

Communication Studies BA Catalog, 2025-26

MAJOR/MINORS

- **ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS:** Vladimir Bratic (chair)
- **ASSISTANT PROFESSOR:** Kelly Coyne
- **VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR:** Jessica Baty-McMillan (director of oral communication)

Communication is the process through which we create and share meaning. In the major, students study this process in a variety of contexts, including relationships, media, organizations, the public sphere, and global cultures. In consultation with an advisor, a communication studies major tailors a program of study to prepare for a career in a field such as media production, journalism, public relations, communication in organizations, or for further study in graduate or professional school. Students who complete the major:

- will understand the centrality of communication to our everyday personal and professional lives;
- develop expertise in traditional academic skills of research, analysis, application, and critical reflection;
- master specific practical and professional communication skills, e.g., writing, public speaking, and digital production;
- gain direct professional experience through internships;
- will be prepared for lives as ethical leaders, professionals, and involved citizens.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A MAJOR IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES:

10 courses (40 credits) and one internship

CORE COURSES:

- COMM 101: Introduction to Communication Studies (4)
- COMM 102: Introduction to Media Studies (4)
- COMM 225: Public Speaking (4)
- COMM 470: Senior Seminar (4)

In addition to the core, majors must take any two classes from the 200 level, any three classes from the 300 level, and one course of their own choice from the Communication department.

200-LEVEL COURSES:

- COMM 220: Interpersonal Communication (4)
- COMM 231: Writing for Print Media (4)
- COMM 236: Writing for Broadcast Media (4)
- COMM 238: Argumentation and Advocacy (4)
- COMM 244: Social Marketing and Campaigns (4)
- COMM 248: Social Media and Social Activism (4)
- COMM 250: Environmental Communication
- COMM 250: Introduction to Digital Production
- COMM 250: Visual Analysis in the Digital Age
- COMM 270: Intercultural Communication (4)

300-LEVEL COURSES:

- COMM 313: Media Criticism (4)
- COMM 327: Communication and Technology: From Cave Paintings to AI (4)
- COMM 343: Organizational Communication (4)
- COMM 344: Health Communication (4)
- COMM 348: Pop Culture (4)
- COMM/INTL 380: Global Communication (4)
- COMM 361: Media Law and Free Speech (4)
- COMM 350: Artificial Intelligence: Transforming Society & Culture
- COMM 350: Women, Domesticity, and the Media

INTERNSHIP:

Students must complete one internship in communication studies.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A MINOR IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES:

Students must satisfactorily complete 5 courses (20 credits), including:

- COMM 101: Introduction to Communication Studies (4) or COMM 102 Introduction to Media Studies
- Two courses (8 credits) from the 200 level courses in the department

- Two additional courses (8 credits), from the 300 level courses in the department

COURSES IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES:

COMM 101: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION STUDIES (4)

This course introduces students to the theories and practices of various areas of study in the field of communication. Verbal and nonverbal communication, the mass media, communication technologies, popular culture, and communication in organizations are among the topics covered. No prerequisites. Offered Term 1. (r, MOD)

COMM 102: INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA STUDIES (4)

This course introduces students to the theories and practices of various areas of study in the field of communication. Television, radio, print media, the Internet, social media and artificial intelligence are among the topics covered. No prerequisites. Offered Term 2.

COMM 220: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION (4)

The importance of understanding one's style of communication in various relationships is relevant to successful communication. Students will learn the progression of skills necessary in developing and maintaining personal relationships. Topics such as self-concept, perception, verbal/nonverbal messages, listening, and disclosing will be discussed. Open to first-year students. No prerequisite. (DJP)

COMM 225: PUBLIC SPEAKING (4)

The theory and practice of public speaking, including selection of content, organization of ideas, language, and delivery; practice in extemporaneous speaking; training in critical analysis is provided through reading and listening to contemporary speeches. Open to first-year students. No prerequisite. May not be taken for credit by students who have already completed COMM 125. Offered Term 1. (o, SMN)

COMM 231: WRITING FOR THE PRINT MEDIA (4)

This course offers special topics in writing for newspapers, magazines, and other print media formats. No prerequisite.

COMM 236: WRITING FOR BROADCAST MEDIA (4)

Social media has revolutionized communication, but also underscore the continued need for precise, accurate information that's readily grasped the first time it's heard. This course, taught by an experienced broadcaster, focuses on news writing for television and radio. You will examine good and bad examples of broadcast writing to determine what makes them

so, learn to convert raw information into readable copy, and also learn techniques of effective interviewing, copy editing, and on-camera delivery.

COMM 238: ARGUMENTATION AND ADVOCACY (4)

Students learn and apply principles of reasoned discourse and techniques of argumentation in this course. Logic, appropriate use of evidence, and addressing alternative perspectives are among topics covered. Students prepare and present written and oral arguments on controversial issues.

COMM 244: SOCIAL MARKETING AND CAMPAIGNS (4)

This class will explore the process of mass communication marketing and campaigns in contemporary society. We will examine the major theoretical concepts of social marketing and campaigning and investigate a variety of public, commercial, and social issues campaigns. When the class is taught in the year prior to the U.S. presidential election, presidential campaigns will be examined as case studies. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or permission. (o, MOD)

COMM 248: SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM (4)

This course explores the history and development of social media activism, focusing on the opportunities and challenges of this new phenomenon. Students will examine case studies of social media activism during the last presidential elections, the Arab Spring, the WikiLeaks affair, the Black Lives Matter movement, and other recent cases. Additionally, each student will complete a research project about a current social activism effort. (f, w, x, r, INQ)

COMM 250: ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION (4)

This course examines the role of communication in our perceptions and interactions with the natural world. By exploring the relationships between media, pop-culture, rhetoric, consumerism, and environmental justice, we will see how our interaction with, and advocacy for the environment is shaped by these relationships. Additionally, we will learn how our environmental perspectives are constructed both ideologically and rhetorically.

COMM 250: INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL PRODUCTION

This course is a workshop focused on discovering, researching, and crafting digital nonfiction stories, in addition to pitching them to internet outlets. In the course, we will discuss internet genres, the politics of representation, and the ethics of digital storytelling, both visually and linguistically. This course is assignment heavy, with several mini-

assignments due over the course over the semester. Students should expect to share their own work often, and revise extensively.

COMM 250: VISUAL ANALYSIS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

This course is an introduction to the study of digital visual culture, including television, movies, and social media. Together, we will discuss how cinematography, sound, mise-en-scène, and editing convey meaning and send us messages about the world in which we live. We will also debate concepts including medium specificity, genre, new media, and taste hierarchies. At the end of the course, students will understand how to conduct formal analyses of visual texts, think critically about visual media in an interdisciplinary context, and apply their skills to visual media they encounter and produce in their own lives.

COMM 270: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION (4)

This course examines the diverse cultural and sociocultural customs, rules, and communication styles in multicultural interaction. Topics examined are intercultural communication theory, communication styles across different cultures, the impact of cultural difference on human interaction in business, education, and interpersonal interaction, and strategies in cross-cultural training. (o, DIV, MOD, DJP)

COMM 290: INDEPENDENT STUDY (2 OR 4)

Independent study conducted below the advanced level. Application must be made with faculty prior to registration. Offered any term.

COMM 313: MEDIA CRITICISM (4)

A survey of critical approaches to the mass media and mass culture. The purpose of the course is to develop students' critical viewing skills by increasing awareness of the pervasiveness of the mass media in everyday life, by studying various theories of media criticism, and by doing critical analysis of the media. (MOD)

COMM 327: COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY: FROM CAVE PAINTINGS TO AI (4)

Social influences on the emergence of new communication technologies, and the way such technologies impact society, are studied in this course. The course begins with consideration of the history of technologies such as the telegraph, telephone, and broadcasting. Insights from historical study are then applied in critical analysis of current and emergent communication technologies.

COMM 343: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION (4)

Students examine communicative approaches to organizing, including classical/scientific management, human relations, human resources, systems, cultural, and critical theories. Specific issues in organizations such as socialization, conflict, work, emotion, and sexual harassment will be considered from a communicative perspective. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. (MOD)

COMM 344: HEALTH COMMUNICATION (4)

Health communication is an emerging specialty in the field of communication. This course is a survey of some of the concepts and theories in health communication and explores several areas, including the social construction of health and illness, patient-provider interaction, the development of health care promotion messages, and an overview of health care models and organizational structures in the U.S. Also listed and described as PH 344. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

COMM 348: POP CULTURE (4)

This course examines the relationship of communication media and popular culture. The study of popular culture reveals how people make meaning in everyday communicative interaction. Topics covered include the role of popular culture in society, cultural studies analysis, and a case study of rock and roll as a cultural form. (DIV, MOD)

COMM 350: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: TRANSFORMING SOCIETY & CULTURE

This course delves into the transformative impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on society and culture. AI technologies are revolutionizing various aspects of our daily lives, from the way we work and communicate to how we perceive and interact with the world around us. We will explore AI's historical context, economic impact, ethical considerations, and potential future trends.

COMM 350: WOMEN, DOMESTICITY, AND THE MEDIA

Students will examine the relationship between women and their homes in television shows, books, movies, and social media figures in mainstream American culture. While the idea of showing a woman in her home is deeply traditional—as in, “a woman’s place is in the home”—there are ways to do it that queer the relationship between women and domesticity. As we put such films as “Grey Gardens,” novels like “Sula,” and stars like Kim Kardashian in a transnational context, we will consider the following questions: How does the relationship between women and domesticity iterate and change across space and time? How do different kinds of genres (e.g., the domestic novel, the horror film) grapple

with this longstanding relationship? Why are texts that take place in the home often referred to as “guilty pleasures?” What are the political implications of off-kilter depictions of women in their homes? Under what conditions do visual and literary texts allow women to live together, or live alone. Students will perform close readings to analyze how visual and literary texts reflect broader sociopolitical contexts, understand the historical relationship between women and the home, and critically evaluate the evolving significance of this connection in today's culture.

COMM 361: MEDIA LAW AND FREE SPEECH (4)

Students gain a basic understanding of philosophy and practice of government regulation of U.S. media. First Amendment issues, intellectual property, and differences between regulation of print, electronic and online media are covered. Students prepare in-depth research projects on issues such as free speech, copyright, content creation regulation in the US and abroad.

COMM 380: GLOBAL COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA (4)

This course deals with the development of various international media systems and international communication. Topics include comparative analysis of U.S., British, Russian, Chinese, and other countries' media systems, the role of commercial, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations in shaping global communication, and critical analysis of documentary films portraying international media issues. Also listed and described as INTL 380.. (o, GLO, MOD)

COMM 390: INDEPENDENT STUDY (2 OR 4)

Independent study conducted at the advanced level. Application must be made with faculty prior to registration. Offered any term.

COMM 399: INTERNSHIP (4)

Application must be made with faculty prior to registration. May be proposed in any term.

COMM 470: SENIOR SEMINAR (4)

In this capstone course, students draw on the knowledge and skills developed in the program to write a major research paper in a particular area of communication studies. Prerequisite: senior standing. Offered Term

COMM 490: SENIOR HONORS THESIS (4, 4)

Capstone for honors candidates, by invitation of the department. A three-term project culminating in a thesis. Application must be made with faculty prior to registration. May meet with COMM 470. Offered Term 1.