

COMMUNICATION, M.A.

The goal of the MA in Communication program is to instill knowledge and skills vital to becoming ethical, articulate, and innovative leaders in communication-related fields. Students in this program have the opportunity to explore humanistic and social-scientific methods of research and practice and learn alongside faculty in their specialized areas of study and practice. This program engages the relational, collaborative, strategic, symbolic, and adaptive nature of communication and challenges students to assess how communication constructs the social world. Through rhetorical studies, students investigate the socio-political implications of discourse and argument, and through interpersonal and organizational studies, students analyze the dynamics of communication in shaping relationships and organizations. With diverse course offerings and degree paths that cultivate research and application as well as technical and creative skills, graduates are positioned for careers in academia, consulting, business and nonprofit practice, and public service.

The majority of students begin the program in the fall when teaching assistantships and scholarships are competitively awarded. To be considered for funding, applications should be received on or before February 1. The final application deadline for fall enrollment is May 1. Occasionally, students begin the program in the spring. The application deadline for spring enrollment is October 1. Applications for admission are completed online through the Graduate School and should include: a personal statement, writing sample, three letters of recommendation, and transcripts of all college/university work. International students are required to submit either TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo scores, unless they have received a degree from a U.S. accredited institution of higher education.

Degree Path Options

There are three paths or options, a thesis option and two non-thesis options (internship or project), to completing the MA in Communication:

1. Thesis

Students completing a thesis will craft an original research project that demonstrates abilities to synthesize research literature, gather and analyze original data or texts, and make explanatory arguments for the findings and interpretations of that analysis. Students who write a thesis may aspire to doctoral studies or other research-oriented careers. Successful completion of the thesis requires an oral examination where students present their work for review and approval by a faculty committee.

2. Professional Project

The nature of professional projects vary based on students goals and interests, but each project must include a scholarly writing component and involve submission to an external outlet or audience (outside the university) for consumption or use – for example, a conference. Students who pursue this option undergo an oral exam where they present their work for review and approval by a faculty committee.

3. Internship

The internship requires securing and successfully completing an approved professional communication-related internship and preparing an extensive final report. This option is intended for students seeking careers that are not academic or research-oriented in nature and does not require an oral exam process with a faculty committee.

Requirements for an M.A. in Communication

Hour and course requirements vary based on the degree path option:

Thesis Option Degree Plan

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
CSS 5V99	Thesis	6
CSS 5352	Seminar in Methods of Rhetorical Criticism	3
CSS 5351	Qualitative Research Methods in Communication	3
or CSS 5354	Quantitative Research Methods in Communication	
Additional 5000-level CSS courses ¹		12
Electives		
Select six semester hours from the following:		6
Up to 6 hours of 4000-level CSS courses (approved for graduate credit; not previously taken for BA credit)		
Up to 6 hours of 5000-level courses outside of CSS		
Up to 6 hours of CSS 5V35 Problems in Communication		
Any 5000-level CSS courses		
Total Hours		30

¹ Excluding CSS 5V35 Problems in Communication

Non-Thesis Option Degree Plan

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
CSS 5V90	Professional Paper in Communication	3
or CSS 5380	Internship in Communication	
CSS 5352	Seminar in Methods of Rhetorical Criticism	3
CSS 5351	Qualitative Research Methods in Communication	3
or CSS 5354	Quantitative Research Methods in Communication	
Additional 5000-level CSS courses ¹		12
Electives		
Select 15 semester hours from the following:		15
Up to 9 hours of 4000-level CSS courses (approved for graduate credit; not previously taken for BA credit)		
Up to 6 hours of 5000-level courses outside of CSS		
Up to 6 hours of CSS 5V35 Problems in Communication		
Any 5000-level CSS courses ²		
Total Hours		36

¹ Excluding CSS 5V35 Problems in Communication

² Excluding CSS 5380 Internship in Communication for students on the Internship option