

# Then and Now . . . and Down the Road: Editing and Publishing at UA Little Rock

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**Abstract** The MA concentration in editing and publishing (E&P) in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing at University of Arkansas Little Rock was conceived in 2008 by two professors in the department with expertise in editing, one nonfiction and the other technical. Subsequent course creations included “continuation” courses of two existing courses with four three-hour classes becoming the core of the concentration. Elective courses were then identified, practicum in editing/internship hours were put into place, and finally, a theory course best suited to the concentration, *Language Theory*, was instituted. The most recent addition has been a new *Topics in Editing and Publishing* class. Changes include reducing the portfolio option from 42 to 36 hours, thus making thesis and portfolio options consistent—with subsequent ramifications for E&P portfolio students. They gain assistance in planning, completing, and “defending” their portfolios. The planned reduction in internship hours from six to three means that students have a bit more room for electives. Looking to the future, the authors consider the role of GenAI in the E&P classroom, a future that shall include consideration of the synergistic connection between theory and practice: praxis.

**Keywords** editing, publishing, curriculum, professional and technical writing

**T**his Program Showcase narrates the evolution of the MA concentration in editing and publishing (E&P) in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing at University of Arkansas Little Rock (UA)—from the concentration’s inception in 2008 to what it is in 2025. Our experiences will, we hope, contribute to conversations about E&P programs and curriculum (Baker; Rawlins; & Pierson, 2024). In what follows, we outline our program, discussing required and elective classes, as well as internship opportunities. We then look

to the future of our concentration—and how technologies such as AI will affect not only *what* we talk about with our students but also *how* to discuss their editorial roles.

## **Then: First Draft of our Concentration**

In November of 2008, two members of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing interested in (and already teaching) editing sketched out a draft of an editing concentration (refer to Appendix A), which was approved by department faculty and formalized via a program change form (refer to Appendix B—copy included here does not contain signatures, but is our working copy). But the conversation about editing and how to teach it had been going on for several years, sparked by students' comments. One in particular comes to mind, something along the lines of, "Oh, I'm so glad you're teaching us *editing*; up to now [*Technical Editing*]'s been just another writing class." It was that student-driven commentary that got those two rhetoric and writing professors to look at what they already had in terms of editing and to build upon it.

At that time, we had two undergraduate/graduate editing courses: one technical (RHET 4304/5304 *Technical Style and Editing*) and one nonfiction (RHET 4321/5321 *Editing for Publication*). Having taught these courses for a number of years, we both realized that one class for technical and one class for nonfiction was not enough. We needed "continuation classes"—*Technical Editing Part II*, *Editing for Publication Part II*, if you will—which were ultimately numbered and titled RHET 4322/5322 *Advanced Editing* (focused on comprehensive technical editing) and RHET 4322/5323 *Production Editing* (focused on taking edited nonfiction pieces submitted for publication to *Literature and Medicine* or *Quills and Pixels*). These four courses comprised the core of our evolving editing concentration.

But four courses/12 hours were not enough to help students develop into editors who could take on a variety of document types and a range of document topics. So we created a new class: RHET 4324/5324 *Topics in Editing*. We also targeted RHET classes that we saw as being relevant for editors-in-the-making, such as *Document Design*, *Writing for Business and Government*, *Technology of the Book*, and *Software Documentation*. Courses such as these represented the elective portion of the concentration. (The *Electives* section later in this article lists all the electives currently available.) Finally, we knew that we needed to give students the opportunity to take those skills learned in their classes and put them into practice in the real world, initially called *Practicum in Editing* and later renamed *Internship*.

Using our editing concentration draft as a guide, we created the proposed *Advanced Editing* class (2010), turned a *Topics in Nonfiction* class (not on our initial plan) into *Production for Editors* (2011), renumbered/renamed an undergraduate/graduate practicum into a graduate-level internship (2011), and changed the name of the concentration to *Editing and Publishing* (2019).

## **Now: Programmatic Requirements and Choices for Editing and Publishing Students**

### **Requirements**

No matter what concentration students select—Editing and Publishing, Nonfiction, or Technical Writing—they all take nine hours of required courses. Six of these nine hours are two classes: *Introduction to Research Methods* and *Rhetorical Theory*:

- **RHET 7300 *Introduction to Research Methods***: “An introductory course in research methods used to study writing in the classroom and workplace; quantitative and qualitative design; ethics of human subject research.” [(University of Arkansas Little Rock, 2025)]
- **RHET 7311 *Rhetorical Theory***: “Nature, extent, practice of rhetoric; emphasis on necessity of integrating a solid understanding of rhetorical theory with extensive writing in a variety of modes for a variety of audiences and reasons.” (University of Arkansas Little Rock, 2025)

These courses are required because they provide students with a set of common skills and language vital for both academic and professional work.

In *Introduction to Research Methods*, students learn how researchers pose questions, gather and generate data, analyze it, and present it to various audiences—not only giving students the opportunities to become better researchers, but also enabling them to interrogate problems within workplace settings, troubleshoot these problems, and help solve them, a valuable skill for both academic and professional settings. Because our program emphasizes both theory and practice, it is important for students, regardless of their concentration, to understand rhetorical concepts and persuasive tactics. *Rhetorical Theory*, then, provides students with the theoretical support that underpins effective communication for various audiences.

The third required class, no matter the concentration, is one that students select, a theory course that is best suited to their concentration. In the case of E&P, that course is RHET

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7312 *Language Theory*. Having completed an MA in linguistics (from a program including several rhetoric courses) at Arizona State University while at the same time working as a technical editor at Sperry Corporation, one of the concentration co-authors saw the synergistic relationship between editing practices and language theories, and so successfully made the case for *Language Theory* being that third required course.

The following advising blurb describes both the course content and specific assignments. Our including the advising blurb for *Language Theory* here is deliberate; we want our readers here to be as informed as our students.

### **RHET 7312 *Language Theory***

#### **What Language Theory is and Why it Matters**

Rhetoric 7312 will introduce you to the principles operating in language. We'll begin by asking the **Big Question**: What is "language"? How does it differ from "communication"? We'll then examine (not literally) the "hardware" of language: the brain. "Grammar" comes next—and we'll spend some time clarifying what is and what is *not* grammar. Because we're writers and editors, we'll not spend much time on the sounds (phonetics) or sound patterns (phonology) of language. Instead, we'll focus on morphology (word formation), syntax (word order), and semantics (word meaning). As wordsmiths, we can't ignore psychological aspects of language, so we'll be studying language acquisition. Finally, we'll be considering the social aspects of language: how language is being used now, how languages have changed over the centuries.

What better course than this one for students focusing on writing and editing?

#### **What We'll Be Doing**

In the following list, I describe the specific assignments we'll be completing:

- Everyone will be a **bringer of data**. When scheduled, the Bringer will be expected to come to class with grammatical, psychological, or social "data"; with a transcript of a conversation or speech event; or with a written text. The Bringer is expected to make enough copies of the data for all class members as we examine and discuss what's been brought. Bringers aren't expected to go on *ad nauseum*; 10 minutes at the most will suffice.
- Everyone will keep a **learning journal**. The journal will contain short "summary/response" entries for each week regarding a "tough concept." (Keep your answers to assigned exercises in your journal: One or more of these exercises may supply

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you with that “tough concept.”) If we have quizzes, I expect you to keep your copies here. Your journal will also contain data gathered when preparing to be the “bringer of data,” a reflective entry about that data, and any data collected for team presentations. (Stay tuned for an explanation of “team presentations.”)

- A final journal entry should take what’s been learned about language *theory* and *apply* that theory to personal interests and/or practices. (I suggest that you keep your journal in a three-ring binder so that you can easily insert material you find, move that material around, trash that material and replace it with something else—you get the idea.)
- Everyone will participate in a **team presentation** responsible for helping the class as a whole come to terms with a prominent/important topic and its application. The team is responsible for assigning readings to the class.
- Everyone will complete one take-home **exam**, which will happen after we finish the chapter on semantics and thus may cover any topic we’ve discussed since the first day of class. This exam is to be completed individually. Of course, you may refer to your texts, class notes, journal entries—just be sure that you don’t merely repeat what’s been written in other places. (In class, I’ll elaborate, make clearer, what I’ve written here. Rest assured that this exam will be doable within the time you have.)
- By the beginning of April, we’ll have discussed a number of chapters from *An Introduction to Language* and from *The Story of English*. Looking at these books’ tables of contents, you can see what chapters we won’t be discussing. You can also think back to what previously discussed topics you want to talk more about, find out more about. You can flip through the glossary and stop when your eye catches an intriguing idea/concept. Or you might know from the proverbial “Day One” what you want to present. You have many options. What’s important is that you choose a topic that truly does intrigue you. Once you have that topic selected and approved by me, everything else will fall into place.
- Stay tuned for what specific days these **audio/visual presentations on chosen linguistic topics** will be happening, their time length, etc. (These are different from your team presentations given earlier in the semester.) You’ll need to use one of various presentation software programs (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi). In putting together these presentations, you’ll be able to hone your skills in conciseness, clarity, and *parallelism*. In addition to the actual “real-time” presentation, you’ll be supplying me with hard copies of your presentation after the fact.

## **Editing and Publishing Core Courses**

Four editing classes make up the required core of UA Little Rock's E&P concentration. From the UA Little Rock catalog (2025):

- **RHET 5304 *Technical Style and Editing***: Studies the nature of technical communication and its editing needs. Practice in editing for correctness, consistency, accuracy, and completeness—accomplished by establishing levels of edit, making multiple passes, and setting up/keeping style sheets. Major project for “real-world” client gives students opportunities to put into practice what they’ve learned. Students also give oral presentations of their projects. Three credit hours. Will be crosslisted as RHET 4304. (Also refer to “advising blurb” in Appendix C, which alludes to the downplay if not the deletion of “style” considerations in technical editing.)
- **RHET 5321 *Editing for Publication***: Prerequisite: graduate standing. Offers a practical, hands-on experience in pre-production editing of a live publication. Focuses on acquisition, review, manuscript editing, editorial correspondence, and manuscript preparation. Three credit hours. Will be crosslisted as RHET 4321.
- **RHET 5322 *Advanced Editing***: Prerequisite: RHET 5304 or RHET 5321. Focuses on issues such as editing graphics, illustrations, and other visual material; editing quantitative and technical material; editing in digital environments, working with authors across digital spaces, and editing manuscripts intended for digital publication. As part of the production process, shows how setting up styles and templates in Word makes the editing process much easier. Also includes instruction in Track Changes and Comments functions in Word. Three credit hours. Will be crosslisted as RHET 4322. (Also refer to advising blurb in Appendix D.)
- **RHET 5323 *Production Editing***: Designed to help future editors learn about and participate in the production of a book-length collection of nonfiction essays. Class focuses on creation of table of contents, arrangement of essays into thematic sequences, book layout and design using high-end desktop publishing software, final proofreading, page proofing, and work with printers. Three credit hours. Will be crosslisted as RHET 4323.

## **A Peek Behind the Curtain: Editing Pedagogy and Required Courses in Action**

Our E&P concentration is informed by theory, specifically by language theory. The more students know about the workings of the English language, how it came to be, and the

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difference between the prescriptive grammar they have gotten in school and the descriptive grammar linguists use to talk about language, the better equipped students are to be able to competently edit and to confidently (and correctly) back up their edits with facts, “chapter and verse” if necessary.

In fact, the first few meetings of *Technical Editing* (especially) and *Advanced Editing* (less so, but still to some extent) are spent “debunking myths.” Instructors ask such questions as:

- How many of you were taught/told/assumed never to start a sentence with *because*? (This question has been asked for 40 years, and the number of students whose hands shoot up is still so distressing.)
- How many of you have been told never to start a sentence with *and*?
- How many of you were told never to end a sentence with a preposition? (Here’s an apt place to tell the story of Winston Churchill, who supposedly was told, during a WWII meeting, not to end a sentence with a preposition, and who purportedly replied, “That is something up with which I will not put.” Giggles abound at how horrible the sentence sounds, but by God, it doesn’t end with a preposition!)
- How many of you were told not to split an infinitive? Well, okay, but what about “To boldly go where no one has gone before”? I kinda like the sound of that. Compare it to “To go boldly. . . .” Ehh—the latter just doesn’t have the same cadence.
- How many of you put a comma in front of every *and* you see? More laughter as I say, “Yes, I love commas and put them in whenever I can—*correctly*. Stay tuned.”
- How many of you *never* put a comma in front of *and*?

Questions such as these generate lively discussions (much more so than one would think) and get us talking about the history of the English language, particularly about Latin being seen as *the* prestige language, and so when the Royal Academy came into being in 18<sup>th</sup>-century England, its members (e.g., Jonathan Swift, who *loathed* “clipped words” such as *gym* for *gymnasium* and let everyone know what he thought) were determined to “purify” the run-rampant English used by the working class. Thus began the attempt to shove English, a West Germanic language, into a Latin, Romance language, mold.

“All grammars leak” said Edward Sapir in *Language* (1921, p. 39). Indeed.

In our editing classes, students gain knowledge not only about the *what* of editing (both sentence-level and comprehensive) but also the *how/why* of editing: adhering to the level of edit specified (Appendix E), making multiple passes for those editing issues spelled out in that level of edit (Appendix F), and keeping document-specific style sheets (Appendix G).

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These documents “freeze-frame” the skills one of us learned as a technical editor at Sperry Flight Systems in the 1980s—a sort of internship taken during a leave of absence from MA coursework. Linguistics—especially neurolinguistics—back up these skills, whether laid out in layperson’s terms in Sperry’s *Publications Style Guide Volume 2: Editing Standards* (1981) or in more academic terms in John Medina’s *Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School* (2014).

These two publications, as well as what’s known as “trace theory” (Kulhavy, 1982), provide pedagogical support for the way our students are taught editing:

- repeat to remember (Medina, 2014, p. 125), for every repetition literally burns a “trace” (Kulhavy, 1982) into the surface of the brain (which works electrochemically);
- repeat something enough (e.g., the ability to do one editing pass at a time), and that memory “conduit” is there and can get only deeper and stronger;
- acknowledge that “the brain cannot multitask” (Medina, 2014, p. 115);
- come to understand that “audiences (i.e., our students) check out after 10 minutes but you can keep grabbing them back by telling narratives or creating events rich in emotion” (Medina, 2014, p. 124).

The above bulleted list truncates a much more detailed and referenced version of editing pedagogy. But it is one that is based on the importance of having students work in real time, whether face to face and/or in a Zoom classroom. It’s based on the importance of students being able to get answers *immediately* to their questions. (In a YouTube video of his “Brain Rules” concepts, Medina critiques the “generic” version of education—in which students attend class during the day and then attempt to do homework in the evening. Based on his work as a developmental molecular biologist/affiliate professor of bioengineering at the University of Washington School of Medicine, Medina argues that students need to work on course material not that night but within 30 minutes of having learned a concept in class. So students *must* get instruction and then immediate (or, at the very least, within 30 minutes) instruction feedback.

We place this material here because in March 2020, everyone pivoted to teaching online in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of us had started teaching *Advanced Editing* synchronously online via Zoom in January 2020, so by the time that COVID-19 “sent us home,” she had become a synchronous online “cheerleader”; students joined the cheering section, for they loved the immediate feedback they got—especially online students who up to that time worked exclusively and asynchronously on Blackboard,



where they posted their weekly responses. These online students were not Blackboard fans. It was therefore not used in our editing classes; rather, Google Drive and its various applications were used instead.

## **Electives**

In addition to the three required courses and the four core courses for the concentration, students may choose from the following three-hour electives, quoted here from the UA Little Rock Graduate Course Catalog (n.d.):

- **RHET 5305 *Document Design***: Study and practice of the use of visual elements in technical communication. Emphasis on typography, page layout, data displays, pictorial communication, and usability testing for both print and online documents.
- **RHET 5306 *Writing for Business and Government***: Theory of and practice in writing for business and government organizations; includes writing strategies, appropriate diction, report formats.
- **RHET 5307 *Writing Software Documentation***: Study and practice of writing documentation for computer software, including printed manuals, tutorials, reference guides, and online help systems. Emphasis on analyzing prospective users and their tasks, interviewing subject matter experts, developing help for different levels of users, writing user-friendly text, editing documentation for style and clarity, and working on a documentation team. Intensive practice with RoboHELP HTML software for composing online help.
- **RHET 5324 *Publishing Inside Out***: This course introduces students to the publishing process and provides insight into the roles and career paths available in publishing today. The course offers guided practice in conceiving and developing a proposal for a nonfiction book and teaches core skills in content editing, marketing research, and project development.
- **RHET 5326 *Technology of the Book***: This course presents an overview of the history of book printing and publishing technologies from 1450 to the present. Students will explore the implications of different publishing technologies for literacy, learning, and civic participation, focusing particularly on current debates about the shift from print to digital publishing. Students will evaluate changes in the responsibilities of authors, editors, and publishers as they explore the future of the book, including print and digital books, and who will control the publishing process and profit from it.
- **RHET 5370 *Writing for Social Media***: This course presents an overview of the need for social media writers and managers in the workplace. Students will analyze

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online audiences and write content that will attract more readers, build trust with the readers, and keep them coming back. Students will create an editorial calendar based on a social media strategy, plan a social media campaign, and execute this plan by writing the content or managing a social media team.

- **RHET 5371 *Writing on the Web***: An introduction to the rhetorical aspects of web design and construction that emphasizes audience(s), purpose(s), and accessibility issues such as website navigation, readability, visual design, and ADA compliance.
- **RHET 5372 *Usability Testing and Design***: An introduction to principles of user experience (UX) design, usability, and usability testing in the context of new media. Topics covered include interaction design, audience and requirements analysis, prototyping, document aesthetics, and usability testing procedures.
- **RHET 5375 *Grant Writing***: Survey, theory, and practice of grant writing (solicited and unsolicited) and the philanthropic sector. Topics include, but are not limited to, finding and researching a foundation, finding and using resources for each stage of the grant writing process, developing a problem statement, creating objectives and goals, creating a budget, and working with foundations.
- **RHET 7320 *Working with Writers***: Study of a variety of writing processes, strategies, skills for writers. Emphasis on practical applications for writers and writing teachers in academic, work, and other settings.

The most recent addition to our list of electives is

- **RHET 7333 *Topics in Editing and Publishing*** (2014): Allows for flexibility in offering courses useful to students and of interest to faculty. May include topics such as Editing for Global Audiences, Intellectual Property and Copyright, History of Printing and the Book, Freelance Editing, and Research and Fact Checking. May be repeated for credit when topics vary. (Curriculum Change Form copy, refer to Appendix A.)

Since its creation, RHET 7333 has been taught twice with two different topics.

**Spring 2021: *Editing Practices and Language Theories*** “is based upon my OCDA (off-campus duty assignment)—aka sabbatical—in Spring 2018. ... Since [then], I’ve been teaching and researching and working toward offering editing classes to online students. But my project is at the stage where I can share my insights, the connections I see between the practice of editing [the what] and the theory/theories of language [the why, the how] that support certain editing practices and discredit others. I’m at the stage where I can run my ideas up the pedagogical flagpole and see if anyone salutes.

“This offering of RHET 7333 will therefore give us the opportunity to make what I see as the necessary connection between theory and practice: necessary because ‘practice uninformed by theory is just that—uninformed’ [one of several “Nahrwold’s laws”]. The synergistic relationship between theory and practice can help us do a better, clearer job at explaining our editing choices not only to writers and their material but also to ourselves. And once we begin to bring to consciousness what has up to that time been unconscious and therefore unavailable—whoa! I hope you’re as excited, as enthusiastic as I am, in spending Wednesday evenings together” (Nahrwold, 2021).

**Spring 2023:** *Editing in Global Contexts/for International Audiences.* “This offering of RHET 7333 grows out of my increasing awareness that we don’t live in a linguistic vacuum ... and that our cultural practices are among many. I hope you’re as excited, as enthusiastic as I am, in spending Thursday evenings together! What better course than this one for students focusing on writing and editing?” (Nahrwold, 2023)

## **Now: Internships and the Importance of Experiential Learning**

Strong theoretical backgrounds and extensive coursework is two-thirds of the pedagogical equation: Students in the E&P concentration are also required to do internships. Such a requirement acknowledges that learning the *what* and *how* of editing must be honed both inside and outside the academy. We therefore pursue options for students’ experiential learning.

In 2014, the creators/co-coordinators of the graduate concentration put together the following Curriculum Course Description for internships: RHET 7161, 7261, 7361. (Both the course numbering and the description had been altered from the initial 2008 E&P program draft.)

- “Prerequisite: recommendation of departmental editing concentration coordinators. Provides hands-on editing experience in a professional workplace. Work hours, activities, and responsibilities must be specified in a written agreement between the employer [client] and student in consultation with the coordinators. Credit hours may vary. ...

For example, this course could be taken three times for a total of six hours. In the first two-hour course (fall), the student would serve as an editorial assistant to the supervising professor. In the second two-hour course (spring), the student would move up to be an editorial associate, thus having more (individual) responsibility for

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working with manuscript(s). In the third two-hour course (summer), the student would serve as managing editor.” [(Two three-hour internships would also be an option.)]

The initial internship client was River Market Press, an imprint of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing. Starting in Spring 2011, students were awarded 10-hour graduate assistantships for working with editorial board members, attending meetings and keeping meeting minutes, assisting in movement from manuscript to typescript, and working on book design/production. In that respect, assistantship work followed the above course description for internships. Unfortunately, the press lost inertia after the printing of *Tommy Adkins: At Home and Abroad* (edited by Nahrwold, 2013).

Department faculty have discussed resurrecting River Market Press so that we can again add GA and internship work to student options for learning outside of the classroom. Presently, however, such a move has been put on the proverbial “back burner” as we deal with more pressing issues, such as revitalizing our composition program and filling both tenure-track and instructor positions in our Professional and Technical Writing program in general and in our E&P concentration in particular.

In the meantime, internship opportunities come to us in several ways: via our faculty and graduate student listservs, alumni, and word of mouth. The latter medium has been surprisingly successful—perhaps given our increasing number of online graduate students, who have told us and others that taking synchronous online classes via Zoom gives them the sense of community they never had before. And we faculty are given the opportunity to mentor internships that graduate students have come to us with. (Just this past year—Fall 2024 and Spring 2025—one of us worked with an online student and her client, both based in Springfield, Illinois.)

### **Down the Road: Changes for the Future**

A significant change to the concentration is that the portfolio option for the MA has been reduced from 42 to 36 hours to coincide with the number of hours required for the thesis option. This change shows up on our “MA in Editing and Publishing Concentration (36 hr.)” (Appendix H). Instead of the six internship hours originally envisioned in our 2008 draft, we are in the process of reducing the number of internship hours from six to three. Our altered course of study also gives thesis as well as portfolio students the six-hour, two-class support to put together their committees and their proposals, as well as the opportunity to “defend” (we prefer “present”) their proposals to faculty and other graduate students. During the second class, students work with their committee chair and members to

complete and defend their theses or portfolios. Such changes to our graduate concentration benefit our students by their getting a bit more coursework, as well as designated assistance in putting together their project proposals and then their projects, whether thesis or portfolio.

Changes continue. The coordinator of the MA concentration in E&P has retired as of August 1, 2025, and synchronous online classes via Zoom are no longer permitted as of Fall 2025 for the Online Campus at UA Little Rock. In Spring 2025, we interviewed and successfully hired a new tenure-track assistant professor with expertise in digital editing, as well as knowledge of/experience with artificial intelligence, UX, and/or usability. Such a hire marks a turn, if you will, in our department offerings.

## **Incorporating GenAI into the Editing Classroom**

As generative AI (GenAI) technologies—even multimodal GenAI—advance, editors will continue to be vital members of organizations “developing and deploying AI in ways that are fair, accurate, transparent, accountable, and explainable” (Pratt, para. 13, 2025). Our program thus strives to encourage students to examine GenAI technologies through a critical lens rather than uncritical adoption. While GenAI companies make claims about efficiency, critical thinking, data analysis, and research (OpenAI, n.d.), GenAI technologies raise real concerns over intellectual property (Metz, 2024), cognitive function (Kos’myna, 2025), linguistic justice (Owusu-Ansah, 2023), labor (Perrigo, 2023), environmental harm (Calvert, 2024), and hallucinations and misinformation (Lucas et al., 2024). GenAI cannot understand rhetorical or cultural contexts, and quite startlingly, has been found to perpetuate biases and harmful stereotypes (O’Donnell, 2024; Kotek, Dockum, & Sun, 2023).

Indeed, Microsoft Edge claims its Editor function “provides AI-powered writing assistance including spelling, grammar, and synonym suggestions across the web so you can write more confidently” (Microsoft, n.d., para. 1). We argue that such an understanding of editorial work does not demonstrate a correct understanding of what grammar *is* (the descriptive grammar linguists work with), the robustness of what human editors offer, or what students in our E&P program are required to demonstrate in order to successfully progress through the program. While editors do attend to sentence-level issues, they also provide important contextual and rhetorical guidance (comprehensive editing) that GenAI models cannot match.

This technological mismatch stems from the fact that GenAIs are not *thinking* in the same way editors might (or do at all, for that matter). As Amanda Guinzburg (2025) discovered,

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GenAI technologies most often offer what a user “wants to hear” in response to any prompt. Guinzburg asks ChatGPT to suggest which pieces of her work to include in a query letter to an agent and is met with strong and confident encouragement. However, the GenAI misinterprets Guinzburg’s purpose and work, making up complete fabrications about what has been included, even as Guinzburg questions it. The GenAI is confident, enthusiastic, positive, and even apologetic to Guinzburg as ChatGPT continually apologizes for misleading her—yet does so incorrectly. GenAI lacks the capacity for uncertainty, for rhetorical questioning; it lacks the ability to acknowledge the limits of its own knowledge. Editors can—and do—work with authors rhetorically in ways that GenAI cannot. Editors can push and pull ideas in new directions. We thus encourage this spirit in our E&P program and argue it as a strength of editorial work.

As we prepare editors for future work, we ask students to interrogate how this technology functions. In order to do so, we must educate ourselves and then share with our students what we have learned and what they *must* learn. Case in point is our summer 2025 offering of a “Writing with AI” *Special Topics* course that focused on human cognition, ethics and AI, and various AI platforms. Students learned not only what AI platforms are and how to use them, but also *how* and *why* they work. This fundamental knowledge prepares students to be leaders in how this technology may or may not be adapted in future contexts. Rather than viewing GenAI tools as a threat or boon to editorial work—what Martin Heidegger (1977) calls “the extreme danger” and “the saving power” (p. 313)—we want students to understand these tools as potentially influential yet limited instruments that require human intervention regardless of use. In the rush to stay current, we cannot forget what editors coming out of our graduate E&P concentration must be able to do: work with *language writ large* to ensure it is “correct, consistent, accurate, and complete” (Rude & Eaton, 2010, p. 203).

## **Conclusion**

From a two-hour brainstorming session in 2008 to where we are now in 2025, our MA concentration in Editing and Publishing has, as pointed out earlier, continued to change. From minor ones, such as submitting a program change form to change the name of our concentration from “Editing” to “Editing and Publishing (2019),” to major ones, such as hiring faculty with backgrounds/ knowledge of linguistics and how that knowledge connects to editing, to hiring faculty with nonacademic writing and editing experience, to hiring faculty with knowledge of/experience with AI. The evolution of our program from its inception until now demonstrates our commitment to best practices in editing, the adaptability of our curriculum and faculty members, and our commitment to preparing

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editors for an increasingly complex professional landscape through theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Our emphasis on theoretical grounding through courses such as *Language Theory* and *Rhetorical Theory* produces graduates with what Carolyn Miller calls “knowing-that” (1989, p.21). Core and elective editing classes serve as a bridge. The real-world editorial internship experience we require of our students provides them with the so-important “knowing-how” (Miller, 1989, p. 21). In this way, we emphasize the synergistic connection of theory and practice: *praxis*.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Appendix A: Draft of Editing Concentration for MA in Professional and Technical Writing**

The editing option for our MA degree would comprise 12 hours of concentration work: Technical Style and Editing, Editing for Publication, Advanced Editing, and an elective [Topics in Editing course, Editing for Global Audiences, or a graduate course related to editing], plus 6 practicum hours that would fulfill the cognate area of the program.

Should we decide to offer a certificate in editing, we'd want those students to have 12 to 15 hours of editing coursework as well as a significant supervised practicum experience.

Here's a draft of course descriptions:

#### *Existing Courses:*

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>RHET 5304</b> | <b>Technical Style and Editing</b><br>Prerequisite: graduate standing. Studies the nature of technical communication and its editing needs. Practice in editing for correctness, consistency, accuracy, and completeness – accomplished by establishing levels of edit, making multiple passes, and setting up/keeping style sheets. Major project for “real-world” client gives students opportunity to put into practice what they've learned. Students also give an oral presentation of their projects. Three credit hours. Will be crosslisted as RHET 4304. |
| <b>RHET 5321</b> | <b>Editing for Publication</b><br>Prerequisite: graduate standing. Offers a practical, hands-on experience in pre-production editing of a live publication. Focuses on acquisition, review, manuscript editing, editorial correspondence, and manuscript preparation. Three credit hours. Will be crosslisted as RHET 4321  |

#### *Proposed New Courses*

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>RHET 5322</b> | <b>Advanced Editing</b><br>Prerequisite: RHET 5304 or RHET 5321. Focuses on issues such as editing graphics, illustrations, and other visual material; editing quantitative and technical material; editing |
|------------------|---|

Draft of Editing Concentration  
Rev. Date: 12/02/08

in digital environments, working with authors across digital spaces, and editing manuscripts intended for digital publication. As part of the production process, would show how setting up styles and templates in Word makes the editing process much easier. Would also include instruction in Track Changes and Comments functions in Word. Three credit hours. Will be crosslisted as RHET 4322.

**RHET 5323**

**Editing for Global Audiences**

Focuses on editing cross international boundaries and the needs of readers whose first language is not English. Would include intensive study of different languages' linguistic rules (including, of course, English). Would also discuss cultural factors. Three credit hours. [NB: in January 2020 became one of various Topics in Editing and Publishing at the graduate level: RHET 7333]

**RHET 5324**

**Topics in Editing**

Allows for flexibility in offering courses that may be of use to students and of interest to faculty. Could include such titles as Indexing, History of Printing and the Book, Intellectual Property and Copyright, Freelance Editing, Research and Fact Checking, etc.

**RHET 5226, -7, -8**

**Practicum in Editing**

Provides an "on-site" editing experience for editing concentration students. Could include work with *Literature and Medicine* or another academic journal, book editing, or freelance work for local entities, including units within the university. Could also include working with authors digitally via Word's Track Changes and Comments (during the second and third iteration). Would require editing faculty [Chuck and Cindy] approval and supervision.

This course would be taken three times for a total of 6 hours. In the first 2-hour course (fall), the student would serve as an editorial assistant to the supervising professor. In the second 2-hour course (spring), the student would move up to be an editorial associate, thus having more (individual) responsibilities for working with manuscript(s). In the third 2-hour course (summer), the student would serve as managing editor.

Draft of Editing Concentration  
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**N.B.:** The editing courses previously listed would be available to all advanced undergraduate students at the 4000 level. Working with their advisors, undergraduates could choose either a heavy or a light editing component. We don't think a formal editing track at the undergraduate level is a wise idea because undergraduates need much broader exposure to a wide variety of writing experiences. They need ample time to strengthen their own writing before they take on significant editorial responsibilities for the writing of others. All undergraduate editing courses would carry prerequisites, at least RHET 1312 Comp II and RHET 3301 Editing for Usage, Style, and Clarity [a.k.a. Introduction to Editing]. (RHET 4304 Technical [Style and] Editing now requires RHET 3301 as a prerequisite.

Draft of Editing Concentration  
Rev. Date: 12/02/08

## Appendix B

### Appendix B: Program Change Form



**University of Arkansas at Little Rock**  
**New Program or Program Changes**  
 (See Online Instructions - [http://ualr.edu/academics/?page\\_id=12](http://ualr.edu/academics/?page_id=12))

Log # (Provost Office use only)

**1. General Information (Must be completed by all)**

<b>a. Originating Person</b>	<b>b. Contact Person's E-mail</b>	<b>c. Contact Phone</b>	<b>d. Date</b>
Chuck Anderson & Cindy Nahrwold	cmanderson@ualr.edu; canahrwold@ualr.edu	569-3160 (dept.)	11/17/08
<b>e. Department/Program</b>		<b>f. College/School (Select from dropdown list)</b>	
Rhetoric and Writing		CAHSS	
<b>e. Type of Program Change (Select from dropdown list)</b> Program Change			
<b>f. Explanation (i.e., brief description, role and scope, etc.)</b>			
<p>This program change entails our adding a new concentration--editing--to our two existing M.A. program concentrations: nonfiction and technical. As with the other two concentrations, the editing concentration will require that students take the four core theory courses. The editing concentration differs from the other two concentrations in that the latter require six hours of cognate courses (courses outside of their concentration). The editing concentration will require that students take six hours of editing practicum, in which students apply what they've learned in their coursework to "real-life" editing experiences: work on academic journals or books, local freelance work either off or on campus.</p> <p>Such a concentration will allow students to focus on honing their editing skills--both nonfiction and technical. Attached is a description of our proposed concentration.</p>			

**2. Program Information**

<b>a. Title</b>
Editing Concentration
<b>b. Justification (i.e., demand/availability of students, need, etc.)</b>
<p>From our own experiences and from what we've heard from employers, both local and beyond, editing is a skill that too few prospective employees have. It is also a skill that is called for in job ads. A quick Google search on October 17, 2008, produced 2,707 postings for editors from July to October 2008 (on the ACESjobs board), 1,308 listings for tech writer-editor jobs on indeed.com., and 916 magazine editor jobs on indeed.com.</p> <p>We currently offer only two graduate editing courses: Editing for Publication (nonfiction) and Technical Style and Editing (technical). These courses make every fall semester and are, in fact, increasing in size. But a semester is too short a time for us to teach our students what they need to know to be competent, confident editors. Our offering more courses--a concentration, in fact, would give students the learning that they want, that they've asked for. (Students have heard about our working on this concentration and regularly ask, "When will the editing concentration begin to be offered?")</p>

**Approval Process**

<b>1. Department Chair Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>5. Graduate Council Chair Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>2. College/School Curriculum Committee Chair Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>6. Graduate School Dean Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>3. College/School Dean Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>7. Provost Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>4. Undergraduate Council Chair Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>8. Chancellor Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

**For Provost Office use only**

**Note: Program proposal and advanced notice information should be attached.**

Current as of 8/2008 (All others are obsolete)

## Appendix C

### Appendix C: Advising Blurb for Technical [Style and] Editing

Technical [Style and] Editing RHET 4/5304.9S1, .9U1 Fall 2024  
[and yes, I'll be explaining the rationale motivating my use of brackets in class name]

#### Prerequisites

4304: Rhetoric 3301 Editing for Usage, Style, and Clarity with a grade of "C" or better—or consent of instructor

5304: graduate standing

#### Class "Location"?

.9S1 and .9U1 students will log into the class via Zoom and attend remotely at the scheduled time:  
12:15–1:30 TR Central.

#### Course Learning Objectives

This course is designed to help you

- develop an understanding of editing and its role in document development and publication.
- learn how to edit effectively on a range of editing tasks and documents (which includes both technical mastery of the English language and the ability to justify editing decisions).
- develop skill at analyzing your own writing and that of others for organization and presentation (which includes graphics and document design).
- develop productive editing attitudes and habits: respect for writers, realization of your own strengths and limitations, respect for collaboration (attitudes); level of edit, multipass editing, style sheets (habits).
- prepare for your role as a professional and for ongoing learning and sharpening of your editing skills once the course is completed.
- develop portfolio materials.

And you'll be working with/for real-life clients with real-life document needs: specifically, an in-house style manual with an appended style sheet (to show that you can "practice what you preach").

I look forward to working with you,

Dr. Cynthia A. Nahrwold [cn](#)

Professor | Coordinator of M.A. Editing and Publishing Concentration  
Department of Rhetoric and Writing  
College of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Education  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
[canahrwold@ualr.edu](mailto:canahrwold@ualr.edu)

## Appendix D

### Appendix D: Advanced Editing Blurb for Spring 2024

#### Advanced Editing RHET 4/5322

**.9S1 [synchronous online] .9U1 [synchronous online as much as possible]**

**12:15–1:30 [Central Time] T R**

What's more, I'm highlighting "consent of instructor" as the prerequisite for this class. (You can take Technical Editing in the fall—same texts in both classes.) E-mail me [[canahrwold@ualr.edu](mailto:canahrwold@ualr.edu)] or text me [501.352.0842] so we can talk.

In Advanced Editing, you'll build upon the editing expertise you bring to the class.

You'll also learn to

- edit effectively on a range of editing tasks and documents (which includes technical mastery of the English language [**what**], the ability to justify editing decisions [**why**], and the use of effective/efficient editing "tricks of the trade": multi-pass editing, levels of edit, and style sheets [**how**])
- edit documents electronically (and effectively!) through functions in Word and Google Docs
- apply styles to text and combine styles to create templates/themes for documents  
[We may limit discussion to pros and cons.]
- analyze your own writing and that of others for comprehension and organization
- edit visual aspects: layout and document design, graphics, illustrations, tables
- understand the legal and ethical issues involved in editing
- manage projects—both individually and collaboratively

And you'll be working with/for real-life clients with real-life document needs.

Cynthia A. Nahrwold, Ph.D. | Professor  
Coordinator of M.A. Editing and Publishing Concentration  
Department of Rhetoric and Writing | [canahrwold@ualr.edu](mailto:canahrwold@ualr.edu) | 501.352.0842



undergraduates within 15 hours of graduating may take this class for an u/g elective or save it for graduate work. Graduate students: graduate standing.

Rev. Oct. 2024

## **Appendix E**

### **Appendix E: Editing Levels**

	<b>Pass #</b>
1. Coordination Only (“do not edit”)—artwork coordination	1
2. Format Edit (“minimal edit”)	1–6
3. Word Edit	1–7
4. Normal Edit	1–8
5. Quality Edit (“full edit”)—for technical papers	9



## **Appendix F**

### **Appendix F: Multi-Pass Editing at Sperry**

*Note: #s 2 and 3 can sometimes be combined.*

1. Orientation
2. Headings
3. Subheadings
4. Tables and Figures
5. Text Format
6. Page Numbers
7. Words (spelling)
8. Sentences
9. Quality

## **Appendix G**

### **Appendix G: Style Sheet Template**

<b>What style book are you following?</b>	<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>Capitalization</b>
<b>What dictionary are you following?</b>			
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Design</b>	<b>Lists</b>	<b>Punctuation</b>
<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Typography</b>	<b>URLs</b>	<b>Misc.</b>

**Appendix G: Style Sheet Template (cont).**

A/B	C/D	E/F	G/H
I/J/K	L/M	N/O	P/Q
R/S	T/U	V/W	X/Y/Z

## Appendix H

### Appendix H: Editing & Publishing Concentration Requirements

#### Required Courses (9 hr.)

\_\_\_ Intro. To Research Methods    \_\_\_ Rhetorical Theory    \_\_\_ Language Theory

#### Core Courses for E & P Concentration (12 hr.)

\_\_\_ Tech Editing    \_\_\_ Advanced Editing    \_\_\_ Editing for Publication    \_\_\_ Production Editing

#### Editing Internship [will be 3 hours, not 6]

\_\_\_ Editing Internship (7161 & 7261 or 7361)

#### Electives (6 hr.) [with fewer internship hours, add elective]

\_\_\_ [3-hour course]    \_\_\_ [3-hour course]    \_\_\_ [3-hour course]

**Note:** Given that internship hours are required, don't do an Independent Study (7350).

#### Final Project Courses (6 hr.)

**Note:** Final project may be thesis, applied project w/cover piece, or professional portfolio.

\_\_\_ Project Proposal (7315)    \_\_\_ Project Hours (7316)

[taken in sequence, not at the same time]

#### Note

- As opposed to what's stated online, RHET 5324 Publishing Inside Out, is not a required course for the Editing & Publishing concentration: It's an elective—like Document Design, for example.

Updated by E&P Coordinator [Dr. Cynthia Nahrwold] 13 January 2025

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Cynthia Nahrwold is Emerita Professor/Coordinator MA Editing and Publishing Concentration in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing at University of Arkansas at Little Rock. For more than a few years, her research and teaching have focused on editing. She co-created the Editing Concentration for the MA program and coordinated that concentration until August 2025. She has published in *Technical Communication*, *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, and numerous Council for Programs on Technical and Scientific Communication proceedings. “Research as social practice” (co-authored with Carl Herndl), published in *Written Communication*, was awarded the NCTE Technical and Scientific Writing Award: Best Article on Philosophy or Theory of Technical or Scientific Communication (2001).