Communication Studies

Degrees Offered

• Master of Arts
• Doctor of Philosophy

Nature of the 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:

COMMUNICATION 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
• Scott A. Myers - Ph.D. (Kent State University)
  Group, Instructional, Interpersonal

PROFESSORS
• Alan Goodboy - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
  Instructional, Interpersonal, Quantitative Methods
• Matthew M. Martin - Ph.D. (Kent State University)
  Interpersonal, Instructional, Communication Traits
• Scott A. Myers - Ph.D. (Kent State University)
  Group, Instructional, Interpersonal

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
• Elizabeth Cohen - Ph.D. (Georgia State University)
  Media Psychology, Entertainment Education, New Media, Health and Risk Communication
• Megan Dillow - Ph.D. (Pennsylvania State University)
  Interpersonal, Communication Theory, Relational Communication
• Brian R. Patterson - Ph.D. (University of Oklahoma)
ADmissions

MASTER OF ARTS

Applicants must meet the university requirements for admission (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/#classificationtext). Information about admission to the online program can be found here (https://online.wvu.edu/programs/communication-studies-m-a/). To qualify for admission to the M.A. in Communication Studies with an emphasis in Theory & Research, students will need to meet the minimum GRE and TOEFL scores, minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA, statement of interest, current curriculum vitae and 3 letters of reference. Additional information can be found here (https://communicationstudies.wvu.edu/students/graduate-students/m-a-in-theory-and-research/m-a-in-theory-and-research-application-process/).

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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

Degree Requirements

- **Credit Hours**: Students are required to complete a minimum of 36 graduate credit hours in Communication Studies at the 400 level or above.

- **Grade Point Average**: Students must earn a minimum overall GPA of 2.75, and of 3.00 in coursework applied to their graduate program, with a minimum grade of B- in each course.

- **Area of Emphasis**: Students must select one of three area of emphasis: Communication in Instruction, Corporate and Organizational Communication, Communication Theory and Research.

- **Graduation Requirement**: Students must take a comprehensive written and oral examination, unless they select the Theory and Research area of emphasis. In this case, they have the option to either take the comprehensive exams or to write a Master's Thesis.

Curriculum Requirements

| COURSEWORK: | 24 |
| Select any COMM courses 400 level or above. |

| AREA OF EMPHASIS: | 12 |
| Select one: |
| Communication in Instruction |
| Corporate and Organizational Communication |
| Theory and Research |

Total Hours: 36

* Excluding courses applied to the Area of Emphasis, COMM 697, COMM 797

**COMMUNICATION THEORY & RESEARCH AREA OF EMPHASIS**

| CORE COURSES: | 6 |
| COMM 700 | Survey of Human Communication Theory |
| COMM 701 | Graduate Research Methods |

| COMPLETION REQUIREMENT: | 6 |
| Thesis Option: |
| COMM 697 | Research |
| Non-Thesis Option: |
| Any COMM course at the 400 level or above. * |

Total Hours: 12

* Excluding COMM 697, COMM 797, or any course applied to other parts of the Master's program.

**COMMUNICATION IN INSTRUCTION AREA OF EMPHASIS**

Communication Studies coursework (400, 500, 600, 700-level) 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**

| CORE COURSES: | 6 |
| COMM 650 | Applied Communication Theory |
| COMM 660 | Communication in the Organization |

| ELECTIVES: | 6 |
| Any COMM courses at the 400 level or above. * |

Total Hours: 12
Excluding COMM 697, COMM 797, or any course applied to other parts of the Master's program.

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Degree Requirements**

- **Credit Hours:** Students are required to complete a minimum number of 57 graduate credit hours in Communication Studies at the 500 level or above.

- **Grade Point Average:** Students must earn a minimum overall GPA of 2.75, and 3.25 in coursework applied to their graduate program. Students also must earn a minimum grade of B- is required in all courses applied toward degree. Students who receive more than three grades of C, C+, or C- will not be permitted to continue in the program.

- **Comprehensive Examination:** Upon completion of a minimum of thirty-nine hours of coursework approved in a plan of study (excluding COMM 797), 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.

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

**CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS**

**CORE COURSES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 700</td>
<td>Survey of Human Communication Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 701</td>
<td>Graduate Research Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 790</td>
<td>Teaching Practicum</td>
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**AREA COURSES:**

Select 10 COMM courses at the 600 or 700 level

**SEMINAR AND RESEARCH:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 796</td>
<td>Graduate Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 797</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Total Hours** 57

**Degree Progress**

All Students will have a plan of study and will receive, at minimum, a yearly letter of evaluation.

**MASTER OF ARTS**

Students in the online program complete two courses a semester (Spring, Summer, and Fall) for a total of 36 credit hours. Typically, students complete the program in two years.

Students completing the Master of Arts on campus typically complete their requirements in one academic year. Full-time students enroll in 15 hours of coursework during the Fall and Spring semesters and complete the remaining 6 hours of coursework during the summer term.

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Upon admission to the program, students are advised by the Ph.D. Coordinator. Working with the Coordinator, students devise their course schedules for their first year.

By the start of the Fall semester of their second year, students should select their dissertation advisor, who must hold Regular Graduate Faculty status.

In addition to making satisfactory progress toward the completion of the degree, students will submit a teaching and research portfolio (i.e., one document) at the end of Year 1 Spring semester and at the end of Year 2 Spring semester. The portfolios will be evaluated by the Ph.D. Graduate Studies Committee.

Upon completion of coursework (typically at the conclusion of Year 2 Spring or Summer term), students take a comprehensive examination. Before the comprehensive examination can be taken, students must have completed 39 hours of coursework with a grade of B- or higher, have a minimum grade point average of 3.25, and have completed any courses for which they received a grade of "Incomplete."

Once the comprehensive examination has been successfully passed, the student writes a dissertation prospectus and submits a typed copy of the prospectus to each member of the student’s dissertation committee.
Additional details can be found in the program's graduate student handbook (https://communicationstudies.wvu.edu/files/d/a5d0b25-0144-4b34-8a78-c454f0e0c761/2018-2019-graduate-handbook.pdf).

**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