Department of Communication

The Department of Communication offers the Master of Arts Degree in Communication.

Master of Arts Degree in Communication

The Master of Arts Degree in Communication offers students the opportunity to pursue advanced study in Communication. This program is grounded in the concept of Integrated Communication and encourages students’ development of broad perspectives in applying research, discovery, critical thinking, and creative enterprise to addressing the practical needs of individuals and groups in a variety of settings. The faculty intend to develop students’ knowledge and skills in communication that are requisite for success in leadership, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors in business, public sector, and nonprofit environments.

Admission Requirements

In addition to satisfying University-wide admission requirements, applicants must meet the following Communication requirements for unconditional admission:

1. Provide two letters of recommendation from academic sources with the option of an additional letter from either an academic or a professional source (no more than three letters should be submitted). Letters from academic sources are expected, but if the applicant has been out of school for a significant period of time, letters from professional sources who can attest to the applicant’s academic potential may be considered.

2. Provide a statement of purpose, 500–750 words in length, describing the applicant’s academic and other qualifications to be admitted to this program, areas of interest in the program, and goals related to pursuing the Master’s degree in Communication.

3. Submit transcripts from all undergraduate programs.

The number of students admitted to this program may be limited.

Degree Requirements

The minimum number of semester credit hours required for this degree is 36, exclusive of coursework or other study required to remove admission deficiencies. Any grade lower than “B” (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) in a graduate course will not count toward the 36 semester credit hours of coursework required in Items A through E.

Candidates for the degree must complete the following requirements:

| A. 15 semester credit hours of core courses: |  
|-------------------------------------------|---|
| COM 5003 Introduction to Graduate Studies in Communication | 3 |
| COM 5013 Communication Theory | 3 |
| COM 5023 Quantitative Research Methods | 3 |
| COM 5033 Qualitative Research Methods | 3 |
| COM 5103 Theories and Applications of Communication | 3 |
| B. 9 semester credit hours (for the thesis or project option) or 15 semester credit hours (for the non-thesis/project option) of prescribed electives in Communication in consultation with the Graduate Advisor of Record. | 9 |
| C. 6 semester credit hours of free electives in consultation with the Graduate Advisor of Record. | 6 |
| These courses may be in Communication or outside the program, but courses must relate to the student’s program of study. | |
| D. No more than a total of 6 semester credit hours from the following may be applied to the Master’s degree. | 6 |
| COM 6933 Directed Readings | |
| COM 6943 Internship in Communication | |
| COM 6951 Independent Study | |
| COM 6953 Independent Study | |
| E. Master’s Thesis or Project |  
| Students pursuing the thesis or project option must complete COM 6983 Master’s Thesis (6 hours) or COM 6993 Master’s Project (6 hours). Students must complete at least 18 hours of coursework and maintain a 3.25 grade point average before they may enroll in COM 6983 Master’s Thesis or COM 6993 Master’s Project. | |
| F. Comprehensive Examination |  
| As per University requirements, all students must complete a comprehensive examination as detailed below. | |

| Total Credit Hours | 36 |

As soon as a student completes 12 hours of graduate coursework in Communication, he or she must meet with the Graduate Advisor of Record to devise a program of study.

In addition to the semester credit hours set forth above, candidates for the degree are required to successfully pass a written exam and then an oral defense of the written exam tailored to the student’s program and specialized coursework. The comprehensive examination is offered each Fall and Spring semester. The comprehensive examination is normally taken in the semester in which the candidate is due to complete his or her graduate study. Enrollment in COM 6961 Comprehensive Examination is required each term in which the comprehensive examination is taken if no other courses are being taken that term. The comprehensive examination can only be taken twice.

Students in the thesis or project option, in addition to passing both a written comprehensive examination and oral defense of the written exam, will present a written prospectus at a meeting for approval by their thesis or project committee and defend the prospectus. Students in the thesis or project option will also orally defend the final thesis or project before the committee.

Communication (COM) Courses

COM 5003. Introduction to Graduate Studies in Communication. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours. 
Prerequisite: Admission to the Master of Arts Program in Communication or consent of instructor. Tracks the development of research and practice in communication stressing integration of inquiry, theory, and practice as well as grounding in various areas of specialized study. Emphasis on the development of skills critical to success in graduate-level communication study.
COM 5013. Communication Theory. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: Completion of or concurrent enrollment in COM 5003, or consent of instructor. Critical review of the historical roots, major paradigms, and current status of communication theory. Special emphasis on the diversity of theoretical approaches and applications as well as the integral relationship of theory and research.

COM 5023. Quantitative Research Methods. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: Completion of or concurrent enrollment in COM 5003, or consent of instructor. Introduces social scientific approaches to communication inquiry. Focus is on design, measurement, and data analysis of quantitative research. Covers principal descriptive and inferential statistics (e.g., univariate and multivariate) applied in communication research. Demonstrates techniques in data analysis using computer programs. Students apply course concepts by evaluating and conducting research projects.

COM 5033. Qualitative Research Methods. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: Completion of or concurrent enrollment in COM 5003, or consent of instructor. Introduces humanistic approaches to communication inquiry. Focus is on design, coding, analysis, data interpretation, and reporting of qualitative research. Examines a variety of qualitative research methods as well as challenges facing researchers in diverse contexts. Students apply course concepts by evaluating and conducting research projects.

COM 5103. Theories and Applications of Communication. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: Completion of or concurrent enrollment in COM 5003 and COM 5013. Integration of theory and application in one or more contextual areas of communication, such as interpersonal communication, organizational communication, new media, international communication, intercultural communication, health communication or issues management. May be repeated for credit when topics vary, but not more than 9 hours will apply to the Master’s degree in Communication without the permission of the Graduate Program Committee.

COM 5113. Communication and College Level Instruction. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: Admission to the Master of Arts Program in Communication or consent of instructor. This course facilitates understanding of the major issues in teaching at the college level. In this graduate-level seminar, emphasis will be placed on the conceptualization, design, development, and management of college-level courses in communication and other allied areas. Assignments will include syllabi development, assignment development, grading rubrics, lesson plans, record keeping methods, and short written assignments describing personal development as a college-level instructor.

COM 5213. Relational Communication. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: COM 5103 or consent of instructor. This course applies theories of interpersonal processes and communication principles in relational contexts, such as marriages, families, friendships, and others. This course emphasizes the use of theoretical frameworks for research investigation in human relational systems. The course includes integration of theory with research and/or practice.

COM 5223. Small Group Communication. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: COM 5013 or consent of instructor. An examination of communication processes in bona-fide groups such as interdisciplinary health care teams, community groups, and corporate teams. This course emphasizes the role and function of verbal and nonverbal communication in group processes of decision-making, dialogue, and problem solving. The course includes integration of theory with research and/or practice.

COM 5313. Health Communication. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: COM 5103 or consent of instructor. Examination of the ways that health professionals and health seekers, journalists, politicians, and society in general contribute to the creation of health issues and the promotion of health activities. Health issues as they relate to interpersonal relationships and communication will be addressed. The course includes integration of theory with research and/or practice.

COM 5323. Special Topics in Health Communication. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: COM 5103 or consent of instructor. This seminar will focus on significant and timely topics in the health communication field. Students may be exposed to healthcare issues such as provider-recipient communication, interdisciplinary team communication, decision-making, social identity, family dynamics, the role of culture in health and disease, new media, healthcare promotion, or community outreach. Broadly, students will gain insight about applied health communication topics and discover the multiple career options available for communication majors in health contexts.

COM 5413. Seminar in Organizations. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: COM 5103 or consent of instructor. Examination of communication processes in complex organizations such as culture, socialization, leadership, decision-making, diversity management, technologies, and methods for adapting to change through strategic planning and continuous process improvement. This course emphasizes the role of organizational communication theory and research in applied organizational settings. The course includes integration of theory with research and/or practice.

COM 5423. Organizational Implementation of Integrated Communication. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: COM 5103 or consent of instructor. Examination of communication and organizational development with external audiences such as managing integrated communication to enhance the dissemination, comprehension, acceptance, and application of information to achieve organizational goals. This course emphasizes the role of communication specialists as message managers for organizations. The course includes integration of theory with research and/or practice.

COM 5613. New Media Design and Production I. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: COM 5103 or consent of instructor. Introduction to information design. Advanced study of new media development. Hands-on skill development in creating digital elements for use in multimedia and combining these elements into interactive presentations. The course includes integration of theory with research and/or practice.

COM 5623. New Media Design and Production II. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: COM 5613 or consent of instructor. Advanced study of information design theories and practice. Emphasizes new media production techniques. The course includes integration of theory with research and/or practice.

COM 5813. International Communication. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: COM 5103 or consent of instructor. Exploration of global media systems, transnational information flows, and their impacts. Issues surrounding globalization, media representation, development communication and communication policy are examined. The course includes integration of theory with research and/or practice.
COM 5823. Intercultural Communication. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisite: COM 5103 or consent of instructor. Examination of communication dynamics in diverse societies and between different cultural communities. The interactions among communication, culture, and identity are explored within historical and contemporary perspectives. The course includes integration of theory with research and/or practice.

COM 5973. Topics in Communication. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: COM 5003 and COM 5103, or consent of instructor. Intensive study of one or more specific issues in communication. May be repeated for credit when topics vary, but not more than 6 hours will apply to the Master’s degree.

COM 6933. Directed Readings. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: Graduate standing and permission of the Graduate Program Committee. Reading, research, discussion, and writing under the direction of a member of the graduate faculty. Enables students to explore/prepare an area of specialization when other appropriate classes are unavailable. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 3 hours will apply to the Master’s degree.

COM 6943. Internship in Communication. (0-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: Graduate standing and permission in writing (form available) of the instructor and Graduate Advisor of Record. Supervised experience, relevant to the student’s program of study, within selected organizations. Must be taken on a credit/no-credit basis. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 3 hours will apply to the Master’s degree.

COM 6951. Independent Study. (0-0) 1 Credit Hour.
Prerequisites: Graduate standing and permission in writing (form available) of the instructor and Graduate Advisor of Record. Independent reading, research, discussion, project development and/or writing under the direction of a faculty member. Intended for specialized work not normally available as part of the regular course offerings. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 6 hours, regardless of discipline, will apply to the Master’s degree. May not be substituted for COM thesis or project courses.

COM 6953. Independent Study. (0-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: Graduate standing and permission in writing (form available) of the instructor and Graduate Advisor of Record. Independent reading, research, discussion, project development and/or writing under the direction of a faculty member. Intended for specialized work not normally available as part of the regular course offerings. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 6 hours, regardless of discipline, will apply to the Master’s degree. May not be substituted for COM thesis or project courses.

COM 6961. Comprehensive Examination. (0-0) 1 Credit Hour.
Prerequisite: Approval of the Graduate Advisor of Record. Independent study course for the purpose of taking the Comprehensive Examination. May be repeated once. Enrollment is required each term in which the Comprehensive Examination is taken if no other courses are being taken that term. The grade report for the course is either “CR” (satisfactory performance on the Comprehensive Examination) or “NC” (unsatisfactory performance on the Comprehensive Examination). Credit earned in COM 6961 may not be counted in the 36 hours required for the Master’s degree in Communication.

COM 6981. Master’s Thesis. (0-0) 1 Credit Hour.
Prerequisites: Written thesis proposal must be approved by the faculty advisor, the thesis Committee and the Graduate Advisor of Record prior to enrollment. Supervised thesis research and preparation. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 6 hours will apply to the Master’s degree. Credit will be awarded upon completion of the thesis. Enrollment is required each term in which the thesis is in progress.

COM 6983. Master’s Thesis. (0-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: Written thesis proposal must be approved by the faculty advisor, the thesis Committee and the Graduate Advisor of Record prior to enrollment. Supervised thesis research and preparation. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 6 hours will apply to the Master’s degree. Credit will be awarded upon completion of the thesis. Enrollment is required each term in which the thesis is in progress.

COM 6993. Master’s Project. (0-0) 3 Credit Hours.
Prerequisites: Written project proposal must be approved by the faculty advisor, the project committee and the Graduate Advisor of Record prior to enrollment. Supervised development and completion of a professional-quality project in the student’s area. May be repeated for credit, but not more than 6 hours will apply to the Master’s degree. Credit will be awarded upon completion of the project. Enrollment is required each term in which the project is in progress.