

COMMUNICATION - MASTER OF ARTS (MA)

The master's degree provides students with knowledge of communication scholarship and develops their ability to analyze complex communication situations. The program is intended to serve two main groups of students: those planning to pursue the PhD degree and those seeking employment in businesses, nonprofit institutions and community groups.

MA students typically pursue studies in one or more of the department's three main areas:

- Community & social interaction
- Organizational communication
- Rhetoric & culture

Students may choose a thesis or comprehensive examination option.

Requirements

Students wishing to pursue graduate work toward this degree should carefully read the Graduate School requirements, review the coursework offered in this catalog, and attend to the detailed degree requirements on the department website.

Application Guidelines

Visit the department's Admissions (<http://www.colorado.edu/communication/graduate-degrees/admissions/>) webpage for details.

Course Requirements

To complete the MA, students are required to take COMM 6010, at least one methods course and at least two readings courses (see tables below).

For both the thesis option and the comprehensive examination option, coursework may include a maximum of 6 hours of independent study and/or internship combined. A maximum of 9 hours may be transferred from graduate work completed in/at other programs and/or institutions (including other CU campuses, such as CU Denver). A maximum of 9 credit hours of courses may be taken outside the department. Transfer and outside department courses combined may not exceed 12 credit hours. Courses in which a grade of C- or below is received are not counted toward the master's degree.

Degree Plans

Plan I: Thesis Option

Students pursuing the thesis option are required to complete a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours, including 24 credit hours of graduate-level coursework (at the 5000 level or higher) and 6 thesis hours (including oral defense of the thesis; additional thesis hours cannot be taken).

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Required Courses		
COMM 6010	Communication Research and Theory	3
COMM 6950	Master's Thesis	6
Electives		
At least one methods course:		3
COMM 6020	Quantitative Research Methods	

COMM 6030	Qualitative Research Methods	
COMM 6310	Advanced Rhetorical Criticism	
At least two readings courses:		6
COMM 5210	Readings in Communication Theory	
COMM 5320	Readings in Rhetoric	
COMM 5425		
COMM 5435	Readings in Community and Social Interaction	
COMM 5620	Readings in Organizational Communication	
COMM 5720	Readings in Communication and Technology	
Four additional graduate-level courses		12
Total Credit Hours		30

Students choosing the thesis option should select a permanent graduate faculty advisor prior to completing 12 credit hours. In consultation with their advisor, students should select two additional committee members and, by the beginning of the second year (assuming a course load of 9 hours per semester), complete the MA Program of Study Form and a written thesis proposal (with the thesis designed such that it can be completed during student's final planned semester in residence).

After the committee has read the thesis, a final oral defense is conducted in conformity with the graduate school's rules. Students must have an affirmative vote from the majority of committee members to pass the thesis. Students who fail the thesis defense may attempt it once more after a period of time that is determined by the committee. Students who fail the second defense are dismissed from the master's program. The final submitted thesis must comply with the CU Boulder Graduate School rules regarding the formatting of theses and dissertations.

Plan II: Comprehensive Examination Option

Students pursuing the coursework with comprehensive examination option are required to complete a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours (at the 5000 level or higher), a written comprehensive examination and an oral defense of that written comprehensive examination.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Required Course		
COMM 6010	Communication Research and Theory	3
Electives		
At least one methods course:		3
COMM 6020	Quantitative Research Methods	
COMM 6030	Qualitative Research Methods	
COMM 6310	Advanced Rhetorical Criticism	
At least two readings courses:		6
COMM 5210	Readings in Communication Theory	
COMM 5320	Readings in Rhetoric	
COMM 5425		
COMM 5435	Readings in Community and Social Interaction	
COMM 5620	Readings in Organizational Communication	
COMM 5720	Readings in Communication and Technology	

Six additional graduate-level courses	18
Total Credit Hours	30

Master's students choosing the comprehensive examination option should select a permanent graduate faculty advisor prior to completing 12 credit hours. The associate chair of graduate studies automatically serves as a committee member. Students, in consultation with their advisor, select a third committee member.

By the beginning of the second year of graduate work (assuming a course load of 9 hours per semester), students should complete the MA Program of Study Form.

The comprehensive examination includes two standardized questions created by the associate chair of graduate studies that are completed by all master's students taking the examination at the same time that semester. One is about communication theory (90 minutes), and the other is about research methods (90 minutes). A third question, created by the student's advisor, is unique to the student's area of expertise (2 hours).

A one-hour oral defense must be held within two weeks of completing the written comprehensive examination. Students must have an affirmative vote from the majority of committee members to pass the comprehensive examination.

Should the majority of committee members judge the written and/or oral performance unsatisfactory, students may be required to retake relevant portions of the examination (with a maximum of one opportunity to retake the examination). Prior to retaking the comprehensive examination, students may be required to complete additional coursework and/or research projects. Retaking the comprehensive examination must include another oral defense. Students who retake the comprehensive examination but do not complete it in a satisfactory manner are dismissed from the master's program.

Learning Outcomes

By the completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Produce academic writing that synthesizes arguments from academic research and theory in the field of communication.
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to design and conduct high-quality original research in communication.
- Effectively present and communicate about communication scholarship to academic and public audiences in both written and oral form.