, and demonstrate a substantial addition of the learning process. Work is sufficiently developed, organized, and supported, and demonstrates a solid understanding of audience, purpose, rationale, and technical style.
C **70–79 %**	A manager would be disappointed and ask you to revise or rewrite sections before allowing clients and others to see the work. In other words, the paper may have clear, but underdeveloped ideas, or the paper might not engage or affect the reader. The paper may contain some errors in grammar, mechanics, or logic.
D **60–69 %**	A manager would be troubled by the poor quality of work. This level of work forces the reader to work too hard to understand the main ideas. The paper may contain incomplete information, have serious grammar and mechanical problems, lack clear organization, or be conceptually unclear.
F **0–59 %**	A manager would start looking for someone to replace you. In particular, work fails to address the tasks of the assignment, is so underdeveloped as to demonstrate incompetence, and is mechanically and grammatically incomprehensible. This grade will also be assigned for any evidence of plagiarism.

Note: I do not round up grades. I seldom give opportunities for extra credit or for revisions after an assignment is submitted for assessment. I am, however, willing to provide input and advice during office hours or by appointment. But I will not "pregrade" your work.

Course requirements and weights of major assignments

Professionalism [20 percent]: Individual score given in recognition of professional behavior in class: regular attendance and being on time (especially for group work sessions), daily work (including homework), quizzes (usually unannounced), and class participation

Group presentation [20 percent]: As members of a team, students create and present a 10- to 30-minute audio-visual presentation on an assigned chapter from our textbook and/or an assigned section of *The Chicago Manual of Style.* Grading criteria include the following:

- Wise choice of emphasis [It will be impossible to include everything from your assigned chapter/section in the time allotted. Your presentation should motivate other students to read the chapter as closely as you did.]
- Accuracy
- Adherence to the principles of well-designed, carefully edited presentations
- Professionalism in handling the presentation
- Creativity in approach to the topic
- Level of engagement with audience (how actively they participate in your short exercise)
- Assessments by team members

Copyediting, proofreading, and style sheet assignment [20 percent]: an **individual** assignment. Students edit a multi-page document.
- Marked-up document (hard copy) [100 points]
- Style sheet (hard copy) [up to 12.5 points deducted if missing]
- Letter of transmittal (hard copy) [up to 12.5 points deducted if missing]
- **Note**: additional deliverables may be required. See the assignment description for details.

Substantive editing assignment [20 percent]: an individual assignment. Students edit a lengthy document, including graphic and design elements.
- Style sheet [up to 10 points deducted if missing]
- Revised document with highlighted changes (Clean, finished document submitted in hard copy and to Canvas) [100 points]
- Memo/letter of transmittal [up to 10 points deducted if missing]
- **Note**: additional deliverables may be required. See the assignment description for details.

Graphics exercise [20 percent]: Student groups will edit a small poster and will provide justifications for changes made and will document each student's contribution to the finished assignment. Related to this assignment will be submission of two additional documents: a group charter and a group progress report (assigned separately).

Any changes to the syllabus will be reasonable and geared
toward achieving maximum learning in the course.
Office hours are subject to change. All changes will be announced through Canvas.

Bad weather notice:
If the university is closed (classes canceled) because of bad weather, we will still have class via Canvas unless I notify you otherwise through email or Canvas.

Group work
How your group works as a team is up to you. Options include conference calls, FaceTime, Zoom, Google Docs and others. **Your** group = **your** choice.

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Reading and assignment schedule (subject to change). All changes will be reflected in Canvas.

Week/Dates	Course content and readings	Major assignments/homework due by start of class
Week 1		
Aug. 19	Introduction to course; Lab orientation	
Aug. 21		**CMS Chp. 2 review (in-class activity)**
Aug. 22	Quiz due date moved to this day.	**Pre Quiz (diagnostic) (Assignments Page or Quizzes)**
Week 2		
Aug. 26	1) Editing: *TCH* Chapter 1, The Big Picture: "What Copyeditors Do" and 2) Basic Copyediting [Mod. 1]	**Grammar Pre-Test**
Aug. 28	Review **L&G** Chapter 11 [both parts; Mod. 2] SVA review	
Week 3		
Sept. 2	Review **Sims** Chapters 7 and 8 [Mod. 2] Assign CMS chapters Pronouns review	**SVA quiz**
Sept. 4	*TCH* Chapter 2, "Basic Procedures" *CMS* "Proofreader's Marks" (pp. 112–113) *TCH* Chapter 14, "Markup" (pp. 311–315) Preview References **Assign** group presentations	**Pronouns quiz**
Week 4		
Sept. 9	*THC* Chapter 3 and Chapter 11, "References" Review "The Skinny on Style Sheets" [Module 3] **Assign** preliminary editing assignment	**References quiz**
Sept. 11	*TCH* Chapter 10, "Tables, Graphs, and Art" Who/Whom/Whoever/Whomever review	
Week 5		
Sept. 16	Adjectives/Adverbs review Group work on presentations Workshop [if time]	**Preliminary editing assignment due** (individual; hard copy)
Sept. 18	**Group presentations (2–4)** *All students are strongly encouraged to read the assigned chapters/sections prior to class. See the assignment sheet.*	**Who/Whom/That/Which quiz Adjectives/Adverbs quiz Group presentation #2 Group presentation #3 Group presentation #4**
Week 6		
Sept. 23	**Group presentations (5–7)** *All students are strongly encouraged to read the assigned chapters/sections prior to class. See the assignment sheet.*	**Prepositions quiz Group presentation #5 Group presentation #6 Group presentation #7**
Sept.. 25	**Group presentation (additional time)** *All students are strongly encouraged to read the assigned chapters/sections prior to class. See the assignment sheet.* *TCH* Chapter 12, "Front Matter, Back Matter, and Running Heads" Usage review; **Assign** Copy editing, proofreading and style sheet assignment; Workshop [if time]	**Usage quiz Additional time for Group Presentations, if needed**

Week/Dates	Course content and readings	Major assignments/homework due by start of class
Week 7		
Sept. 30	Workshop: Group or Individual work.	**Usage quiz**
Oct. 2	Workshop: Group or Individual work	**Team evaluation** of Group Presentation (individual evaluations of team members)
Week 8		
Oct. 7	Electronic editing: Track Changes Read CMS Chapter 2 (2.84) TCH Chapter 13 (pp. 315–330)	
Oct. 9	Graphics orientation Comprehensive Editing: Definition and Process	**Copy editing, proofreading, and style sheet assignment** (individual); Memo analysis quiz
Week 9		
Oct. 14	**TBD**	Language & Style activity (in-class)
Oct.16		
Week 10		
	TBD	
Oct. 21	Introduction to the rest of the semester Assign **Substantive editing assignment** Questions about Comprehensive Editing?	
Oct. 23	Questions about Comprehensive Editing? Electronic editing (continued) [Module 1.5.5] Workshop (individual)	
Week 11		
Oct. 28	Working with a group [Module 1, "collaborating"] Visual design [Module 4, 8 short videos]	
Oct. 30	Visual design [Module 4, 8 short videos] Workshop (individual)	
Week 12		
Nov. 4	Discuss and assign Team charter Group work on team charter	
Nov. 6	Timely topic (TBD) Workshop (individual) Assign Graphics redesign (Group project)	**Team charter due** (group)
Week 13		
Nov. 11	Timely topic (TBD) Group work on team project	**Substantive editing assignment due** (individual)
Nov. 13	Timely topic (TBD) Group work on team project	
Week 14		
Nov. 18	Discuss and assign Progress report. Group work on team project	
Nov. 20	Timely topic (TBD) Group work on team project	**Progress report due** (group)
Fall Break		
Nov. 25 -- 27	**Fall Break – No class**	**No assignments due**
Week 15		
Dec. 2	Final discussion of graphics redesign	
Dec. 4	Course wrap up (discuss final exam0	**Graphics redesign** (all components, including team evaluation) **– at beginning of class**
Final Exam		
Dec 11(Thurs.), *10:00–12:00*	**Final exam – online activities held during the exam period**. No physical presence required.	**TBD**

Additional exercises may be assigned throughout the semester.
Additional topics will be covered in class during Weeks 12–15,
based on class needs.

This schedule is subject to change.