Communication Studies, MA

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Your ability to convey ideas, change opinions and persuade behaviors are skills valued in any organization that has customers, employees, suppliers or investors. This program gives you the tools to advance your career in nearly any field.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: MA Communication Studies
The MA in communication studies is a cutting-edge degree program designed for students who wish to pursue a wide range of today's communication professions.

With special emphases on both advocacy and social technologies as defining themes, students can tailor the program to their personal goals, focusing on topics such as interpersonal, organizational, sport, environmental, social media politics and global or technology-mediated communication.

Students use multiple perspectives to explore a variety of topics and issues in communication.

These include how individuals and collectives participate effectively in personal relationships; organizational settings and public dialogues across cultural contexts; and the impact and effects of media, mediated representations and new technologies. They also learn to use communication strategically to advocate for others.

Graduates are prepared to pursue doctoral work or careers in a variety of communication-driven fields such as public affairs, public relations, employee development, strategic communication, community relations and grassroots movements through exposure to a variety of research methods, theories and practical applications.

At a Glance

- College/School: New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences
Accelerated Program Options

This program allows students to obtain both a bachelor's and master's degree in as little as five years. It is offered as an accelerated bachelor's and master's degree with:

- American Studies, BA
- Applied Science, BAS
- Biology, BA
- Communication, BA
- Communication, BS
- Environmental Science, BA
- Ethnicity, Race and First Nations Studies, BA
- Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies, BS
- Global Management, BGM
- History, BA
- Interdisciplinary Arts and Performance, BA
- Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, BA
- Latin American Studies, BA
- Philosophy, Religion and Society, BA
- Political Science, BA
- Political Science, BS
- Psychology, BA
- Psychology, BS
- Social and Behavioral Sciences, BA
- Social and Behavioral Sciences, BS
- Sociology, BA
- Sociology, BS
- Women and Gender Studies, BA

Acceptance to the graduate program requires a separate application. During their junior year, eligible students are advised by their academic departments to apply.
Degree Requirements

36 credit hours and a written comprehensive exam, or
36 credit hours including an applied project (CMN 593) and a written comprehensive exam, or
36 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam and a thesis

Required Core (9 credit hours)
CMN 502 Theory and Practice in Communication and Persuasion (3) or CMN 522 Argumentation and Advocacy (3)
CMN 505 Methods in Applied Communication Research (3)
CMN 506 Humanistic Inquiry and Field Research in Communication (3)

Electives (up to 27 credit hours)

Culminating Experience Options (0-6 credit hours)
CMN 593 Applied Project, with written comprehensive exam (3)
CMN 599 Thesis, with written comprehensive exam (6)
written comprehensive examination (0 credit hours)

Additional Curriculum Information
Electives are selected in consultation with the student's program advisor and may include courses with either the CMN (communication) or STC (social technology) prefixes. When appropriate, students may take up to six credit hours outside the program (non-CMN and STC prefix).

The thesis or applied project must demonstrate intellectual ability, academic ability and professional growth. The thesis is supervised and approved by the student's advisor and committee. An oral defense is required for the thesis. The applied project is supervised by the student's advisor. The achievements or results of the applied project should be made available to the public in the form of a presentation, poster, report or other form negotiated with the faculty advisor.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree, in any field, from a regionally accredited institution.

Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:
1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. statement of purpose
4. three letters of recommendation
5. an academic writing sample (preferred) or professional writing sample
6. resume or curriculum vitae (optional)
7. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information

An applicant whose native language is not English must provide proof of English proficiency regardless of current residency.

The statement of purpose should describe the educational background, scholarly interests, and academic and professional goals of the applicant.

It is preferred that the letters of recommendation are from faculty members who know the applicant's work well; if faculty members are not available, then the applicant may submit letters of recommendation from individuals in supervisory or professional roles.

Career Opportunities

The Master of Arts degree program in communication studies helps prepare graduates for jobs in corporate communication, journalism, mass media, politics, higher education or a wide range of other fields. Graduates already employed may find the skills they acquired through the program are helpful for career advancement; some leadership positions require a master's degree. Those interested in changing careers may pursue a master's in a communication studies to align with their particular professional goals. This master's degree can also prepare graduates for doctoral studies where they will conduct research or a career in higher education educating students.

Career examples include:

- fundraising manager
- human resources manager
- internal communications manager
- journalist
- learning and development analyst
- marketing: account executive, consultant or research analyst
- political campaign manager
- professor: community college, tenure-track or nontenure track academic (e.g., lecturer, admissions director, academic advisor, etc.)
- sales account executive
- speech writer
- technical communication specialist
- web producer