

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.A. IN COMMUNICATION**

(Students Entering in Fall 2011)

The Department offers two M.A. degree options:

**Non-Thesis.** Requires successful completion of minimum of 30 credits of required Coursework and the completion of two scholarly papers to be approved by the Advisory Committee.

**Thesis.** Requires successful completion of minimum of 24 credits of required Coursework and 6 credits of Thesis Research. Thesis must make original contribution to Communication research and requires successful oral examination.

### **COURSEWORK**

The M.A. plan of study is an agreement between a student and the student's Advisory Committee concerning what coursework the student will undertake to meet degree requirements. The plan is designed with reference to the student's area of concentration or thesis topic and career plans. Approval or revision of the plan requires unanimous approval by members of the student's Advisory Committee.

Minimum required courses:

**COMM 700 Introduction to Graduate Study in Communication. 3 credits.**

(Required in first semester)

**Theory. 3 credits** drawn from following:

**COMM 602 Communication Theory**

**COMM 630 Seminar in Public Relations Management**

**COMM 652 Contemporary Rhetorical Theory**

Second Theory course is strongly recommended.

**Method. 3 credits** (with grade of B or better [including B-]) drawn from following:

**COMM 600 Empirical Research in Communication**

**COMM 711 Historical-Critical Research in Communication**

**COMM 714 Introduction to Qualitative Methods in Communication**

**Additional 21 credits for Non-Thesis Option or**

**Additional 15 credits plus 6 credits of COMM 799 Thesis Research for Thesis Option**

**Minimum of 18 total credits must be 600 and above.**

**Minimum of 15 total credits must be from Communication. Internship credits—no more than 3 credits of COMM 488 or 1 credit of COMM 688—may count towards degree in Non-Thesis Option but may not count towards 15-credit minimum in Communication.**

**Internship credits may not count towards degree in Thesis Option.**

Advisory Committee may require additional preparatory credits.

Maximum of 6 credits may be transferred with approval of Advisor and Graduate Director. No

credits may be transferred from any previous degree.  
Continuous enrollment is required (fall and spring semesters) until degree is awarded.  
Must maintain 3.0 GPA, a B or better (including B-) on required courses, and Good Standing/Satisfactory Progress.

#### **Time Limits**

Degree must be completed within five years of matriculation.  
Assistantship/Fellowship funding extends no more than four continuous (fall and spring) semesters with annual reappointment contingent upon maintaining Good Standing/Satisfactory Progress.

**Research Assurances [Human Subject Research]** Any research involving human subjects requires prior approval by Communication Human Subjects Review Board and/or the University's Institutional Research Board (IRB).

#### **Graduate Director Approval and Form Processing**

All required Departmental Forms and Graduate School Forms require final approval by Graduate Director. After signature of Graduate Director, all forms must/will be given to Graduate Coordinator for processing:  
Graduate Coordinator makes one copy of all forms for Advisor.  
Original of Department form is placed in student file.  
Original of Graduate School form is sent to Graduate School by Graduate Coordinator, and copy is placed in student file.

#### **PLAN OF STUDY**

Must select Advisor and Advisory Committee and construct Plan of Study during 6th credit hour (first-semester for full-time students).

#### **Advisor/Advisory Committee.**

Advisory Committee must be three or more Graduate Faculty, including Advisor who must be Regular Graduate Faculty in Communication. One member may be outside Communication.

#### **Plan of Study Approval and Changes**

Plan of Study requires unanimous approval by Advisory Committee.  
Plan of study meeting prior to approval is required if requested by student or any Committee member and shall occur on Fridays of 7th, 8th, and 9th weeks of fall and spring semesters reserved for M.A. Committee meeting.  
Changes in approved plan of study require new approval. Minor changes (e.g., semester approved course can/will be taken) require no new approval.

#### **COURSE REGISTRATION**

Full-time students typically enroll in 10 credits per regular (fall and spring) term.  
First-semester students on teaching assistantship enroll in COMM 686 Teaching Communication (1 credit).  
COMM 798 Independent Study, contracted with faculty member, requires accessing specific faculty

section number at Faculty Course Numbers and lifting of "Permission Only" block by Graduate Coordinator.

Matriculating funded students register no earlier than August to avoid registration cancellation due to unprocessed tuition remission.

Registration on Testudo (on-line system) or MARS (telephone system 301-403-0500) requires Student ID and PIN. Initial PIN is birthday (e.g., 042285 for April 22, 1985). From menu, choose Records and Registration, then Registration, and then Drop/Add. Enter course and section numbers, grading method, and credits for each class.

### **Good Standing/Satisfactory Progress Towards Degree**

Must remain in Good Standing/ Satisfactory Progress which entails:

Maintaining minimum 3.0 GPA.

Filing approved Plan of Study by semester of 6th credit (first semester for full-time students).

Completing incompletes by end of semester following awarded incomplete.

Not found responsible for breaching ethical principles of scholarship (e.g., violations of academic integrity and/or intellectual property rights or non-compliance of protocols for protection of human subjects).

### **Procedures for Good Standing/Satisfactory Progress Review**

Failure to meet any Good Standing criteria requires Graduate Director notify student, Advisor, and Department Chair of deficiency.

Graduate Director may stipulate conditions required to restore Good Standing, recommend continued funding be contingent upon satisfying required conditions, or take other appropriate action.

Student, Graduate Director, or Advisor may request Advisory Committee review student's overall academic performance beyond specific deficiency. Graduate Committee substitutes for Advisory Committee if no Advisory Committee exists.

Following review, Advisor must submit letter to Graduate Directed signed (in support or dissent) by all Committee members.

- 1) Certifying overall progress to be satisfactory despite deficiency,
- 2) Recommending probationary requirements for remaining in program, or
- 3) Recommending dismissal from program.

Recommendations other than dismissal restores Good Standing with Graduate Director approval.

Recommendation for termination by Committee or Graduate Director requires meeting of Communication Graduate Faculty and 2/3 majority vote of members present and voting.

### **OTHER M.A. NON-THESIS OPTION REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Scholarly Papers**

Must complete two single-authored scholarly papers that receive approval from at least two members of the student's Advisory Committee no later than the semester before the student completes the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examinations. Approval requires certification by the two Advisory Committee members by December 10 of the fall semester and May 10 of the spring semester. The assumption is that each paper will go through an extensive revision process with at least one of the two Advisory Committee members before being submitted for final evaluation. The two Advisory Committee members who provide the final evaluations of the seminar papers must be

granted a minimum of two weeks for final review of each scholarly paper. A student should allow ample time for revisions. A meeting of the student's Advisory Committee may be scheduled to address concerns with the Scholarly Papers. Students should use a manuscript style of citation most commonly associated with their area of study.

### Timeline

Date Due	Action	Form
First semester (6th credit) for full-time students	Selection of Advisor and Advisory Committee	Request for Appointment of Advisor/Advisory Committee
Any time	Change Advisor or Advisory Committee Member	New Request for Appointment of Advisor/Advisory Committee
First semester (6th credit) for full-time students.	Approval of Plan of Study	Plan of Study attached to a Approval of Plan of Study
Any time	Change in Plan of Study	Request for Change in Plan of Study
Approximately 2nd week of final semester	Application for Graduation	Application for Graduation (Graduate School form)
Approximately 6th week of final semester	Certification of satisfactory completion of coursework for the MA in COMM	Approved Program for the Master of Arts (Graduate School form)
9th week of final semester	Two scholarly papers approved by Advisory Committee	Certification of Approval of Scholarly Papers
Approximately 14th week of final semester	Certification of Non-Thesis Requirements	Certification of Master's Degree without Thesis (Graduate School form)

### M.A. THESIS OPTION

#### Thesis Advisor/Thesis Committee Approval and Changes

Nomination for Thesis or Dissertation Committee must reach Graduate School no later than six weeks prior to anticipated oral thesis defense.

Change in Advisor or Committee members requires approval of new Request for Appointment of Program Advisor/Advisory Committee Form and approval and submission of new Nomination of Thesis or Dissertation Committee to Graduate School.

#### Thesis Option Plan of Study Approval

General statement of thesis topic must be included in approved Plan of Study.

Committee judges suitability of proposed project to student's expertise and career objectives and may require additional methods courses for preparation for proposed research.

#### Research Assurances [Human Subject Research]

Thesis research involving human subjects requires prior approval by Communication Human Subjects Review Board and/or the University's Institutional Research Board (IRB), and approvals

must accompany Nomination for Thesis or Dissertation Examining Committee.

### **Thesis Proposal/Prospectus**

Thesis Prospectus must reach Thesis Committee no later than one semester prior to graduation. Thesis Prospectus requires unanimous Thesis Committee approval. Thesis Prospectus Meeting prior to approval required if requested by student, advisor, or any other Committee member.

### **Thesis Examination Scheduling**

Thesis Examining Committee must receive thesis at least seven working days prior to oral examination.

Thesis Examination, which is usually one hour, may be held after thesis approval by Advisor, completion of other program requirements, earning of minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA, and no earlier than six weeks after submission of Nominating of Thesis Examining Committee to Graduate School. Thesis Examination may be scheduled at discretion of student, Advisor, and Thesis Committee.

### **Thesis Examination Attendance and Location**

Examination must be held on campus and be open to all University Graduate Faculty.

Examination must be attended by all members of approved Thesis Examining Committee. Consult Graduate Catalogue for further information about Emergency Substitutions and Remote Participation.

### **Thesis Examination**

#### **Part 1: Thesis Presentation**

Brief student presentation/summary of thesis research required prior to questions. Following questioning, student and others outside of Examining Committee are excused during deliberation of Committee.

#### **Part 2: Conclusion of Examination**

Committee renders judgment from following:

1. Accept thesis without revision and sign Report of Examining Committee.
2. Accept thesis contingent upon recommended revisions and, excepting Chair, sign Report. Committee empowers chair to evaluate and approve recommended revisions and sign Report.
3. Recommend revisions but withhold signing Report until reviewing and approving revisions.
4. Recommend revisions and require second meeting of Committee to review revised thesis and render final determination.
5. Fail thesis and examination.

#### **Pass/Failure**

Pass requires unanimous Committee vote.

Failure requires Committee detail in writing to student, Graduate Director, and Dean of Graduate School deficiencies in thesis and/or oral examination.

Second examination permitted contingent upon approval by Graduate Director and Dean of Graduate School and Good Standing at time of second examination. Second failure, or denial of

second examination, constitutes termination from program.

**Submitting Final Thesis**

Approved thesis must be submitted to Graduate School electronically.  
 Hard copy of approved thesis required for Advisor and graduate file.

**Timeline**

Date Due	Action	Form
First semester (6th credit for full-time students)	Select Advisor and Advisory Committee	Request for Appointment of Advisor/Advisory Committee
Any time	Change Advisor and Advisory Committee	New Request for Appointment of Advisor/Advisory Committee
First semester (6th credit) for full-time students	Approved Plan of Study	Plan of Study attached to Approval of Plan of Study
Any time	Change Plan of Study	Request for Change in Plan of Study
At least 4 weeks prior to thesis prospectus defense	Nomination of Thesis Committee to Graduate School	Nomination of Thesis or Dissertation Committee (Graduate School form)
Minimum one semester before graduation	Defend Thesis Prospectus	Approval of Prospectus MA Degree in COMM
Approximately 2nd week of final semester	Application for Graduation to Graduate School	Application for Graduation (Graduate School form)
Approximately 6th week of final semester	Approved Program for Degree of the Master of Arts	Approved Program for the Master of Arts (Graduate School form)
At least 2 weeks prior to thesis defense	Submit Thesis to Examining Committee	
No later than next to last week of final semester	Defend Thesis	Report of Examining Committee (Graduate School form)
No later than next to last week of final semester	Submit Thesis to Graduate School	