CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

We live in an information society, a global age of communication, and hundreds of careers are open to those who earn a master’s degree in Communication. Graduates work as media consultants, public relations practitioners, non-profit marketing directors, advertising campaign managers, community college instructors, organizational consultants, student life directors, lobbyists, political interest group directors, special events directors, public information officers, alumni relations directors, organizational development trainers, legislative analysts and forensics directors.

MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION

The Department of Communication offers graduate-level instruction leading toward the Master of Arts degree. The program combines training in communication theory, methodology and practice for students who desire knowledge and skills for solving work-related communication problems and for students who intend to enter doctoral programs.

The program offers four concentrations of study—Communication Education, Communication Studies, Political Communication, and Media and Public Relations. Each integrates coursework from related disciplines, providing graduate students with an interdisciplinary approach to the study of communication. An internship experience is also included in the program, ensuring that students graduate practice-ready for their careers. Students in the program have interned with public relations companies, human resources companies, community colleges, advertising agencies, environmental advocacy groups, radio and television stations, non-profit organizations, sports franchises, the University’s alumni relations office and many other organizations and companies.
Graduate Course Offerings

COMM 216 Rhetorical Theory and Criticism
COMM 233 Documentary Film as Persuasive Communication
COMM 237 Public Relations Case Studies and Problems
COMM 239 Theory of Mass Communication
COMM 260 Communication Research Methods
COMM 261 Critical and Qualitative Research Methods
COMM 271 Graduate Seminar in Rhetorical Thought
COMM 273 Graduate Seminar in Mass Communication Theory
COMM 275 Graduate Seminar in Public Relations
COMM 276 Graduate Seminar in Communication in Learning Settings
COMM 277 Graduate Seminar in Media Relations
COMM 278 Graduate Seminar in Political Communication
COMM 287 Graduate Practicum
COMM 289 Graduate Internship
COMM 291 Graduate Independent Study
COMM 297 Graduate Research
COMM 299 Thesis

Graduate Assistantships

A number of graduate assistantships are available each year on a competitive basis. Graduate assistants work as instructors in such courses such as Public Speaking, Interpersonal Communication, Public Relations and Media and Society, as well as serving as coaches for the department’s nationally ranked forensics program. They also serve as research assistants for professors in the department.

Special Features of the Program

The Department of Communication boasts a nationally ranked forensics program that focuses on parliamentary debate, Lincoln-Douglas debate and AFA individual events. Many students in the program have successfully completed research projects, many of which have been featured at annual conferences of the International Communication Association, the National Communication Association and the Western States Communication Association. Communication graduate students have co-authored journal articles with professors from the Department. Students concentrating in Media and Public Relations often join the Department’s chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of American and attend the organization’s annual national conference. The Communication Graduate Department professors also offer personalized, career-focused advising.

Admission Requirements

- Minimum GPA of 3.00. The last 60 units of the undergraduate degree can be used for this calculation.
- GRE scores (general subject test) less than five years old.
- 3 letters of recommendation from individuals who can attest to academic background, professional experience and/or personal qualities.
- One-page personal statement that includes: reason for pursuing graduate study in Communication, commitment to the profession, objectives and plans for graduate study.
- Bachelor’s degree – Candidates for admission to the program do not have to hold a bachelor’s degree in Communication.

Degree Requirements

The program requires the completion of 32 units of study, and provides for a thesis (Plan A) or non-thesis (Plan B) option. Students must select a concentration of study in one of the following areas: Communication Education, Communication Studies, Political Communication, or Media and Public Relations. Each concentration requires a minimum of one course from a related discipline outside of the Department of Communication. The course must be taken at the 200 level unless the related discipline does not have graduate program, in which case the course must be taken at the 100 level. Only 4 units taken at the 100 level can be applied to a student’s program. Each concentration requires a minimum of five graduate seminars offered by the Department of Communication.
Communication Master’s Theses (partial list)

2013
- Communication channels and the formation of attitudes toward funding public schools / by Jacqueline S. Ratto
- Changing media, changing cultural values: Chinese young adults’ micro-blog usage and cultural values / by Yajiao Wang
- The ideology of the federal policy and institutional review boards and its effect on research / by Leah Vargas
- An Ideological Analysis of Filter Blogs: How Daily Kos and Powerline Construct Biased News / by Gabriel King

2012
- The impact of interpersonal communication on the media agenda setting process: a case study of new student perceptions of Stockton, CA / by Priscilla Y. Ambrocio. 2012
- The influence of social media on Chinese college students’ social activism / by Xiaoting Gu. 2012
- Correlates of verbal aggression and physical aggression among post-adolescent students / by Esther S. Lancaster-Knobel. 2012
- To confine or not to confine? : an analysis of the messaging of the proposition 2 campaigns / by Elizabeth Lily Penfold. 2012
- Contextually driven messages about gender: an ethnographic study on messages concerning traditional gender behaviors within work, education, romantic relationships, friendships, and exercise/sports / by Danielle N. I. Rockley. 2012
- An ethnographic study of communication and gender performance in a modern day Latino wedding / by Olivia Corine Stanko 2012

2011
- An assessment of the impact of an internship on the social emotional competence of communication students / by Tayor Blackburn. 2011
- Genre criticism: an application of BP’s image restoration campaign to the crisis communication genre / by Anne C. Eastlick. 2011
- Toward a grounded normative theory of strategies of political communication used in politics disadvantages in policy debate / by Timothy C. Ernst. 2011
- A grammar of edification: constructing our social reality via efficient quotidian management with rhetorical forms / by Steven Kalani Farías. 2011
- The impact of social media on crisis communication / by Patrick James Gannon. 2011
- Social media’s impact on higher education crisis communication plans / by Patrick J. Giblin. 2011
- Culture and crisis communication: the use of intercultural communication in public relations crisis management planning / by Damion R. Martin. 2011

2010
- Returning to Haiti: humanitarian effort or corporate capitalism? : a crisis communication response evaluation of Royal Caribbean International / by Melissa A. Piffero. 2010
- Changing communication through Facebook: redefining perceptions of public and private communication / by Megan D. Turco 2010

2009
- Burning protests, the rhetoric of agitation and control of the journey of harmony tour / by Kathleen Bruce 2009
- The importance of intercultural willingness-to-communicate in reducing ethnocentrism and behaviors associated with ethnocentrism / by Christine M. Collaço. 2009
- The creation of the Khalsa: a study into the rhetorical strategies of collective identity transformation / by Raman Kaur Deol. 2009
- International public relations: perceptions of the effects of language usage and culture on codes of professional standards / by Ashley Gayle Dolezal. 2009
- Ideology in California: the role of oppositional interaction as a strategy in the campaign for Proposition 8 / by Kasey Christopher Gardner. 2009
- When going to the doctor makes you sick: a case study of the crisis communication strategy of the Endoscopy Center of Southern Nevada / by Erin Kaye O’Harra. 2009
- The impact of using situational management communication styles in intercollegiate athletics / by Glen A. Sisk. 2009

2008
- (Neo) revolutionary messages: an analysis of the impact of counter-narratives versus state narratives during the 1991 Coup D’etat in the former Soviet Union / by Duane A. Gundrum. 2008
- Community violence exposure and adolescents’ academic functioning / by Jennifer C. Thom. 2008
- A study of Myspace and Facebook from the perspectives of uses and gratification and impression management / by Mark A. Urista. 2008
- A social exchange and power dependency theory perspective of Mexican immigrant family communication patterns / by Mariela Anahi Vera. 2008
- A critical look at nutritional value of commercials on the Nickelodeon Network / by Sarah Amanda Jean Vinall. 2008