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.

The Department of Communication Studies offers work leading to the degree of master of arts. 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

The M.A. in Communication Studies offers three areas of emphasis:

COMMUNICATIONS THEORY & RESEARCH AREA OF EMPHASIS

All students planning to continue graduate study past the M.A. level are encouraged to enter this program.

CORPORATE & ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION AREA OF EMPHASIS

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.

COMMUNICATION IN INSTRUCTION AREA OF EMPHASIS

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 Ph.D. program in Communication Studies is one that affords students the opportunity to focus on numerous domains of communication, including instructional communication, interpersonal communication, health communication, and mediated communication, among others.

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
- 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

- 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
• Jaime Banks - Ph.D. (Colorado State University)
  Communication Technology, Human Identity, Social Network Analysis
• 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)

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 in the 290-310 range 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 3.00 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
P.O. Box 6293
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506-6293
**Master of Arts**

**Major Requirements**

Minimum GPA of 3.0 required.

Minimum grade of B is required in all courses applied toward degree.

Select an Area of Emphasis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Emphasis</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION THEORY &amp; RESEARCH AREA OF EMPHASIS</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Studies coursework (400, 500, 600, 700-level)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 700</td>
<td>Survey of Human Communication Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 701</td>
<td>Graduate Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 697</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td>36</td>
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| COMMUNICATION IN INSTRUCTION AREA OF EMPHASIS | 36 |

| COMMUNICATION IN INSTRUCTION AREA OF EMPHASIS | 36 |

| Written Comprehensive Examination |       |
| Oral Comprehensive Examination | *     |

* The oral examination may be waived with the approval of the student’s examination committee and the Departmental Coordinator of Graduate Studies.

| CORPORATE & ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION AREA OF EMPHASIS | 36 |

| Written Comprehensive Examination |       |
| Oral Comprehensive Examination | *     |

* 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**

**MAJOR REQUIREMENTS**

Minimum GPA of 3.25 is required.

Minimum grade of B is required in all courses applied toward degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 700</td>
<td>Survey of Human Communication Theory</td>
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<td>COMM 701</td>
<td>Graduate Research Methods</td>
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<td>COMM 790</td>
<td>Teaching Practicum</td>
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<td>COMM 796</td>
<td>Graduate Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary area courses</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary area courses</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods courses</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation research</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 797</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation</td>
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<td>Dissertation Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td>57</td>
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</table>
Students who receive more than six credit hours of Cs may not be permitted to remain in the program.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS/DISSERTATION

Upon admission to the program, students are advised by the Ph.D Graduate Studies coordinator. Working with the coordinator, students devise their schedule for their first year. During the second 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-nine hours of coursework, students take a comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination consists of three sections on which students will be tested on the primary and secondary areas 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.

Major Learning Outcomes

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Students earning a M.A. or Ph.D. in Communication Studies will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to understand and critically evaluate research in communication studies
2. Design and execute empirical research in communication studies
3. Communicate their research in oral and written formats, including the ability to author manuscripts suitable for conference presentation and professional publication
4. Demonstrate expert knowledge in their area of emphasis
5. Present and argue the historical, philosophical, and theoretical issues in communication studies
6. Understand the ethical impact of personal and professional behavior

COURSES

COMM 509. Health Comm Dissemination. 1-3 Hours.
PR: COMM 409. Focus on effective dissemination of health messages. Students communicate outcomes of health communication campaigns conducted in previous classes to diverse external publics; could include presentations to conferences, community groups, schools, workshops.

COMM 591. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation of topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses.

COMM 593A-C. Special Topics. 1-6 Hours.
A study of contemporary topics selected from recent developments in the field.

COMM 600. Communication in the Classroom. 3 Hours.
PR: Teaching experience or consent. Role of interpersonal communication in classroom environment with particular emphasis on communication between students and teachers. Recommended for elementary, secondary, and college teachers in all fields.

COMM 601. Instructional Communication. 3 Hours.
Survey of the theory and research in instructional communication. Emphasis is placed on the study of instructional communication behaviors and the role instructor-student communication plays in the instructional setting.

COMM 602. Interpersonal Communication: Theory and Research. 3 Hours.
Survey of the theory and research in interpersonal communication. Emphasis upon relational communication and intimate communication in interpersonal relationships.

COMM 603. Communication Training and Development. 3 Hours.
This applied graduate course provides the student, who has a background in human communication theory and research, an introduction to communication training and development issues, procedures, assessment, and presentational skills.

COMM 604. Theory and Research in Persuasion. 3 Hours.
Various theories and principles of persuasion with emphasis on contemporary research literature.

COMM 605. Theory and Research in Mass Communication. 3 Hours.
Mass communication from a consumer’s viewpoint. Use of consumer-oriented mass media research also stressed.

COMM 606. Theory and Research in Organizational Communication. 3 Hours.
Contemporary research linking communication variables and networks to organizational change, effectiveness, leadership, power, and management practices. Analysis of communication problems within a variety of organizations.
COMM 607. Theory and Research in Language. 3 Hours.
Study of verbal interactions and language from source and perceived perspectives.

COMM 608. Nonverbal Communication. 3 Hours.
Examines the impact of nonverbal communication on the communication process. Attention is given to research on non-language aspects of communication and their application to various contexts.

COMM 609. Communication Apprehension and Avoidance. 3 Hours.
Theory and research related to individuals' predispositional and situational tendencies to approach or avoid communication. Emphasis on work in the areas of willingness to communicate, communication apprehension, reticence, and shyness.

COMM 610. Family Communication. 3 Hours.
This course addresses the communication that exists within and about families. We address various family structures, and employ various theoretical frameworks to explain, predict, and control family communication and its correlates with socio-cultural, relational and individual wellbeing.

COMM 611. Intergroup Communication. 3 Hours.
This course focuses on intergroup communication and the reciprocal nature between identity and pro/anti-social interaction. Moving beyond the popular individualized communication perspective, intergroup theories and research allow us to explore the prominence of social group memberships (e.g., age, race, religion, gender, value orientations) in our everyday communication and cognitions.

COMM 612. Small Group Theory and Practice. 3 Hours.
Specific research areas in interpersonal communication with emphasis on small groups.

COMM 615. Media in Communication and Education. 3 Hours.
Use of the media in educational and other communication environments with emphasis on communication processes and principles relevant to television and film.

COMM 616. Communication in the Educational Organization. 3 Hours.
Problems of communication within educational organizations with emphasis on elements that impact educational change, conflict management, and interpersonal influence. Recommended for elementary, secondary, and college teachers in all fields.

COMM 617. Communication Problems of Children. 3 Hours.
(Primarily for elementary and secondary school teachers and language arts supervisors.) Normal maturational development of listening and speaking skills, their relationships to language acquisition, and influence upon achievement.

COMM 619. Communication and Affect in Instruction. 3 Hours.
PR: Graduate status. This advanced graduate course examines the influence of teachers’ communicative behaviors on student learning, student communication, and the classroom climate.

COMM 622. Gender and Communication. 3 Hours.
This graduate course will review contemporary and historical communication issues about sex, gender, and communication. Nonverbal communication, friendship, romantic family, educational, organizational, and media impacts will be reviewed.

COMM 623. Leadership. 3 Hours.
Leadership styles, models and theories in classical and contemporary settings are covered. Emphasis is given to leadership in groups and organizations.

COMM 624. Communication Ethics. 3 Hours.
This course focuses on communication ethics with a particular emphasis on communication ethics in the organizational context. Communication issues and situations are explored from various ethical perspectives.

COMM 625. Computer Mediated Communication. 3 Hours.
This course explored the relationships between CMC and various aspects of human activity. This course investigates established and emerging CMC-based social, cultural, organizational, and instructional activities.

COMM 626. Intercultural Communication: Theory and Research. 3 Hours.
Advanced seminar in communication of various cultures. Special emphasis on research in diffusion of innovations.

COMM 627. Teachers in Film. 3 Hours.
This course focuses on how teachers and schools are portrayed in film. Students will use course readings and personal experiences to offer critical analysis of these films.

COMM 629. Health Communication. 3 Hours.
Overview of essential concepts and theories needed to understand and evaluate health-related messages in patient-provider relationships, between workers in health care organizations, and in medial related applications.

COMM 632. Humor and Communication. 3 Hours.
Advanced study of humor research as a communication process, from both source and receiver perspectives. The class investigates humor theories, research on functions, enactment, and applications of humorous communication across various work and social contexts.
COMM 635. Social & Digital Media Management. 3 Hours.
This course will present students with theoretical and applied examples of how social and digital media can be successfully managed, as well as provide examples of the consequences of unsuccessful management. In the end, students will craft a social and digital media management plan for their organization or industry of choice, based on the theories and concepts discussed.

COMM 645. Masspersonal Communication. 3 Hours.
Examines intersections of interpersonal and mass communication research. The role of interpersonal communication in campaigns, computer-mediated communication, avatar effects, and celebrity and character attachments is explored, as well as the effect of media use on interpersonal communication.

COMM 652. Diversity in the Workplace. 3 Hours.
Examines diversity/difference at work applying an intergroup communication approach intersecting diversity, identity, prejudice, inclusion and exclusion. Explores the prominence of differences of social, moral, religious, racial, and familial group memberships in our everyday lives.

COMM 654. Social Marketing for Behavior Change. 3 Hours.
Social marketing is the practice of applying marketing principles and techniques to promote social objectives that benefit individuals or society, such as improving public health and safety, and protecting the environment. This course will introduce students the basic principles of social marketing and teach them the steps in developing a social marketing communication campaign.

COMM 655. Computer-Mediated Communication and Professional Identity. 3 Hours.
Examines digital media footprints and strategies for effectively communicating professional identities online. Students evaluate current online identity portrayals and develop a theory-based strategy for goal-directed self-presentations.

COMM 656. Organizational Culture. 3 Hours.
This course examines how human communication that occurs within an organization influences how the organization creates, sustains, and changes its workplace culture. Emphasis is placed on how organizational culture is created through artifacts, espoused and enacted values, and underlying assumptions/beliefs.

COMM 660. Communication in the Organization. 3 Hours.
This course exposes students to the role of communication in organizational environment with particular emphasis on its social science roots.

COMM 662. Conflict in Professional Life. 3 Hours.
This course is designed to examine research findings and theory about managing and resolving conflict in professional life. This course will examine both the macrodynamics (i.e., general/global conflict processes that occur in any social setting) and microdynamics (i.e., conflict that occurs uniquely in the workplace) of conflict research.

COMM 691A-Z. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation of advanced topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses.

COMM 693A-Z. Special Topics. 1-6 Hours.
A study of contemporary topics selected from recent developments in the field.

COMM 694A-Z. Seminar. 1-6 Hours.
Seminars arranged for advanced graduate students.

COMM 695. Independent Study. 1-6 Hours.
Faculty supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.

COMM 697. Research. 1-15 Hours.
PR: Consent. Research activities leading to a thesis, problem report, research paper, or equivalent scholarly project, or a dissertation. (Grading may be S/U.)

COMM 700. Survey of Human Communication Theory. 3 Hours.
Broad overview of contemporary theories in human communication. Should be taken the first semester of graduate study.

COMM 701. Graduate Research Methods. 3 Hours.
Major emphasis on designing and conducting experimental and laboratory research in human communication. Computer applications to social science research also given consideration. Should be taken the first semester of graduate study.

COMM 702. Advanced Interpersonal Communications. 3 Hours.
PR: COMM 602. This course examines how interpersonal communication patterns are linked to relational processes, both as influences and outcomes. Emphasis is on in-depth analysis of social science interpersonal research.

COMM 706. Advanced Organizational Communications. 3 Hours.
PR: COMM 606. This course provides an overview of the history and development of organizational communication. Additionally, current organizational theories and perspectives are investigated.

COMM 711. Advanced Seminar in Research Methods. 3 Hours.
PR: COMM 701. Research techniques necessary to conduct original communication research. Emphasis on advanced statistical techniques.

COMM 712. Communication Measurement. 3 Hours.
PR: COMM 701. This course investigates measures and instruments used in the field of communication studies. Focus is placed on the creation and validation of communication measures.
COMM 713. Qualitative Research Methods. 3 Hours.
Qualitative research methods in human communication and related professional areas with major emphasis on conducting and evaluating qualitative research procedures. Special focus on practical application.

COMM 719. Advanced Instructional Communications. 3 Hours.
Examination of issues surrounding instructional communication. Topics include study of history, paradigms, and programmatic areas of research of instructional communication.

COMM 722. Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication. 3 Hours.
Addresses transgressions and other violations of relational rules and their antecedents and consequences in the context of close personal relationships.

COMM 790. Teaching Practicum. 1-3 Hours.
PR: Consent. Supervised practice in college teaching of communication studies. Note: This course is intended to insure that graduate assistants are adequately prepared and supervised when they are given college teaching responsibility. It will also present a mechanism for students on assistantships to gain teaching experience. (Grading will be P/F.).

COMM 791A-Z. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation of advanced topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses.

COMM 792A-Z. Directed Study. 1-6 Hours.
Directed study, reading, and/or research.

COMM 793A-Z. Special Topics. 1-6 Hours.
A study of contemporary topics selected from recent developments in the field.

COMM 794A-Z. Seminar. 1-6 Hours.
Seminars arranged for advanced graduate students.

COMM 795. Independent Study. 1-9 Hours.
Faculty supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.

COMM 796. Graduate Seminar. 1 Hour.
PR: Consent. Each graduate student will present at least one seminar to the assembled faculty and graduate student body of his or her program.

COMM 797. Research. 1-15 Hours.
PR: Consent. Research activities leading to thesis, problem report, research paper or equivalent scholarly project, or a dissertation. (Grading may be S/U.).

COMM 798. Thesis or Dissertation. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. This is an optional course for programs that wish to provide formal supervision during the writing of student reports (698), or dissertations (798). Grading is normal.

COMM 799. Graduate Colloquium. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. For graduate students not seeking coursework credit but who wish to meet residency requirements, use of the University's facilities, and participate in its academic and cultural programs. Note: Graduate students who are not actively involved in coursework or research are entitled, through enrollment in their department's 699/799 Graduate Colloquium to consult with graduate faculty, participate in both formal and informal academic activities sponsored by their program, and retain all of the rights and privileges of duly enrolled students. Grading is P/F; colloquium credit may not be counted against credit requirements for masters programs. Registration for one credit of 699/799 graduate colloquium satisfies the University requirement of registration in the semester in which graduation occurs.

COMM 930. Professional Development. 1-6 Hours.
Professional development courses provide skill renewal or enhancement in a professional field or content area (e.g., education, community health, geology). These tuition-waived, continuing education courses are graded on a pass/fail grading scale and do not apply as graduate credit toward a degree program.