Communication Studies

Degrees Offered

• Master of Arts
• Doctor of Philosophy

Nature of Program

The Department of Communication Studies offers the M.A. and the Ph.D. degrees in Communication Studies. Communication scholars seek to discover the mechanisms and rules that govern the wide range of communication activities using a battery of social scientific techniques. We try to develop theories that will account for why we act the way we do. The graduate faculty in the Department of Communication Studies is well-known at the regional, national, and international level for accomplishments in research, teaching, and service.

Faculty

Chair

• Matthew M. Martin - Ph.D. (Kent State University)

Professors

• Melanie Booth-Butterfield - Ph.D. (University of Missouri)
  McConnell Chair in Speech Communication, Health and Interpersonal Communication
• Rebecca M. Chory - Ph.D. (Michigan State University)
  Organizational Communication, Mass Communication, Research Methods
• Joan S. Gorham - Ph.D. (Northern Illinois University)
  Associate Dean, Instructional, Intercultural, and Mass Media
• Matthew M. Martin - Ph.D. (Kent State University)
  Chairperson, Interpersonal, Instructional, Communication Traits
• Scott A. Myers - Ph.D. (Kent State University)
  Group, Instructional, Interpersonal
• Keith Weber - Ed.D. (West Virginia University)
  Communication Campaigns, Quantitative Methods, Instructional Communication

Associate Professor

• Maria Brann - Ph.D. (University of Kentucky)
  Health, Interpersonal and Qualitative Research Methods
• Megan Dillow - Ph.D. (Pennsylvania State University)
  Interpersonal Communication, Communication Theory, Relational Communication
• Alan Goodboy - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
  Instructional Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Quantitative Methods
• Brian R. Patterson - Ph.D. (University of Oklahoma)
  Developmental Communications, Communication Theory
• Andrea Weber - Ed.D. (West Virginia University)
  Communication Assessment, Leadership, Communication Ethics

Assistant Professor

• Nicholas Bowman - Ph.D. (Michigan State University)
  Communication Technology, Media Psychology, Mass Communication, Media Effects, Entertainment and Emotion
• Elizabeth Cohen - Ph.D. (Georgia State University)
  Media Psychology, Entertainment Education, New Media, Health and Risk Communication
• Christy Rittenour - Ph.D. (University of Nebraska)
  Family, Life-span, Interpersonal

Professor Emerita

• Virginia P. Richmond - Ph.D. (University of Nebraska)
Nature of the Program

The Department of Communication Studies offers work leading to the degree of master of arts with a concentration in communication theory and research. Persons who possess a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university may be admitted to the program. Qualified graduate students from a variety of disciplines are admitted to the program. The master of arts degree program is intended to qualify the student to do the following:

• Assume a variety of professional roles in educational, organizational, health, governmental, or media institutions
• Teach the subject matter in high school and/or college
• Undertake advanced training toward a doctorate in the behavioral/social sciences

Requirements

In addition to the general WVU requirements, the graduate student in communication studies must meet departmental requirements. These include successful completion of both the minimum number of required graduate hours as set forth in Program A, B, or C (listed below) with a grade of B or above in each class and the maintenance of a minimum grade point average of 3.0. Classes graded P, S, or marked CR may not be counted toward a degree.

Applicants for admission must specify the program they wish to pursue. Program A is open only to full-time students. Programs B and C are open to both part-time and full-time students.

Program A

All students planning to continue graduate study past the M.A. level are encouraged to enter program A. The following are required for Program A:

• At least thirty-six hours of graduate credit, thirty of which must be in the Department of Communication Studies (A maximum of six hours of thesis credit will be allowed.)
• Completion of COMM 700 and COMM 701
• A thesis
• An oral examination on the thesis

Program B

All students planning a professional career in a field other than education are encouraged to enter this program. This is normally a terminal degree program in communication studies. The following are required for Program B:

• A minimum of thirty-six hours of coursework, thirty of which must be in the Department of Communication Studies
• Successful completion of written and oral comprehensive examinations (The oral examination may be waived with the approval of the student’s examination committee and the Departmental Coordinator of Graduate Studies.)

Program C

All students planning a professional career in elementary or secondary education are encouraged to enter this program. This is normally a terminal degree program in communication studies. Students may complete this program through off-campus study, on-campus study, or a combination. The following are required for Program C:

• A minimum of thirty-six hours of coursework, thirty of which must be in the Department of Communication Studies
• Successful completion of written and oral comprehensive examinations (The oral examination may be waived with the approval of the student’s examination committee and the Departmental Coordinator of Graduate Studies.)

Doctor of Philosophy

The Ph.D. program in Communication Studies is a fifty-four hour program (including dissertation hours) which affords students the opportunity to focus on numerous domains of communication, including computer-mediated communication, health communication, instructional communication, interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and strategic communication. Students will be awarded the Ph.D. upon completing fifty-four graduate credit hours, passing comprehensive exams, writing a dissertation proposal, and writing and defending a dissertation. Students are required to complete the following:

Required Courses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 600</td>
<td>Communication in the Classroom</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 602</td>
<td>Interpersonal Comm:Theory/Rsrch</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 606</td>
<td>Theory/Rsrch-Organizational Comm</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 700</td>
<td>Survey of Human Comm Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
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Core COMM courses at the 700 level, this may include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 702</td>
<td>Advanced Interpersonal Comm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 706</td>
<td>Advanced Organizational Comm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 719</td>
<td>Advanced Instructional Comm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research methods beyond COMM 701  
Additional COMM courses  
Dissertation research *

Total Hours 54

* (i.e., COMM 797 Research). A GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation and any grade lower than B does not count toward the fifty-four hours. Students who receive more than six hours of Cs may not be permitted to remain in the program.

Upon admission to the program, students are advised by the Coordinator of On-Campus Graduate Studies. Working with the coordinator, students devise their schedule for their first semester. During the first semester, in conjunction with the coordinator, students select an advisor. This advisor serves as the chair of each student’s comprehensive examination and dissertation committees. Working with their advisor, students then select four other committee members, at least one of which, but no more than two, must be graduate faculty members external to the Department of Communication Studies.

Upon completion of the thirty-six hours of coursework, students take a comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination consists of three sections on which students will be tested on two of the domains of communication emphasis and research methods. The written examination will be followed by an oral examination approximately two weeks later.

Once the written and oral comprehensive examinations have been successfully defended (as determined by the committee), students write a dissertation proposal and submit the proposal to their committee. Once the proposal has been approved, students write and defend their dissertation. The dissertation defense is open to the public.

Applying for Admission to the Program

To apply for admission to the Ph.D. program, applicants must submit the following materials:

1. The application for admission to graduate school at West Virginia University.
2. Scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Applicants should have a minimum combined score of 1,000 on the verbal and quantitative components of the GRE and a minimum score of 4.0 on the analytical component of the GRE. Scores should not be older than five years at the time of application.
3. Scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language Examination (TOEFL) (for international students only whose native language is not English). Scores will be accepted from any of three versions (i.e., internet-based test, computer-based test, paper-based test). Applicants should score in the ninetieth percentile of the test version taken.
4. All official undergraduate and graduate transcripts. Transcripts must be mailed directly from the registrar of the college and/or university attended. Applicants should have a minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.75 and a minimum graduate GPA of 3.30.
5. A vita. The vita should include all formal education, any teaching or professional work experience, and any research projects conducted to date.
6. A statement of interest. The statement of interest is a three to four-page, typed document in which applicants identify the following:
   • their reasons for pursuing a Ph.D. in communication studies
   • their reasons for wanting to attain their Ph.D. degree in communication studies at West Virginia University
   • their research interests and how these interests correspond with the research conducted by the department faculty
   • the faculty members whose research interests are most closely aligned with their own educational and career goals
   • why attaining the Ph.D. degree in communication studies specifically from West Virginia University is vital to the achievement of their career goals
7. Three letters of recommendation from individuals familiar with the applicant’s academic progress and potential. These letters of recommendation should address whether the applicant has the ability to succeed in the Ph.D. program in communication studies at West Virginia University as both a Ph.D. student and as a graduate teaching assistant.
8. A sole-authored sample of scholarly writing completed in the applicant’s M.A. program. This sample can be a course paper, a convention paper, a thesis or major project, or a journal article.
9. Any additional supporting evidence. This evidence can include, but is not limited to, awards received for outstanding research, teaching, or academic endeavors; a convention paper or journal article of which the applicant is a co-author; a newspaper or magazine article, or teaching evaluations.

The transcripts, vita, statement of interest, recommendation letters, scholarly writing example, and supporting evidence should be mailed directly to:

On-Campus Graduate Coordinator  
Department of Communication Studies