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  

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**COMMUNICATION THEORY & RESEARCH AREA OF EMPHASIS**

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

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Thesis  
Thesis Defense  

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**COMMUNICATION IN INSTRUCTION AREA OF EMPHASIS**

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

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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**

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

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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.

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* Required Courses  

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Primary area courses  
Secondary area courses  
Research methods courses  
Dissertation research  

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Dissertation Proposal  
Dissertation  
Dissertation Defense  

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* 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 Goals**

**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