

School of Communication

M.A. Requirements

PROFESSORS: Carlson, Hilt, Johansen, Lipschultz, Prisbell, Sherer, Smith-Howell, Wanzenried

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS: Allen, Bingham, Dwyer, Glaser, Lamsam, Rose

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS: Fus, Ogden, Pickering, Reilly, Wilson

The School of Communication offers a Master of Arts degree emphasizing a broad theoretical knowledge of speech and mass communication. Graduate students achieve in-depth knowledge of communication processes and effects, and acquire the skills needed to discover new knowledge through research and other forms of scholarly activity. They also acquire skills and knowledge needed for professional growth. Graduate students conduct original research for a thesis or project.

School of Communication graduate faculty members offer an impressive blend of academic and professional media and corporate experience. Faculty are actively involved in discovery of new knowledge through publication in top scholarly journals. The faculty seek to cultivate in students breadth and depth of knowledge about communication, and seek to foster the spirit of free investigation.

Admissions Procedures and Policies

Prospective communication graduate students should first contact the department's graduate program coordinator. The School of Communication requires applicants to complete a Personal Reference Form, including a 500-word essay. Additionally, applicants must follow requirements and procedures applicable to all prospective UNO graduate students, including completion of the Application for Graduate Admission.

The department may grant unconditional or provisional admission.

Unconditional Admission may be granted to a student whose record includes at least the following:

- Certification of a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution;
- Documentation through official transcript using a 4.0 grade point scale of having earned at least:
 - a 3.25 in communication undergraduate work, *and*
 - either a 3.0 overall undergraduate average or a 3.25 average in the last half of undergraduate credit hours, *and*
- Inclusion of at least 15 undergraduate semester hours of appropriate courses in communication arts and sciences, including sufficient advanced upper division preparation in the area of graduate concentration.

Provisional Admission may be granted for reasons of experience, maturity or other circumstances to a student who does not meet the unconditional admission standards. In no case may a student be admitted who does not meet UNO Graduate College provisional admission standards. If granted provisional admission, the student must complete a graduate level communication seminar during the first 12 hours of course work with a grade of "B" (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher.

Applicants who have more than six hours of undergraduate deficiencies will be advised to remove them *before* applying for any type of admission.

Before deciding whether or not to recommend provisional admission, the school's graduate faculty may require any one or any combination of the following:

- Completion of prescribed course(s) (not for graduate credit) with a grade of "B" (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher; and/or
- Passing such test(s) as faculty members deem necessary in order to determine whether the applicant is adequately prepared for graduate study.

Master of Arts

Degree Requirements

All students who major in communication are required to complete 12 semester hours of core courses with an average grade of "B" (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher across the core: COMM 8010, 8020, 8470, and 8570. The core provides basic, intensive and broad coverage of communication as a field of advanced study. The core integrates mass and speech communication theories and research methodologies. If a student fails to achieve an average grade of "B" in the overall core, the student may retake each core course with a grade below "B" (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) once, and must obtain an average grade of "B" (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher to remain in the program.

All students take a three-part comprehensive examination. These broadly cover communication theory, research methodology and a student's specific area of interest. Generally, these examinations are administered near or at the end of all course work.

After completion of the first six hours of graduate course work, the student must be advised on a plan of study.

Thesis Option

(30 credit hours including COMM 8990) In the thesis option, the student must complete: the 12 hour core, 12 additional hours of graduate elective courses, and a six hour thesis, based on a proposal approved by the student's committee. The student must write a thesis which is defended orally before his or her thesis committee. No more than nine hours from outside the department may be counted toward degree requirements.

Project Option (36 credit hours including COMM 8970)

In the project option, the student must complete: the 12 hour core, at least one additional three hour graduate-only seminar, 18 additional hours of graduate elective courses, and a three hour graduate project. The project, in lieu of a thesis, is based on a proposal approved by the student's committee. The student must complete a project which is defended orally before his or her project committee. No more than 12 hours from outside the department may be counted toward degree requirements.

Certificate in Human Resources and Training

In conjunction with the departments of Business Administration and Psychology, the School of Communication is offering a Certificate in Human Resources and Training. For more information on this certificate, please see page 139 in the Graduate Catalog or [Human Resources & Training Certificate](#) on this website.

Certificate of Technical Communication

In conjunction with the English department, the School of Communication is offering a Certificate of Technical Communication. For more information see the Technical Communication web site at www.unomaha.edu/~techcomm

Additional Information

The graduate program has developed a student handbook that provides detailed information on degree requirements and committee structure. Copies of this handbook are available from graduate faculty members in the School of Communication, (402)554-2600.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

4010/8016 History of Mass Communication (3)

The American mass media from 17th century origins to present, with emphasis on mass communication aspects of literary, intellectual, social and political history, and their relationships to current media issues. Prereq: None.

4110/8116 Rhetorical Theory and Criticism (3)

Rhetorical theory and criticism, emphasizing ways of evaluating oral communication. Prereq: None.

4140/8146 Communication and Human Relationships (3)

This course applies theories of interpersonal processes and communication principles to the study of relationships. Discussion focuses on the communication in different types of relationships and relational stages, e.g., strangers, acquaintances, friendship and intimate. Prereq: None.

4150/8156 Communication Training and Development Skills (3)

This course exposes students to the process of designing communication training workshops/programs. It provides students, especially those who are prospective trainers and/or consultants, experiential and cognitive knowledge about needs assessment, adult learning, communication training topics research, objectives writing, module design, interactive delivery methods, and program evaluation. Prereq: Graduate majoring in communication or permission of instructor.

4160/8166 Communication for Instructional Settings (3)

Introduces prospective trainers and/or educators to the principles of communication in instructional settings (i.e., classrooms, workshops, training seminars). Provides theoretical and experiential knowledge about communication goals/objectives, student/trainee communication needs & expectations, reinforcement & feedback, climate & influence, and teacher/trainer communicator style, characteristics, & behavior. Prereq: Graduate majoring in communication or permission of instructor.

4170/8176 Organizational Communication(3)

Exposure to various theoretical approaches and methods for understanding communication processes in organizational settings. Application of these approaches/methods to the analysis and resolution of problematic situations in organizations. Prereq: None.

4180/8186 Communication Leadership and Power in Organizations (3)

Introduces students to the role of communication leadership and power in organizations. Provides theoretical and experiential knowledge about such topics as communication leadership styles and tactics, superior/subordinate communication and power, ethical responsibilities, and diversity/gender issues related to communication leadership. Prereq: Graduate majoring in communication or permission of instructor.

4190/8196 Computer-Mediated Communication (3)

Computer-Mediated Communication addresses emerging issues of virtual communities, identity, civic life and participation, online relationships, collaborative work environments, digital networks, gender/race/class issues, legal and ethical considerations of technology, and commodification of mediated communication. Prereq: Graduate student standing.

4220/8226 Literary Journalism (3)

Survey of the journalistic works of pertinent American writers through readings, lectures, discussions, plus creative writing assignments.

4230/8236 Principles of Public Relations (3)

This basic course combines the communication theories and management practices of public relations and its multi-faceted role in today's society, including historical perspectives, ethical and legal issues, and the process and planning of campaign development.

4240/8246 Public Relations Case Studies (3)

The course is designed to enable the student: 1) to integrate issue-management and decision-making theoretical models with the communication theory and research techniques presented in JOUR 4230/8236 and 2) to apply professional judgment to the public relations problem-solving process through the development of structured analysis of historical cases. Prereq: None.

4310/8316 Political Broadcasting (3)

A study of the evolving role of the electronic media in shaping political activities in our contemporary democratic society. Prereq: None.

4340/8346 Telecommunication Regulation (3)

A study of responsibilities and obligations of broadcasters as defined and interpreted through the history of regulation and deregulation policy. Licensing, spectrum allocation, programming and advertising regulation are studied.

4350/8356 Mass Communication Research (3)

Field and lab quantitative research methods. Students develop and conduct a mass media research project. Prereq: None.

4370/8376 Communication Workshop (3)

A workshop to explore communication theory and processes and to develop skills in their application.

4380/8386 Film Theory and Criticism (3)

Study of major trends in film criticism and theory in Europe and America, with concentrated analysis of selected films. Prereq: None.

4390/8396 Electronic Media Management (3)

Emerging mass media are driven by commercial pressures. This course discusses management, economics, policies and structures of American radio, television, cable and digital media. Students are instructed on the media business from local, national and global perspectives. The industry is studied from both professional and critical perspectives. Prereq: Graduate students should have either course work or professional experience in mass communication.

4400/8406 Mass Media Ethics (3)

The study of mass media as social institutions, particularly in their interaction with government and the public, with emphasis on ethical considerations.

4410/8416 Communication Law (3)

A discussion of laws, court decisions, constitutional issues and regulations that affect the mass media, with emphasis on libel, privacy, confidentiality of reporters' sources, prior restraint, obscenity regulation, free press/fair trial, commercial speech, broadcast regulation and intellectual property.

4420/8426 Theories of the First Amendment: Speech and Press (3)

An examination of freedom of communication in the United States with particular attention to freedom of the mass media and the many attempts at censorship. The course examines the philosophical and legal aspects of freedom of speech and press and the theories held by legal scholars. Prereq: None.

4500/8506 Mass Communication and Public Opinion (3)

A study of the philosophy, process and effects of mass communication in the U.S., the relationship between the mass media and public opinion, and the nature, function and measurement of public opinion.

4510/8516 Persuasion (3)

Basic principles and psychological processes underlying persuasive communication; a review of various source, message, channel and receiver variables and their influence on communication effectiveness. Prereq: None.

4520/8526 Psycholinguistics (3)

A discussion of the literature concerned with how such psychological variables as perception, learning, memory and development relate to the linguistic variables of sentence structure, meaning and speech sounds. Prereq: None. (Same as PSYCH 4520/8526)

4530/8536 Cross-Cultural Communication (3)

The intent of this course is to examine the concepts of cross-cultural communication. Theory and research are integrated with applications and necessary skills are identified and developed. Prereq: None.

4540/8546 Contemporary Systems of Communication (3)

An adaptation of General Systems Theory concepts to the study of human communication processes with emphasis on systems analysis of contemporary interpersonal communication perspectives. Prereq: None.

4550/8556 Nonverbal Communication (3)

This course is designed to familiarize the student with current theory and research about nonverbal communication and to provide a variety of practical experiences through which the student can analyze and evaluate his or her own nonverbal behavior and that of others. Prereq: None.

4600/8606 Communication Theory (3)

Exposes students to theories that cut across the traditional sub-disciplines of the field of communication: mass, organizational, small group, interpersonal and public/rhetorical. Also discusses principles that will assist students in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the theories to which they are exposed. Prereq: Graduate majoring in communication or instructor permission.

4620/8626 Directing Forensics (3)

To provide students planning to teach speech in high school or college with a philosophy and detailed knowledge of how to direct a forensic program. Prereq: None.

4800/8806 Conflict Mediation (3)

This course develops knowledge of mediation theory, research, and practice and communication skills essential to the effective mediation of disputes in various contexts. Prereq: Graduate major in Communication or instructor permission.

4900/4910-8906/8916 Seminar in Mass Communication (3)

A senior seminar applying historical and theoretical perspective to current issues and developments in mass communications.

8010 Seminar in Communication Research: Quantitative Emphasis (3)

Philosophy of scientific investigation from a quantitative standpoint, including process and products, in comparison to other ways of knowing. Introduces students to quantitative designs and statistical applications for communication research and to data-gathering methods appropriate for such designs. Emphasis is placed on preparing, evaluating and writing quantitatively-oriented communication research proposals and reports. Interplay between quantitative and qualitative data is discussed. Prereq: Graduate majoring in communication or permission of instructor.

8020 Seminar in Communication Research: Qualitative Emphasis (3)

Philosophy of scientific investigation from a qualitative standpoint, including process and products, in comparison to other ways of knowing. Introduces students to qualitative designs for communication research and to methods appropriate for qualitatively oriented designs. The interplay between qualitative and quantitative data in communication research is discussed as are techniques for preparing, evaluating and writing qualitatively oriented communication research reports. Prereq: Graduate majoring in communication or permission of instructor.

8030 Topics in Communication Research Methods (1)

A variable content course dealing with research methods in communication. Each offering will treat a single research method in depth - survey, experimental, content analysis, qualitative, legal, etc. Prereq: COMM 8010 or 8020 or permission of instructor.

8110 Seminar in Modern Public Address (3)

Studies in figures, movements and institutions prominent in modern public address. Prereq: Graduate and majoring in communication or permission of instructor.

8180 Topics in Speech Communication (3)

A variable content course dealing with speech communication. Each offering will treat a single aspect of speech communication in-depth - e.g., interpersonal conflict, gender and communication, organizational culture, health systems communication, relational communication, political communication, marital and family communication, communication education, etc. Course may be repeated. Prereq: Graduate and majoring in communication or permission of instructor.

8300 Topical Seminar in Mass Media (3)

Substantive study of specialized areas and modes of broadcasting, film and print communication. Content will vary. Course may be repeated. Prereq: Graduate and majoring in communication or permission of instructor.

8470 Foundations Seminar: Speech Communication (3)

This seminar was designed for students preparing to take the major, minor or advanced seminars in communication. The course will expose students to the historical development of the speech communication discipline. It will also address issues involved in conceptualizing and doing research on speech communication. Additionally, the course will discuss speech communication in selected contexts (e.g. intercultural, organizational, small group) and areas of study (e.g., persuasion, nonverbal communication). Finally, future direction in the development of the discipline will be addressed. Prereq: Graduate and major in communication or permission.

8500 Seminar in Communication Theory (3)

This course has a twofold purpose: (1) to expose students to different perspectives on building and critiquing theory (e.g., the classical versus the interpretive/naturalistic perspectives.) (2) to apply perspectives to the analysis and critique of a range of influential theoretical approaches employed in the communication discipline (e.g., systems theory, semiotics, message reception/processing theories). Prereq: Graduate and majoring in communication, or permission of instructor.

8570 Foundations Seminar: Mass Communication (3)

This seminar was designed for students preparing to take the major, a minor or advanced seminars in communication. The mass communication system in the United States will be examined in terms of its basic philosophical and legal assumptions and the current political, cultural, sociological and psychological theories relating to the process and effects of mass communication. Prereq: Graduate and majoring in communication or permission of instructor.

8970 Graduate Project (3)

Project Option students must complete a three-hour graduate project written under the supervision of an adviser. A two-member graduate committee must approve the project. Prereq: COMM 8010, 8020, 8470, 8570 and student must be admitted to candidacy.

8980 Independent Study (1-3)

Students conduct independent research under the supervision of an adviser. May be taken multiple times with approval of graduate adviser.

8990 Thesis (1-6 each)

Independent research project written under the supervision of an adviser.

9400 Seminar in Communication & Technology (3)

A synthesis of speech and mass communication research as it relates to the study of computers and technology. Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) will be emphasized. Students write a research paper appropriate for submission to an academic conference. Prereq: COMM 8470 or 8570, and COMM 8010 or 8020, or permission of instructor.