Communication Studies

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The BA in Communication Studies is a major in the College of Arts and Sciences for students interested in specializing in digital media studies as an area of expertise. The major helps students develop advanced skills in communications with an emphasis on digital media studies, including multimedia writing, video editing and production, web content strategy and design, and writing for social media platforms.

Communication Studies students acquire a solid grounding in the study of digital communications while exploring current ideas and tools that are shaping the knowledge society. A hallmark of the Communication Studies curriculum is the emphasis on both theory and practice. Not only do students study what is happening at the forefront of emerging communication technologies, they also participate. Students have access to cutting-edge resources as they make and reflect upon media and in the process acquire important skills in teamwork, innovation, design, and entrepreneurship. The major prepares students for careers in digital media including web content strategy and design, social media/community management, and multimedia journalism.

The Department of Communication Studies is committed to excellence in teaching and learning. Faculty are dedicated to the art of thinking across media, platforms, and theories in order to create an innovative and socially responsible curriculum that goes beyond the classroom. Communication Studies students gain hands-on experience by working closely with faculty on a variety of activities.

Student Learning Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Students will gain critical awareness of the social role of media.

Objective 1.1: Students will understand the history and context of the role that media has played in society.

Objective 1.2: Students will be able to articulate and critique the role media has historically played, and currently plays in society.

Goal 2: Students will understand the principles and practices of effective media communication.

Learning Objective

Objective 2.1: Students will be able to identify and employ a range of effective communication strategies to navigate audience, purpose, and context.

Goal 3: Students will understand and apply human centered design approaches to communicating through digital media.

Objective 3.1: Students will analyze, articulate, and understand how multiple theoretical approaches of aesthetics and design inform the way audiences act, interact, and produce meaning.

Objective 3.2: Students will be able to create media objects which effectively applies these design principles for a desired rhetorical goal.

Goal 4: Student will understand the relation between media and social responsibility.

Objective 4.1: Students will understand and articulate the ethical questions and principles that inform the use of digital media.

Objective 4.2: Students will understand and articulate how digital media has been, and can be, employed to facilitate innovation, social change, and civic engagement.

Goal 5: Students will be able to use digital media in a way which demonstrates information literacy.

Objective 5.1: Students will employ digital media tools and approaches to establish the veracity and credibility of information.

Objective 5.2: Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively manage the ubiquitous flow of digital media information.

Objective 5.3: Students will be able to effectively use digital media to research, gather, and assess digital information and knowledge.
Communication Studies Major Curriculum

GEP Signature Courses (See Curricula): five courses

GEP Variable Courses (See Curricula): six to nine courses

GEP Integrative Learning Courses (See options for Communication Studies): three courses

Communication Studies Courses: Twelve required courses, including seven core courses and five option courses.

All Communication majors will be assigned a departmental advisor with whom they will consult during the course of their studies and who will help them select a series of course appropriate for both their interests and future careers.

All students complete the seven Core courses and select the remaining five courses from the list of Option Courses.

Core Courses
COM 200 Communications Theory & Practice
COM 201 Ethics in Communication
COM 202 Visual Rhetoric
COM 371 Civic Media
COM 372 Web Design and Development
MKT 303 Integrated Marketing Communications (not for business majors)
COM 472 Digital Storytelling

The five remaining courses in the major may be chosen from a broad set of options. Note two of the five must be COM courses, the remainder can be either COM courses or from the list of affiliated courses:

Option Courses (select five)
COM 372 Web Design and Development
COM 373 The Art of Presentation
COM 382 When in Rome
COM 402 Advanced Web Design
COM 465 Bear Witness: War Past and Present
COM 473 Special Topics in Communications and Digital Media
COM 491 Communication Internship

ART 173 Digital Photography I
ART 273 Digital Photography II
ART 373 Digital Photography III

ENG 206 Public Speaking & Presentation: Rhetoric in Modern Practice
ENG 261 Introduction to Reporting and Writing
ENG 263 Writing for Organizations
ENG 344 Screenwriting
ENG 362 Literary Journalism
ENG 363 Online News Production
ENG 448 Magazine Writing
ENG 451 Food Writing
ENG 462 Narrative Journalism
ENG 463 Advanced Multimedia Journalism
ENG 464 Sports Journalism
ENG 465 Special Topics in Journalism
ENG 490 Journalism Internship

MKT 315 Multicultural Marketing
MKT 321 Advertising
MKT 323 Media Management
MKT 324 Public Relations
MKT 325 Applied Design
MKT 326 Media Now

MTF 282 Screenwriting I
MTF 284 Digital Filmmaking
MTF 382 Screenwriting II (MTF 282 is a pre-req)
MTF 383 Film Directing (MTF 284 is a pre-req)
MTF 384 Digital Cinematography (MTF 284 is a pre-req)
MTF 386 Editing and Digital Post-Production (MTF 284 is a pre-req)
MTF 393 Professional Film Production Workshop (MTF 284 is a pre-req)

Integrated Learning Component (ILC)
Communication majors must also take three courses in the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) as part of the Integrated Learning Component (ILC) of the GEP. These courses must be outside of the major department. To fulfill the ILC requirement, students should choose three courses from the following:

CSC 120 Computer Science I
HIS 387 Popular Culture in the United States
LIN 101 Introduction to Linguistics
LIN 200 Language & Culture
LIN 317 Sociolinguistics
LIN 340 Communication in Social Contexts: “Can You Hear Me Now?”
LIN 401 Bilingualism and Language Diversity
MTF 157 Music History: Antiquity to 1750
POL 113 Introduction to Comparative Politics
POL 115 Introduction to International Politics
THE 371 Christianity & Media
THE 372 Technology Ethics
SOC 252 Media & Popular Culture
Art History courses: ART 101, 102, 103, 104, 107, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 212.
Literature and/or culture courses in any language at the 300 or 400 level.

Communication Studies Minor Curriculum
Six courses are required to complete the minor. To gain solid grounding in the field of communications, all students will satisfy three core requirements and then select three other courses from a range of options.

Minor Core Course Requirements
COM 200 Communications Theory and Practice
COM 201 Ethics in Communications
Select one from: Select one from: COM 371 Civic Media, COM 372 Web Design, COM 472 Digital Storytelling, or COM 491 Communications Internship.

Three additional courses can be chosen from numerous specified options in Communication Studies or courses provided by correlated departments: English; Fine Arts; Marketing; Music, Theatre, and Film.

Minor Course Options (select three)
COM 202 Visual Rhetoric
COM/MKT 303 Integrated Marketing Communications (if not taken in core)
COM 371 Civic Media (if not taken in core)
COM 372 Web Design and Development (if not taken in core)
COM 373 Art of Presentation
COM 382 When in Rome
COM 465 Bear Witness: War Past and Present
COM 472 Digital Storytelling (if not taken in core)
COM 473 Special Topics in Communications and Digital Media
COM 491 Communication Internship

ART 173 Digital Photography I
ART 273 Digital Photography II
ART 373 Digital Photography III

ENG 206 Public Speaking & Presentation: Rhetoric in Modern Practice
ENG 261 Introduction to Reporting and Writing
ENG 263 Writing for Organizations
ENG 344 Screenwriting
ENG 362 Literary Journalism
ENG 363 Online News Production
ENG 448 Magazine Writing
ENG 451 Food Writing

ENG 462 Narrative Journalism
ENG 463 Advanced Multimedia Journalism
ENG 464 Sports Journalism
ENG 465 Special Topics in Journalism
ENG 490 Journalism Internship

MKT 303 Integrated Marketing Communications (non-business majors only; MKT 301 for marketing majors)
MKT 315 Multicultural Marketing
MKT 321 Advertising
MKT 323 Media Management
MKT 324 Public Relations
MKT 325 Applied Design
MKT 326 Media Now

MTF 282 Screenwriting I (The Short)
MTF 284 Digital Filmmaking
MTF 382 Screenwriting II (The Feature)
MTF 383 Film Directing
MTF 384 Digital Cinematography
MTF 386 Editing & Digital Post-Production
MTF 393 Professional Film Production Workshop

Communication Studies Courses
COM 200 Communication Theory & Practice (3 credits)
This introduction to communication and digital media studies focuses on various ways people employ language, image, and more cinematic means for communicative purposes. Through a series of hands-on projects students learn to research and analyze contemporary issues and trends in the field of communications, with an emphasis on digital media. In doing so, students examine how communication technologies are impacting the relationship between media audiences, producers, and content.

COM 201 Ethics in Communications (3 credits)
This course explores ethical issues in the field of communications. Themes include: privacy, civic media, citizen journalism, copyright, intellectual property, cyber bullying, net neutrality, social networking, global ethics, and digital divides. Students develop skills in applied ethical decision making, democratic dialogue, and civic participation through a range of projects in both online and community settings.
Pre-requisite: COM 200

COM 202 Visual Rhetoric (3 Credits)
This course examines the role of aesthetic, sensory-based experience in digital environments. The course focuses on contemporary ways to
understand sensory perception (especially sight, sound, and touch) and its relationship to meaning making. Students will come to understand aesthetics as a mode of complex communication intricately related to social and cultural influences. Students will apply this understanding to a variety of hands-on projects involving color, typography, photography, infographics, sound design and editing, and presentation design.

**Pre-requisites:** COM 200 and 201

**MKT303 Integrated Marketing Communications (see MKT 303) (3 credits)**

**COM 371 Civic Media (3 credits)**
This course engages students in questions about media, technology, sociality, and society. Students examine both theoretical and experiential foundations in order to understand the relationship between mediated communication and human communities. Those who complete this course will gain hands on experience engaging audiences and developing communities through various social media platforms.

COM 200 and COM 201 are prerequisites for this course.

**COM 372 Web Design & Development**
This course explores the principles and best practices for creating web content, ranging from introductory work in HTML to design prototypes and web typography. Students will work with several types of web content (text, image, audio, video) and consider how that content is best used in the composition of usable, accessible, and attractive web sites. Students will also learn about the structure/history of the web, typical design workflows, and potential careers in web work.

**Pre-requisites:** COM 200 and 201

**COM 373 The Art of Presentation (3 credits)**
This course prepares students to deliver presentations in a wide range of professional contexts. The course emphasizes effective strategies for presentation design, audience engagement, and multimedia presentations.

**COM 382 Digital Publishing: Study Tour (3 credits)**
In this course students will research, produce and publish an interactive media rich culture and tour guide. This student centered digital publication will highlight art, architecture, history, culture, attractions, museums, parks, walking tours, side trips, and restaurants for the student traveler. The guidebook will also provide students traveling abroad with up-to-date, socially responsible opportunities to go beyond tourism. Destination varies depending on semester.

**COM 402 Advanced Web Design (3 Credits)**

**COM372:**
The class will be a mixture of web design theory and practical front-end techniques. Students are expected to have experience hand-coding websites using HTML and CSS, a basic understanding of using Git, and be familiar with basic principles of design such as color and typography. Topics covered will include: usability, accessibility, Git, Javascript/jQuery, designing for content management, and using Wordpress as a CMS. By the end of this course, students should have a solid understanding of the web design industry and modern web design techniques.

**COM 465 Bear Witness: War Past and Present (3 Credits)**
For most of us the visual experience of war comes from images. We will likely never see war first-hand so photographs, movies, video games and graphic novels help shape our collective understanding and memory of armed conflict. This course will investigate images of war from the United States, Iran, Spain, Rwanda, both World Wars, the war in Vietnam and the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We will examine photographs, films and video games and discuss the dual purpose of war images – as pieces of art and as the documentation of an event.

**COM 472 Digital Storytelling**
Students in this course will critique and create a variety of digital stories through multiple lenses. Possible topics include 1) the lens of craft (narrative paths, spectatorship, structure); 2) the lens of convergence (transmedia storytelling, immersion, and storytelling via games); and 3) the lens of social change (first-person narratives, documentaries, and social justice), 4) the lens of aesthetics (style, time, and space). COM 200 and COM 201 are prerequisites for this course.

**COM 473 Special Topics in Digital Rhetoric**
This special topics course will explore a specialized area at the intersection of technology and rhetoric.

**COM 491 Communication Internship (3 credits)**
An on-the-job learning experience in which students spend 12-15 hours a week over a
semester, with opportunities to develop further their understanding of communications, ideally in a career field close to their own interests. Normally taken in the junior or senior years, after career interests have clarified through diverse courses in the curriculum.

**COM 492 Communication Independent Study (3 credits)**

**COM 410 Social Media and Community Engagement (3 credits)**

Students in this course will be actively involved in research concerning social media and community engagement with local not-for-profit organizations. Students will examine both theoretical and experiential foundations in order to understand the relationship between mediated communication and social communities. Those who complete this course will know how to apply a variety of social media theories and practices to the social web (including network theory and social network analysis). Not only will students learn how to effectively communicate to audiences through a variety of platforms (including Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and Instagram), they will gain hands-on experience in content strategy and community engagement while working with a local organization. Course entry is by application.

**COM 411 Nonprofit Communications for Social Change (3 credits)**

Not-for-profit and community-based organizations rely on strategic digital communication to create social change. Students in this course gain in-depth knowledge of communication theories and practices while conducting research projects with local organizations through the Beautiful Social Collaborative. Students in the course actively participate as a member of a project team to complete projects with clients in the Greater Philadelphia area. Local travel is required.

**Internship**

Students who have completed both 200 and 201 and have at least junior standing are eligible to take the Internship course as one of their option courses. In order to take the Communications Internship students must be a Communications major and have a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

**Independent Study**

Communication Studies students with junior or senior standing and an overall GPA of 3.0 may apply for credit in an independent study program. These courses usually cover a topic not typically offered as part of the standard selection of courses, but which will enhance the student's educational objectives. At the end of the semester preceding the semester in which an independent study is sought the interested students should submit a written proposal describing, with particulars, the planned study project. The minimum requirement for such a proposal is that it include a substantial critical and/or creative project, and the name of the appropriate faculty member.