

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 areas of emphasis:

COMMUNICATION IN INSTRUCTION AREA OF EMPHASIS

All students planning a professional career in the education field or are currently employed as a K-12 teacher are encouraged to enter this program.

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. Students may complete this program through off-campus study or on-campus study.

FACULTY

CHAIR

- Lindsay Morris-Neuberger - Ph.D. (Michigan State University)
Health and Risk Communication, Campaigns

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES

- Daniel Totzkay - Ph.D. (Michigan State University)
Health Communication, Mass Communication

PROFESSORS

- Alan K. Goodboy - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
Instructional, Interpersonal, Quantitative Methods
- Christine Kunkle - Ph.D. (University of Nebraska)
Family, Life-span, Interpersonal
- Matthew M. Martin - Ph.D. (Kent State University)
Instructional, Interpersonal, Communication Traits
- Lindsay Morris-Neuberger - Ph.D. (Michigan State University)
Health and Risk Communication, Campaigns
- Scott A. Myers - Ph.D. (Kent State University)
Instructional, Family, Organizational

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

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

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

- Katie Kang - Ph.D. (Rutgers University)
Organizational, Group
- Daniel Totzkay - Ph.D. (Michigan State University)
Health Communications, Mass Communication
- Megan Vendemia - Ph.D. (Ohio State University)
Communication Technology

TEACHING ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

- John G. Cole - M.A. (West Virginia University)
Instructional, Organizational, Computer Technology
- Carrie D. Kennedy-Lightsey - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
Communication Theory, Student Internships, Interpersonal

PROFESSORS EMERITI

- Melanie Booth-Butterfield - Ph.D. (University of Missouri)
- Joan Gorham - Ph.D. (Northern Illinois University)
- Virginia P. Richmond - Ph.D. (University of Nebraska)

Admissions

M.A. IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

The Communication Studies department at WVU offers its M.A. program either face-to-face or fully online. Applicants must indicate to which program they wish to apply. Please note that for online students, the only Area of Emphasis available is Corporate and Organizational Communication. Students must meet the university requirements for admission (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/#classificationtext>) and must submit the items below and must have an undergraduate degree in Communication Studies or a closely allied field, with an undergraduate GPA of 3.0. The GRE is not required for admission to this program.

Information about admission to the online program and admission requirements can be found here (<https://online.wvu.edu/programs/communication-studies-m-a/>).

PH.D. IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

The Ph.D. program in Communication Studies is intended to qualify students to teach and conduct research in instructional communication, interpersonal communication, mediated communication, health communication, and organizational communication, among other topics, in the communication-related industries or in higher education. More information about the program and the application process is available here (<https://communicationstudies.wvu.edu/students/graduate-students/ph-d-in-communication-studies/>). An M.A. in Communication Studies or a closely allied field is required for admission to the Ph.D. program in Communication Studies. Applicants are expected to have attained a minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.75 and a minimum graduate GPA of 3.25. The GRE is not required for admission to this program.

List of Admission Requirements for the M.A.:

- See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (<https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/>).
- Transcripts from all institutions attended (<https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/>).
- Two letters of recommendation from individuals who can directly comment on the applicant's undergraduate academic record and potential for pursuing an M.A. degree in Communication Studies (e.g., undergraduate professors, undergraduate academic advisor).
- A curriculum vitae should include all formal education, any professional internship or work experiences, undergraduate activities, and any research projects completed to date.
- A statement of interest/purpose (2-3 pages) must identify the applicant's reasons for pursuing the M.A. in Communication Studies, the reasons for obtaining this degree at West Virginia University and indicate why attaining the M.A. in Communication Studies at WVU is vital to the accomplishment of the applicant's career goals.

List of Admission Requirements for the Ph.D.:

- See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (<https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/>).
- Transcripts from all institutions attended.
- Three letters of recommendation from individuals familiar with the applicant's academic progress and potential, which address the applicant's ability to succeed in the Ph.D. program as both a Ph.D. student and as a graduate teaching assistant.
- A curriculum vitae that addresses all formal education, any teaching or professional work experience, and any research projects conducted to date.
- A personal statement (3-4 pages) that identifies the reasons for pursuing a Ph.D. in communication studies, the reasons for wanting to attain a Ph.D. in communication studies at West Virginia University, 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 the applicant's educational and career goals, and why attaining the Ph.D. degree in communication studies specifically from West Virginia University is vital to the achievement of the applicant's career goals. Statement of purpose.
- A sole-authored, scholarly writing sample 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. Applicants may also include any additional supporting evidence they wish the committee to consider. 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.
- Additional supporting evidence (optional).

International Applicants:

- See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (<https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/>).
- International applications should view additional requirements here (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/#internationaltext>) and here (<https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/information-for/international-students/>).
- Language proficiency is required in order to hold a graduate teaching assistantship. See here (<https://elli.wvu.edu/testing-resources/english-proficiency-gtas/>).

Application Deadlines:

- The M.A. in Communication Studies program in Theory and Research Area of Emphasis admits students for the fall semester only. The priority deadline for the M.A. program is March 1st.
- The M.A. in Communication Studies program in Corporate and Organizational Communication admits students for the fall and spring semesters, with rolling admission.
- The Ph.D. program admits students for the fall semester only. The priority review deadline for the Ph.D. program is January 15th.
- Exceptional Ph.D. applicants may be nominated by the Communication Studies program for competitive University Fellowships. Qualified applicants will be notified if they are nominated. More information on WVU fellowships can be found here (<https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/finances/fellowships/>).

Applications completed by the deadline will receive full consideration.

Assistantships

All applicants will be considered for financial support in the form of graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs). All applicants who are accepted into the program are provided with an assistantship for the first year of study, with the potential for two additional years of assistantship based on a yearly performance review.

Certain application requirements may be waived based on a preliminary review of an application by the program.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS 2024-2025

The Admission Requirements above will be the same for the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

Major Code: 1473

For specific information on the following program, please see the link to the right:

- Communication Studies, M.A.

For specific information on the following program, please see the link to the right:

- Communication Studies, Ph.D.

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/a5d0fb25-0144-4b34-8a78-c454f0e0c761/2018-2019-graduate-handbook.pdf>).