

Editorial Style Guide

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SUNY Cobleskill's Office of Marketing & Branding follows *The Associated Press Stylebook* (AP). This guide is a reference for the SUNY Cobleskill community to ensure consistency, clarity and accuracy among print and online publications directed to external audiences. The style guide is not meant to govern academic publications or everyday internal communications (i.e. email messages, syllabi, class or department handouts, etc.). Its purpose is to help the campus community present unified and consistent external messages. The most common issues related to higher education are noted here.

The name of the College is State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill. SUNY Cobleskill is the only acceptable abbreviation. At no time should the College be referred to as “Cobleskill” or “Cobleskill College.”

ABBREVIATIONS

Before a name: Abbreviate the following titles when used before a full name outside direct quotations: *Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Mr., Mrs., Rep., the Rev., Sen.* Spell out all except *Dr., Mr. and Mrs.*, when they are used before a name in direct quotations.

After a name: Abbreviate *junior (Jr.)* or *senior (Sr.)* after an individual's name. Abbreviate *company (Co.), corporation (Corp.), incorporated (Inc.)* and *limited (Ltd.)* when used after the name of a corporate entity. Do not precede by a comma.

With dates or numerals: Use the abbreviation A.D., B.C., a.m., p.m., when used with the day or the month (NOTE: upper and lowercases, as well as inclusion of periods). The abbreviations are correct only with figures. *In 450 B.C.; at 9:30 a.m.; in room No. 6; on Sept. 16.*

Months: Capitalize the names of months in all uses. When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. Spell out when using alone, or with a year alone. *Jan. 5; January; January 2012.*

Addresses: Abbreviate *avenue (Ave.), boulevard (Blvd.)* and *street (St.)* in numbered addresses. *He lives on Pennsylvania Avenue. He lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.* Always use numerical figures for an address number (ex. 9 Morningside Circle). Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth when used as street names.

ACADEMIC DEGREES

Capitalize the title of degree. For example: Bachelor of Science; Master of Arts. But **lowercase** when generally referring to degree. For example: a bachelor's degree or a bachelor's.

If mention of a degree is necessary to establish credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use instead a phrase such as: *Jesse Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology.*

The standard reference to degrees is: associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree or doctoral degree. There is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science. Use abbreviations only after a full name; never after only a last name. When abbreviating degrees, use the following:

Bachelor of Arts – B.A.

Bachelor Business Administration – B.B.A. Bachelor of Science – B.S.

Bachelor of Technology – B.T.

Associate of Applied Science – A.A.S. Associate of Arts – A.A.

Associate of Occupational Studies – A.O.S. Associate of Science – A.S.

Master of Education – M.E.

Master of Science – M.S.

Master of Arts – M.A.

Master of Fine Arts – M.F.A.

Doctor of Philosophy – Ph.D.

Doctor of Divinity – D.D.

Doctor of Education – Ed.D.

Doctor of Humane Letters – L.H.D.

When used after a name, an academic abbreviation is set off by commas:

Corey Smith, Ph.D.

Do not precede and follow a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree.

Using both Dr. and Ph.D. is redundant.

Correct: Dr. Sam Jones Incorrect: Dr. Sam Jones, Ph.D.

ACADEMIC TITLES

Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as professor, dean, president, chancellor and chairperson when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere. *Marion Terenzio, president of SUNY Cobleskill; President Marion Terenzio*

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives; *the department of history; the history department; the department of English; the English department*, or when *department* is part of the official and formal name: *SUNY Cobleskill Department of Plant Science*

ALUMNI

For an individual graduate, an **alum** is the gender neutral term. For the plurals, **alums** or **alumni** refer to gender neutral graduates.

- Jesse Smith '75 (NOTE: closed apostrophe)
- The class of '75 (NOTE: closed apostrophe)

ALMA MATER

alma mater

AMPERSAND (&)

Use the ampersand when it is part of a formal name: *Baltimore & Ohio Railroad*. The ampersand should not otherwise be used in place of *and*.

BUILDINGS

Alumni Hall

Beard Wellness Center (second reference: wellness center)

Walton A. Brown Presidential Atrium (second reference: Brown Presidential Atrium)

Iorio Gymnasium

Bouck Auditorium

Bouck Ballroom

Brickyard Point

Champlin Dining Hall

Cobleskill College Child Care Center (2 reference: child care center)

Crittenden Athletic Fields (2 reference: athletic fields)

Curtis Mott Hall

Dairy Complex

Dow Agricultural Complex

Equestrian Center

Frederic R. Bennett Recreation Area & Ski Lodge (second reference: ski lodge)

Frisbie Hall

Hodder Hall

Holmes Hall

Home Economics

Knapp Hall

Neal Robbins Field House (second reference: field house)

Old Gym

Prentice Dining Hall

Ryder Hall

Warner Hall
Wheeler Hall

CAPITALIZATION

In general, avoid unnecessary capitals. Use a capital letter only if you can justify it by one of the principles listed below.

- **Proper Names:** *John, Mary, Boston, General Electric*
- **Proper Nouns:** Capitalize common nouns such as party, river, street when they are an integral part of the full name for a person, place or thing: *Delaware River; Main Street, the Democratic Party*
- **Lowercase** the common noun elements of names in all plural uses: *the Democratic and Republican parties; the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers; Montgomery and City Line avenues; Delaware and Chester counties*
- **Derivatives:**
 - Capitalize words that are derived from a proper noun and still depend on it for their meaning: *American; English; Shakespearean*
 - Lowercase words that are derived from a proper noun but no longer depend on it for their meaning: *french fries; herculean; venetian blind*
- **Do not capitalize** the words association, building, center, club, conference, college, committee, department, division, office, hall, board, trustees, etc., when used alone to refer to a specific place or group. *The college is nearing its 200th anniversary.*
- **The word “College”** should only be capitalized when referring specifically to SUNY Cobleskill or when part of another institution’s official name (ex: Boston College)

CITIES AND STATES

Cities – The following domestic cities stand alone (do not need to be accompanied by a state) in datelines and basic copy:

Atlanta	Houston	Philadelphia
Baltimore	Indianapolis	Phoenix
Boston	Las Vegas	Pittsburgh
Chicago	Los Angeles	St. Louis
Cincinnati	Miami	Salt Lake City
Cleveland	Milwaukee	San Antonio
Dallas	Minneapolis	San Diego
Denver	New Orleans	San Francisco
Detroit	New York	Seattle
Honolulu	Oklahoma City	Washington

- **States** – Spell out state names in body copy. Abbreviate in captions, bylines, lists, etc.

Ala. (AL)	Md. (MD)	N.D. (ND)
Ariz. (AZ)	Mass. (MA)	Okla. (OK)
Ark. (AR)	Mich. (MI)	Ore. (OR)
Calif. (CA)	Minn. (MN)	Pa. (PA)
Colo. (CO)	Miss. (MS)	R.I. (RI)
Del. (DE)	Mont. (MT)	S.D. (SD)
Fla. (FL)	Neb. (NE)	Tenn. (TN)
Ga. (GA)	Nev. (NV)	Vt. (VT)
Ill. (IL)	N.H. (NH)	Va. (VA)
Ind. (IN)	N.J. (NJ)	Wash. (WA)
Kan. (KS)	N.M. (NM)	W. Va. (WV)
Ky. (KY)	N.Y. (NY)	Wis. (WI)
La. (LA)	N.C. (NC)	Wyo. (WY)

Eight states are not abbreviated in copy or datelines: Alaska (AK); Hawaii (HI); Idaho (ID); Iowa (IA); Maine (ME); Ohio (OH); Texas (TX); Utah (UT)

COMMAS

In a series: Use a comma to separate all elements in a series (the Oxford comma rule).
For example:

The flag is red, white, and blue.

I had orange juice, ham and eggs, and toast for breakfast.

He would nominate Chris, Pat, or Terry.

Use a comma before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases:

The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.

With equal adjectives: Use commas to separate a series of adjectives equal in rank. If the commas could be replaced by the word and without changing the sense, the adjectives are equal: a thoughtful, precise manner; a dark, dangerous street.

Use no comma when the last adjective before a noun outranks its predecessors because it is an integral element of a noun phrase, which is the equivalent of a single noun: *a cheap fur coat* (the noun phrase is fur coat); *the old oaken bucket*; *a new, blue spring bonnet*.

With introductory clauses and phrases: A comma normally is used to separate an introductory clause or phrase from a main clause: When he grew tired of the mad pace of New York, he moved to Philadelphia.

The comma may be omitted after short introductory phrases if no ambiguity would result: *During the night they heard many noises.* But use the comma if its omission would slow comprehension: *On the street below, the curious gathered.*

Introducing direct quotes: Use a comma to introduce a complete, one-sentence quotation within a paragraph: *Catherine said, "They spent six weeks in Italy and came back speaking English with an Italian accent."*

Do not use a comma at the start of an indirect or partial quotation: *They said their victory put them "firmly on the road to a new season record."*

With hometowns and ages: Use a comma to set off an individual's hometown when it is placed in apposition: *Mary Richards, Minneapolis, and Rhoda Morganstern, New York, where there.* However, the use of the word "of" without a comma between the individual's name and the city name generally is preferred: *Mary Richards of Minneapolis and Rhoda Morganstern of New York were there.*

If an individual's age is used, set it off by commas: *Mary Richards, 48, Minneapolis, was present.* Again, the use of the word "of" will eliminate the need for some of the commas.

With Yes and No: Yes, I will be there.

In Large Figures: Use a comma for most figures greater than 999. The major exceptions are street addresses (1234 Main Street), broadcast frequencies (1600 kilohertz), room numbers, serial numbers, telephone numbers, and years (1916).

COMMITTEES

In the United States, a committee is an "it," not a "they." Committee *members*, on the other hand, are "people on a committee" or "they." The same applies to a board, a department or an office. Therefore, "*The committee gave its recommendation.*" *Committee members recommend.*" Capitalize the names of committees.

COMPOSITION TITLES

Use italics for titles of magazines, newspapers, books, movies, TV shows, lectures and speeches. Do not use underlines or quotation marks.

COURTESY TITLES

In general, do not use the courtesy titles Miss, Mr., Mrs., or Ms., on first reference. Instead, use the first and last names of the person.

CURRICULUM

Capitalize the name of a course, but not a generic field of study:

They are taking Real World Mathematics.

A student needs a strong background in mathematics to become a physician.

DASH

Denote by typing two hyphens with a space on either side in all uses except the start of a paragraph. Follow these guidelines:

Abrupt Change: Use dashes to denote an abrupt change in thought in a sentence for an emphatic pause: *We will fly to Paris in June – if I get a raise. Smith offered a plan – it was unprecedented – to raise revenues.*

Series Within a Phrase: When a phrase that otherwise would be set off by commas contains a series of words that must be separated by commas, use dashes to set off the full phrase: They listed the qualities – intelligence, charm, beauty, independence – that they liked in a partner.

Attribution: “Who steals my purse steals trash.” – Shakespeare **DATES AND TIME**

Always use Arabic figures for dates, without st, nd, rd or th: *Nov. 1, 1998*

Use figures for times except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes. It isn’t necessary to indicate a time “on the hour” by typing :00. Avoid redundancies like 12 noon; 10 p.m. tonight.

If the current year is implied, it isn’t necessary to write it out. Use the year in text if it refers to past or future years. *Our January 2000 meeting. Our December 20 party.*

Lowercase a.m. and p.m., with periods: 9:30 a.m., 1 p.m., noon.

Spaces between the hyphens with times: 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

DAYS OF THE WEEK

Capitalize. Do not abbreviate, except when needed in a tabular format: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat (three letters, without periods, in tabular composition).

DOLLARS AND CENTS

Use numerals and the word cents (all lowercase) for amounts less than a dollar : 5 cents, 12 cents.

Use the \$ sign and decimal for larger amounts: \$1.25 million, \$2.55

For whole dollar amounts, drop the decimals: \$2, \$15, \$155

For dollar figures greater than 999 a comma should be used: \$12,000; \$500,000

ELLIPSIS (...)

Use an ellipsis to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes, texts and documents. Be especially careful to avoid deletions that would distort the meaning. In general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces as ...

Punctuation guidelines: If the words that precede and ellipsis constitute a grammatically complete sentence, either in the original or in the condensation, place a period at the end of the last word *before* the ellipsis. Follow it with a regular space and an ellipsis: “*I no longer have a strong enough political base. ...*” (**NOTE:** There should be a period and then an ellipsis.)

When the grammatical sense calls for a question mark, exclamation point, comma or colon, the sequence is word, punctuation mark, regular space, ellipsis: *Will you come?*
...

NOTE: Avoid the use of an ellipsis except in the circumstances described above. An ellipsis should never replace a period, comma, or colon.

EMAIL

Lowercase with no hyphen: *email*

FACULTY

The word “faculty” pertains to a group of people, not one person. One person should be referred to as a faculty member.

GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The Associated Press Stylebook recognizes the use of the singular “they/them/theirs” in referencing individuals who do not identify with a particular gender. Often a sentence can be rephrased in a way that does not require gendered pronouns.

If *they/them/their* use is essential, be sure that the phrasing does not imply more than one person.

Using plural forms is a simple, gender-neutral alternative to gendered pronouns. This technique is preferred as it is inclusive and avoids complicated sentence structures.

Avoid:

Every student should know *his* college ID number.

Use instead:

All students should know *their* college ID number.

Avoid:

The intern will report directly to *her* supervisor about upcoming projects.

Use instead:

Interns will report directly to *their* supervisors about upcoming projects.

Students in their first year of college, who have earned less than 30 total college credits, should be referred to as *first-year students* instead of *freshmen* (which assumes a masculine gender).

Most job titles are gender-neutral (lawyer, officer), and there are usually gender-inclusive alternatives for specifically gendered titles (waiter/waitress becomes server). Other examples are chairperson instead of chairman, spokesperson instead of spokesman, firefighter instead of fireman, and videographer instead of cameraman.

Other alternative phrases to use include workforce/staff instead of manpower, humanity/humankind instead of mankind, staffing instead of manning.

LGBT, LGBTQ

Acceptable in all references for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning and/or queer. In quotations and the formal

names of organizations and events, other forms such as LGBTQIA and other variations are also acceptable with the other letters in the acronym explained. I generally stands for intersex, and A can stand for allies (a person who is not LGBT but who actively supports the LGBT community), asexual (a person who doesn't experience sexual attraction), or both. The word queer can be considered a slur in many contexts, so limit the use of the word to quotes and names of organizations.

GPA

GPA is acceptable in all references for *grade-point average*

HYPHENS

Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words.

Avoid Ambiguity: Use a hyphen whenever ambiguity would result if it were omitted. *They recovered their health. They re-covered the leaky roof.*

Compound Modifiers: Use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb very and all adverbs that end in ly: *a full-time job; a part-time student; a better-qualified applicant; a know-it-all attitude; a very good time; an easily remembered rule. A fulltime student **but** the student attends full time.*

Compound Proper Nouns and Adjectives: *Italian-American; Mexican-American.* No hyphen, however, for *Latin American* or *French Canadian*.

Avoid duplicated vowels, tripled consonants: *anti-intellectual; pre-empt, shell-like; coop.*

Listings of Multiple Hyphenated Terms: *They received a 10- to 20-year prison sentence.*

With the prefix “non,” hyphenate all except the following words, which have specific meanings of their own: nonchalance; nonsense; nonchalant; nonsensical; nondescript. Other words and proper names preceded by “non” should be hyphenated: non- traditional; non-credit; non-German.

INITIALS

Use periods and no space when an individual uses initials instead of a first name:
H.L. Mencken.

INTERNET REFERENCES

The words **internet** and **web** are lowercase. **Word Wide Web** is capitalized.

website is one word and lowercase **home page** is two words lowercase

JUNIOR/SENIOR

Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names of persons. Do not precede by a comma: *John F. Kennedy Jr.*

NAMES

People are entitled to be known however they want to be known, as long as their identities are clear. A nickname should be used in place of a person's given name only when it is the way the individual prefers to be known: *Magic Johnson*

NUMERALS

In general, spell out whole numbers below 10; use figures for 10 and above: *They had a fleet of 10 station wagons and two buses. They had 10 dogs, six cats and 97 hamsters.*

Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence. If necessary, recast the sentence:

WRONG: 993 students entered the college last year.

RIGHT: Last year, 993 students entered the college.

PHONE NUMBERS

Use figures. The form: *518-255-5638*. If extension numbers are needed, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension: *518-255-5638, ext. 2*.

POSSESSIVES

Plural nouns not ending in "s": Add "s": *the alumni's contributions; women's rights*.

Plural nouns ending in "s": Add only an apostrophe: *the churches' needs; the children's toys; the horses' food*.

Singular nouns not ending in “s”: Add “s”: the child’s toy; the horse’s food.

Singular common nouns ending in “s”: Add “s” unless the next word begins with s:
the

hostess’s invitation; the hostess’ seat; the witness’s answer; the witness’ story.

Singular proper names ending in “s”: Use only an apostrophe: Achilles’ heel; Agnes’ book; Xerxes’ armies.

Special Expressions: The following exceptions to the general rule for words not ending in “s” apply to words that end in an “s” sound and are followed by a word that begins with “s”: *for appearance sake*. Use “s” otherwise: *the appearance’s cost; my conscience’s voice*.

Joint Possession, Individual Possession: Use a possessive form after only the last word if ownership is joint: *Fred and Sylvia’s apartment; Fred and Sylvia’s stocks*.

Use a possessive form after both words if the objects are individually owned:
Fred’s and Sylvia’s books.

Descriptive Phrases: Do not add an apostrophe to a word ending in “s” when it is used primarily in a descriptive sense: *citizens band radio; a teachers college; a writers guide; our speakers bureau*.

An ’s is required when a term involves a plural word that does not end in s: *a children’s hospital; a people’s republic*.

Quasi Possessives: Follow the rules above in composing the possessive form of words that occur in such phrases as: *a day’s pay; two weeks’ vacation; three days’ work; your money’s worth*. Frequently, a hyphenated form is clearer; *two-week vacation; a three-day job*.

QUOTATION MARKS

The period and comma always go within the quotation marks. The dash, semicolon, question mark and exclamation point go within the quotations marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.

They said, “I am shocked and horrified by the incident.” They said they were “shocked and horrified by the incident.” “I do not object,” they said, “to the tenor of the report.”

Quotation within Quotation: Alternate between double quotation marks (“or”) and single marks (‘or’): *They said, “I quote from their letter, ‘I agree with Kipling that “the*

female of the species is more deadly than the male,” but the phenomenon is not an unchangeable law of nature,’ a remark they did not explain.”

Use three marks together if two quoted elements end at the same time: *They said, “They told me, “I love you.”*

SENTENCES

Use only one space between sentences – not two.

THAT, WHICH

Use **that** and **which** in referring to inanimate objects and to animals without a name.

Use **that** for essential clauses, important to the meaning of a sentence, and without commas: *I remember the day that we met.* Use **which** for nonessential clauses, where the pronoun is less necessary, and use commas: *The team, which finished last year a year ago, is in first place.*

WHO, WHOM

Who is the pronoun used for references to human beings and to animals with a name. It is grammatically the subject (never the object) of a sentence, clause or phrase: *The person who rented the room left the window open. Who is there?*

Whom is used when someone is the object of a verb or preposition: *The person to whom the room was rented left the window open. Whom do you wish to see?*