

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

Overview

202 Wayne Hall

West Chester University

West Chester, PA 19383

610-436-2500

Department of Communication and Media (<http://www.wcupa.edu/communicationStudies/>)

Dr. Millhous (lmillhous@wcupa.edu), *Chairperson*

Dr. Mahoney (mmahoney@wcupa.edu), *Assistant Chairperson*

Dr. Schraedley (mschraedley@wcupa.edu), *Assistant Chairperson*

Dr. Rainear (arainear@wcupa.edu), *Graduate Coordinator*

Program of Study

The Master of Arts in Communication Studies is a comprehensive program that focuses on the broad field of communication. Given the breadth of the field of communication, the program seeks to build students' understanding and abilities across a broad array of communication contexts (including organizational, interpersonal, small group, mass media, and public relations). The program is designed to provide a theory-based approach to a variety of communicative phenomena while simultaneously stressing the value of research. Together, theory and research provide students with the proper foundation for making solid persuasive arguments in their professional and academic pursuits. By acquiring theoretical knowledge and research skills, students and graduates can best apply their education in their chosen fields.

The M.A. in Communication Studies is designed as both an academic and a professional development degree with thesis and non-thesis track options. Many students complete the program and pursue additional graduate work at the Ph.D. level. The program offers a thesis option for students interested in pursuing a large-scale research project in preparation for future Ph.D. work. In terms of professional development, all courses explore pragmatic issues of communication. The program offers tremendous flexibility enabling students to further their chosen career goals, and perhaps future success, by exploring up to 15 credits outside the Department of Communication and Media. For example, students interested in administrative work can take elective courses in the Master of Public Administration program (M.P.A.). The department faculty also are ideally suited to help with students' professional development goals because they serve as communication consultants to groups and organizations outside of the University.

Since the program is designed to enhance students' communication skills, courses within the program require extensive speaking and writing. Courses are generally taught as small discussion-oriented seminars, and most course grading centers on students' papers and presentations.

Philadelphia Campus

The M.A. in Communication Studies has also been offered at the Philadelphia campus. At this time, new students are no longer being admitted into the program there.

Curriculums for programs offered at the alternative PASSHE Center City (<http://wcupa.edu/philly/>) satellite campus in Philadelphia are equivalent to those found on WCU's main campus. With state-of-the-art classrooms, the Center City location serves the needs of degree completers and/or adult learners who are balancing work and family obligations.

Programs

Master's Program

- M.A. in Communication Studies (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/graduate/arts-humanities/communication-media/communication-studies-ma/>)

Certificate

- Digital Media Marketing (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/graduate/arts-humanities/communication-media/digital-media-marketing-graduate-cert/>)

Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's

- B.A. to M.A. in Communication Studies (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/arts-humanities/communication-media/communication-studies-ba/>)
- B.A. in Media and Culture to M.A. in Communication Studies (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/arts-humanities/communication-media/media-culture-ba/>)

Admissions

All applicants to one of West Chester University's graduate programs will be held to the graduate admissions requirements (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/general-information/admissions-enrollment/graduate-admissions/>). When applicable, additional requirements for admission into specific department program(s) may be listed below.

Admission Requirements for the M.A. in Communication Studies

Admission to the M.A. in Communication Studies is based on satisfactory review of all application materials. A bachelor's degree is required and the cumulative undergraduate GPA should be 3.0 or above. Please note that applications will be evaluated holistically and no single factor, including GPA, will preclude a student from gaining admission. Applicants should submit the following materials:

1. Completed online application
2. Official transcript(s) from all institutions attended
3. Writing sample (3-5 pages) of previous work such as an excerpt of an undergraduate academic paper, a job-related writing sample, a piece of creative writing, or a statement of interest in the M.A. in Communication Studies at WCU
4. Two letters of recommendation
5. Resume or curriculum vitae, including work experience or co-curricular activities that indicate communication or media skills

Policies

All graduate students are held to the academic policies and procedures (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/graduate/academic-policies-procedures/>) outlined in the graduate catalog. Students are encouraged to review departmental handbooks for program tips, suggested course sequences, and explanations of procedures. When applicable, additional policies for specific department programs may be listed below.

Admission to Degree Candidacy

At the completion of 12 semester hours (at least nine of which are within the department), a minimum graduate GPA of 3.0 or better must be earned for candidacy to be achieved. At candidacy, a major advisor is selected.

Grade Point Average Requirement for Good Standing

To remain in good standing, a student must maintain a minimum, overall graduate GPA of 3.0 or above.

Comprehensive Examination

After the completion of all course work, nonthesis and thesis students will take a comprehensive written examination. Thesis students will defend their theses orally.

Faculty

Professors

Michael Boyle (mboyle@wcupa.edu) (2006)
Interim Associate Dean, College of Arts and Humanities
B.A., East Stroudsburg University; M.A., University of Delaware;
Ph.D., University of Wisconsin at Madison

Roger Gatchet (rgatchet@wcupa.edu) (2015)
B.A., Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo; M.A., Ph.D, University of Texas at Austin

Elaine B. Jenks (ejenks@wcupa.edu) (1992)
B.A., University of Maryland; M.A., Gannon University; Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University

M. Ola Kopacz (mkopacz@wcupa.edu) (2007)
M.A., Warsaw University (Poland); Ph.D., University of Arizona

Bessie Lee Lawton (blawton@wcupa.edu) (2008)
B.A., M.A., University of the Philippines; Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania

Edward J. Lordan (elordan@wcupa.edu) (2001)
B.A., West Chester University; M.A., Temple University; Ph.D., Syracuse University

L. Meghan Mahoney (mmahoney@wcupa.edu) (2011)
Assistant Chairperson, Communication and Media
B.A., York College of Pennsylvania; M.A., West Chester University;
Ph.D., Ohio University

Elizabeth Ann Munz (emunz@wcupa.edu) (2013)
B.A., University of Richmond; M.A., Ph.D., Purdue University

Denise M. Polk (dpolk@wcupa.edu) (2005)
B.A., Baldwin-Wallace College; M.A., Miami University; Ph.D., Kent State University

Associate Professors

Camilo Diaz Pino (cdiazpino@wcupa.edu) (2018)
B.A., M.A., University of Auckland, New Zealand; Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, Madison

Maxine Gesualdi (mgesualdi@wcupa.edu) (2016)
B.S., West Virginia University; M.A., West Chester University; Ph.D., Temple University

Lisa Millhous (lmillhous@wcupa.edu) (1999)
Chairperson, Communication and Media
B.A., Macalester College; M.A., Ph.D., University of Minnesota

Adam M Rainear (arainear@wcupa.edu) (2020)
Graduate Coordinator, Communication and Media
B.A., Rutgers University; M.A., Ph.D., University of Connecticut

Megan Schraedley (mschraedley@wcupa.edu) (2019)
Assistant Chairperson, Communication and Media
B.A., Boston College; M.A., Ph.D., University of Missouri - Columbia

Julia Waddell (jwaddell@wcupa.edu) (2016)
B.A., B.S., University of Florida; M.S., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Ph.D., University of Michigan

Assistant Professors

Laura Brown (lbrown2@wcupa.edu) (2024)
B.A., Grove City College; M.A. & Ph.D., Ohio University

Jordin Clark (jclark@wcupa.edu) (2024)
B.A., Elmhurst University; M.A., Ph.D., Colorado State University

Stephen M. Didomenico (sdidomenico@wcupa.edu) (2020)
B.A., University of Michigan; M.A., University of Illinois; Ph.D., Rutgers University

Jeremy McCool (jmccool@wcupa.edu) (2024)
B.A., M.A., Western Illinois University; Ph.D., Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Lucy Miller (lmiller2@wcupa.edu) (2024)
B.A., M.A., University of Arkansas; Ph.D., Texas A&M University

Taryn Myers (tmyers@wcupa.edu) (2024)
B.A., M.S., Towson University; M.S., Ph.D., Howard University

Eryn S. Travis (etravis@wcupa.edu) (2017)
B.A., University of Maryland; M.A., West Chester University; Ph.D., Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Courses

COM

COM 500. Communication And Leadership. 3 Credits.

Exploration of the interconnections between communication principles and the theory and practice of leadership.

COM 501. Theoretic Perspectives On Human Communication. 3 Credits.

A comprehensive examination of major theoretical perspectives on human communication ranging from classical to contemporary.

Distance education offering may be available.

COM 502. Communication Research Methods. 3 Credits.

An examination of the major issues pertaining to inquiry in human communication, including the nature of inquiry; qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches to communication research; moral and ethical standards for human research; the role of the researcher; and comparisons of academic research. Students will be required to design and execute a research project.

Distance education offering may be available.

COM 503. Communication & Persuasive Influence. 3 Credits.

An analysis of major conceptual approaches to persuasion and their implications for understanding influence contexts and designing pragmatic strategies.

COM 505. Rhetoric And Leadership. 3 Credits.

The criticism and history of influence will be explored to focus on examples of persuasion through public discourse.

COM 506. Communications In Small Groups. 3 Credits.

An examination of traditional and contemporary research which pertains to various dimensions of small group communication including, but not limited to, the following topics: structure, size, tasks, goals, roles, systems, and leadership.

COM 508. Special Topics Seminar. 3 Credits.

An intensive examination of a selected area within communication study. Topics will vary and will be announced in advance of each semester.

Distance education offering may be available.

Repeatable for credit.

COM 509. Communication & Conflict Resolution. 3 Credits.

Using both theoretical and activity-centered learning, the student will explore the options available to resolve conflict through communication.

Distance education offering may be available.

COM 510. Culture, Media And Representation. 3 Credits.

Course examines how the media constructs ideologies and images of various cultural groups for mass consumption.

COM 511. Understanding Close Relationships. 3 Credits.

This course is designed to introduce and discuss basic theories, themes, concepts, and controversies in relationships from a communication standpoint. Students will be better equipped to apply theoretical knowledge to repair, maintain, and enhance their own personal relationships.

Distance education offering may be available.

COM 514. Family Communication. 3 Credits.

This seminar is designed to acquaint students with contemporary theory and research on family communication. More specifically, students will examine communication processes that define and impact families, the diverse family forms that comprise contemporary family systems, intersections between families and other contexts (e.g., workplace, healthcare, media), and current issues that affect families. The course provides students with the opportunity to learn about family communication both in an abstract way (via readings and class discussions) and in a more concrete fashion (by developing and writing a scholarly paper).

COM 520. Political Communication. 3 Credits.

Examines the role communication plays in the political system with a specific focus on campaign communication, political advertising, and media coverage of politics.

COM 530. Advances In Nonverbal Communication. 3 Credits.

This course investigates recent advances and controversies in nonverbal communication theory and research.

COM 535. Communication Competence. 3 Credits.

Course examines what it means to be a highly competent communicator. Communication competence will be explored across a multitude of communication contexts including interpersonal, organizational, intercultural and leadership contexts.

COM 550. Listening: Verbal & Nonverbal Perception. 3 Credits.

A survey of research in listening behavior and related nonverbal variables. Identification of important characteristics of effective listeners. Application to communication activities in the classroom.

COM 551. Public Relations Research And Writing. 3 Credits.

Familiarizes student with the skills needed to work as a public relations writer and editor. Explores applicable media theories as well as ethical and legal issues.

COM 561. Strategic Media Content. 3 Credits.

Today's digital environment provides endless distribution options. The purpose of this course is to guide students through the process of creating and maintaining a digital media content strategy. Specifically, students will learn how to apply communication audience research measurements to strategic development of organizational goals. Next, students will apply knowledge towards the development of a strategic digital marketing plan for distribution. In this phase, students will study various social media platforms and the function and audience for each, as well as how they work together in cross-platform promotion. Finally, students are expected to complete a final marketing campaign to meet a local organization's digital media goals. The final project will require digital media creation and evaluation.

Distance education offering may be available.

COM 563. Visual Communication. 3 Credits.

Digital communication these days is overwhelmingly visual. We consume visual content through websites, streaming video, and social media. The most engaging social media content typically consists of visual images. This course equips students with theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed to create compelling social media visuals in a variety of formats.

Distance education offering may be available.

COM 565. The Science and Media Connection: Producing and Communicating Science. 3 Credits.

This course is intended to prepare students to make multimedia products about fundamental scientific phenomena which can be used to educate and teach others. Through both theoretical and practical approaches, students learn skills and concepts that will enable them to complete a series of science-based creative projects and apply these skills toward future use.

Equivalent courses: ESS 365, ESS 565, MDC 365

COM 568. Special Topics Seminar in Digital Media Marketing. 3 Credits.

An intensive examination of a selected area within digital media marketing study. Topics will vary and will be announced in advance of each semester.

Distance education offering may be available.

Repeatable for credit.

COM 570. Conc Foundations Comm Train & Devel. 3 Credits.

This course examines major schools of thought in organizational training and development. Each viewpoint is explored for its diagnostic guidance, learning implications, and training technologies.

COM 575. Seminar On Speech Pedagogy. 3 Credits.

An examination of pedagogical research on the development of effective public speakers. Provides opportunities to both train speakers and critique public presentations.

COM 598. Grad Internship in Speech Communication. 3-6 Credits.

Supervised professional training in approved communication placements. Repeatable for credit.

COM 599. Directed Graduate Studies. 3 Credits.

Research projects, reports, readings in speech communication. Repeatable for credit.

COM 601. Communication Studies Thesis I. 3 Credits.

Original research, supervised through topic selection, investigation, and oral defense.

COM 602. Communication Studies Thesis II. 3 Credits.

Original research, supervised through: IRB approval (if necessary), data collection, analysis, writing results, writing thesis chapters, and defense.

COM 602 Prerequisite: Successful completion of COM 601 with minimum grade of C-.