The Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Media Design (APRD) offers the graduate programs listed below.

The MA in Corporate Communication (https://www.colorado.edu/cmci/aprd/macc/) is an online professional master’s degree designed for early and mid-career professionals who want to advance their career in corporate communication in an increasingly globalized corporate environment. It is well-suited for corporate communication practitioners in business, governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as mid-career professionals from allied disciplines such as journalism, advertising and marketing who want to switch to corporate communication jobs due to increased demand in this sector. The program’s coursework blends conceptual knowledge and practical techniques to make students invaluable and nimble communicators in a globally relevant profession.

The MA in Strategic Communication Design (https://www.colorado.edu/cmci/STMCMstudio/) (MSTCM) is an immersive 39-credit hour program typically completed in a full calendar year. Located in a state-of-the-art studio in the heart of Boulder’s entrepreneurial tech community, the MSTCM is entirely project-based. With the guidance of industry-driven instructors, our students leverage design’s potential as a critical problem-solving tool in a rapidly changing world. This human-centered program evolves students into branding design and entrepreneurial professionals through innovative, intensive, and progressive learning experiences. MSTCM graduates have been appointed to leadership design positions in top companies, including Google, Apple, Uber, Twitter and Dropbox—to name just a few.

The Marketing Analytics track of the MS in Business Analytics is an APRD, CMCI and Leeds School of Business partnership. In this advertising and marketing specialization in the Leeds Master’s in Business Analytics (https://www.colorado.edu/business/ms-programs/masters-program-business-analytics/) graduate program, students become experts in cutting edge digital advertising techniques and learn how to find, create, and analyze advertising data. The ten-month MS degree starts every July. Students leave the program ready to work in analytical roles at digital advertising agencies, DSPs, DMPs, programmatic shops and digital marketing departments.

Strategic Communication is a distinct track of the PhD in Media Research and Practice (https://www.colorado.edu/cmci/aprd/PhD) program. Students gain an understanding of scholarship through coursework, independent studies and research assistantships that explore theories and methods that shape strategic communication research. We welcome and appreciate both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. The program emphasizes how theory informs practice, critically analyzing how advertising and public relations operate in ways that can—or could—constructively contribute to the successful, ethical and resilient functioning of society. Students taking this track focus their research and teaching in the areas of advertising, public relations and various types of promotional communication such as health communication, political communication, social media and video gaming.

The department actively encourages students to enroll in courses offered both within and outside CMCI and APRD graduate course are open to students in other units.

Course code for these programs is APRD.

Master's Degrees

- Corporate Communication - Master of Arts (MA) (https://catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/media-communication-information/programs-study/advertising-public-relations-media-design/corporate-communication-master-arts-ma/)
- Strategic Communication Design - Master of Arts (MA) (https://catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/media-communication-information/programs-study/advertising-public-relations-media-design/strategic-communication-design-master-arts-ma/)

Doctoral Degree

- Media Research and Practice - Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (https://catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/media-communication-information/programs-study/media-studies/media-research-practice-doctor-philosophy-phd/)

Faculty

While many faculty teach both undergraduate and graduate students, some instruct students at the undergraduate level only. For more information, contact the faculty member’s home department.

Barrett, Bridget (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_173429/)
Associate Professor; PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Cheval, Melinda Kiger
Associate Teaching Professor Emerita

Doty, Dawn (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_158312/)
Associate Teaching Professor; MA, Johns Hopkins University

Duncan, Thomas R.
Professor Emeritus

Elliston, Diane
Assistant Teaching Professor; MFA, Claremont Graduate University

Fisher, Jolene (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_158335/)
Associate Chair, Associate Professor; PhD, University of Oregon

Gangadharambatla, Harsha (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_153279/)
Professor; PhD, University of Texas at Austin

Gillette, Jeff
Assistant Teaching Professor; MS, Virginia Commonwealth University

Hopp, Toby (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_157745/)
Associate Professor; PhD, University of Oregon

Khedekar, Deepti (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_174027/)
Assistant Teaching Professor; PhD, University of Colorado Boulder

Labrecque, Joseph (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_165806/)
Assistant Teaching Professor; MA, University of Denver
Courses

APRD 5001 (3) Foundations of Brand Design
Focuses on the challenges of designing brands targeted at customer needs and desires. Working through a series of projects, students learn both the theory and practice of identifying brand opportunities, idea generation, global design strategies, testing, and brand launch. Graduate students from other departments who have the appropriate background may be allowed to register on a space-available basis with consent of the Program Director.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5002 (3) Foundations of Experience Design
Introduces the mindset, skills, and methodologies that are core to the practice of human-centered design in digital environments. By applying different design methods and applications across UX, UI, and IxD capabilities, students will learn to design a holistic experience and develop creative problem-solving skills using interaction design principles, design thinking, and customer journey mapping. Graduate students from other departments who have the appropriate background may be allowed to register on a space-available basis with consent of the Program Director.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5003 (3) Advanced Brand Design
Builds on core concepts introduced in APRD 5001 by expanding executional skillsets and conceptual frameworks through the development of a unified theory of branding. This course encourages students to establish their core principles as art directors and visual designers. They will learn how to create opportunities for complex, meaning-centered relationships between people and products through research, strategic definition, identity development, expression, communication, and behavioral analysis.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5004 (3) Designing the Customer Journey
Focuses on bridging the gap between designing digital products and understanding the customer journey as they utilize those products. Using concepts and applications introduced in APRD 5002, students will learn to integrate prototyping activities, along with research and testing techniques, into every stage of the design process to quickly adapt designs based on customer feedback and testing insights. Topics include journey mapping, user research methods and high/low fidelity prototyping.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)

Grading Basis: Letter Grade
APRD 5006 (3) Design for Startups
Introduces the basic concepts of entrepreneurship as a discipline, with special emphasis given to the ways that design and creativity impact the entrepreneurial process and how designers can meaningfully engage in a startup studio environment. With a broad overview of early-stage entrepreneurial activities, this course prepares students to create a new business, work for a startup, or launch a new venture within an existing organization. Graduate students from other departments who have the appropriate background may be allowed to register on a space-available basis with consent of the Program Director.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5008 (3) Designing for Scale
Tailored specifically for designers and creative professionals, this course highlights the role that design plays in driving measurable business results for organizations. With the ROI-driven strategic mindset required in today's competitive landscape, students learn essential business skills needed to deliver not only exceptional design but also measurable impacts for brands and businesses.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5009 (3) Principles of Visual Design
Examines essential principles that drive innovation and creativity in the design field. Through hands-on projects and critical analysis of historical and contemporary creative communication trends, students work on developing their own design philosophy and visual aesthetic. By the end of the course, students should have the expertise needed to craft compelling, impactful visual design solutions that make branding more engaging and effective. Graduate students from other departments who have the appropriate background may be allowed to register on a space-available basis with consent of the Program Director.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5011 (3) Digital Design Portfolio
Dedicated to the meticulous curation of an industry-ready professional portfolio. Students receive guidance in crafting their online digital portfolios and fostering professional development tailored to their post-graduation career aspirations. Interaction with industry professionals and successful program alumni allows students to gain valuable advice, tips, and feedback to enhance their portfolios.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5012 (3) Advanced Tools for Startup Design
Equips students with the tools, strategies, and knowledge necessary to thrive in entrepreneurial business environments. Students will develop a practical understanding of how to validate business strategies by applying the principles of human-centered design and iterative design culture. Practical skills, especially business prototyping, are honed to ensure that students can apply their knowledge in real-world situations and make a profound impact on startup success.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5014 (3) Advanced Tools for Interaction Design
Introduces advanced practices and tools of the digital design profession with an emphasis on preparing students for the increasingly sophisticated nature of modern digital product design. Students get an overview of the architecture of design systems, gain an understanding of what a design system means across different industries and design practices, and learn to build their own design system.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5015 (3) Brand Design for Sustainable Futures
An in-depth look at the challenges of designing for sustainability by moving students beyond the confines of a standard project brief to examine the purpose and implications of a brand or service's existence. Immersed in design ethics and the power of visual communication, students will gain the expertise to design with purpose and intention, and to align with circular economy principles to reduce waste and pollution.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5018 (3) Innovative Technologies for Design
Explores the fusion of design, technology, and coding. The course aims to prepare students to seamlessly integrate technology into design work that addresses real-world challenges. Topics covered in this course include virtual reality, augmented reality, data visualization, and foundational skills in web development using JavaScript, HTML and CSS, and contemporary AI capabilities.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5020 (3) Design Leadership
Explores the art of using design to drive innovation, impact, and change. Through collaboration and empathy, students will discover the power of design to bring people together to create meaningful solutions to real world problems. From managing design teams, project management processes, product development models, and organizational design, students will gain the skills needed for managing design in today's complex world and discover how to work effectively with others across disciplines and sectors to create impact at scale.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students in Strategic Communication Design (STCM-MAP)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 5841 (1-3) Graduate Independent Study
Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

APRD 5851 (1-6) Graduate Professional Project
Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

APRD 5931 (1-3) Internship
Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 3.00 total credit hours.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
APRD 6342 (3) Digital Advertising
Covers both traditional and emerging digital advertising methods, the popular platforms used to execute ads, and the leading analytic tools that can be used to assess advertising performance. Core advertising tools covered include search, display, social media, native advertising, sponsored content and mobile. This class focuses on best practices and Key Performance Indicators that go with each advertising platform. Department consent required.
Requisites: Restricted to MS Business Analytics (BUAN-MS) majors and MKAG-CERG students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 6343 (3) Applications of Advanced Statistical Techniques in Advertising
Building upon prior data acquisition and analysis coursework, students will effectively and flexibly generate advanced statistical models in a digital advertising-specific context. This course will focus on data originating from a variety of digital advertising sources. In addition to technical skill acquisition, students will learn how to interpret results and present them to clients and management. Department consent required.
Requisites: Restricted to Business Analytics (BUAN-MS) majors only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 6871 (1-3) Special Topics
Graduate special topics. Topics vary by instructor and semester. Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 15.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

APRD 6940 (1) Master's Candidate for Degree
Registration intended for students preparing for a thesis defense, final examination, culminating activity, or completion of degree.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

APRD 6951 (1-6) Master's Thesis
Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

APRD 7001 (3) ProSeminar in Mass Communication Theory I
 Discusses prominent theoretical and methodological points of view in journalism studies and strategic communication that range from social science to critical studies to the humanities. The premise is that methods are driven by research questions, so there is no best way to conduct research. You should leave this course with an understanding of how to address various mass communication phenomena.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7001
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7002 (3) Research Design
Adopts a holistic and creative approach to bridging theory with method for the purpose of research design. Students learn how to bridge theory and method, exploring research designs that effectively address research questions and hypotheses through elaboration of theoretical and operational linkages.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7002
Requisites: Requires prerequisite courses of APRD 7003 and MDRP 7051 and MDRP 7061 (all minimum grade C-). Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7003 (3) ProSeminar in Mass Communication Theory II
Continues introducing and discussing theoretical and methodological points of view in areas of communication, journalism and persuasion. Discusses the most important qualitative and quantitative methodological points of view, and from theoretical viewpoints that range from social science to critical studies. The idea is to develop an appreciation for theories and methodologies that can be employed depending upon the research question.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7003
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7004 (1) Doctoral Professionalization Seminar
Introduces you to the university and gives you a chance to think out loud about what your academic future might look like. The course is designed to be responsive to your needs regarding your career, getting a job, getting tenure and teaching. In short, the course prepares you for a career in academia.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7004
Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 4.00 total credit hours.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7010 (3) Qualitative Interviewing as a Research Method
Develops the necessary skills to conceptualize, plan, and execute interview-based research projects. Covers topics such as brainstorming and implementing a research idea, formulating research questions, designing a thorough research plan, navigating the IRB, recruiting participants, creating the interview guide, conducting interviews, and analyzing and writing up data. Course also examines reflexivity and ethical issues that are inherent in interview studies, especially ones involving certain populations.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7010

APRD 7011 (3) Seminar in Strategic Public Relations
Analyzes the various dimensions of public relations based on scholarship. The seminar seeks to expose students to key public relations specialties such as issues management, risk and crisis communication, corporate social responsibility, communication campaigns, public diplomacy. It also aims to train students to recognize public relations as a strategic practice that can contribute significantly to organizational effectiveness and social good.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7011
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7012 (3) Ethnography and Media
Provides a ¿how to¿ concerning the intersection of ethnography and the media. During which, the course examines the epistemology of fieldwork. We will critically examine aspects and approaches to doing and writing ethnography, including with and without social science theory. We will discuss the challenges of entering, being in, and leaving the field. And we will explore data collection techniques.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7012
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade
APRD 7013 (3) Mixed Research Methods in Mass Communication
Examines the practice of mixed-methods research in the social sciences with an emphasis on the pragmatic considerations necessary for such projects. The class will discuss the development and execution, the analyses of data obtained, and the practical tools required for such studies. Throughout the course, students will examine and discuss specific applications of mixed methods research.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7013
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7014 (3) Experimental Design in Mass Communication
Introduces all facets of experimental design for studies of forms of communication. This course study experiments, both for your own research and to help you evaluate the work of others, and provide an overview of research in the field and the various ways in which media can be utilized in experimental research. This is a hands-on, nuts-and-bolts methods course. You will not only learn about the various theories and methodologies, but also implement your own.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7014
Requisites: Requires prerequisite course of JRNL 7061 or APRD 7061 (minimum grade D-). Restricted to graduate students only.

APRD 7020 (3) Controls of Media and Information
Investigates the role media play in the public sphere and democratic practices. Does media facilitate support or opposition to political and economic policies and cultural frames that become part of publics? Which institutions best inform publics and why? This course traces the development of U.S. and selected international media institutions. We analyze and debate the relationship of differing media content to political power, freedom of critical inquiry, and the facilitation or inhibition of democratic practices.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7020
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7021 (3) Environmental Journalism and Science Communication
Focuses on mass communication of issues related to science and follows two lines of inquiry. The seminar takes a cultural perspective, and explores the concept of scientific uncertainty in media. It will use these as a springboard for examining how we use media to conceptualize science, environment, health, etc., and how that impacts the way we live on this planet.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7021
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7030 (3) Media Sociology
Examines a range of theories for how media messages and media institutions turn out the way they do. ‘Media sociology’ refers to theorizing about the media as the ‘dependent variable’, even though many of the ‘independent variables’ explored are not narrowly sociological. It connects media actors, organizations, and institutions to sociological concepts such as socialization, interaction, roles, and structures.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7030
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7031 (3) Moral Psychology and Media Ethics
Explores the psychological structures and processes that come into play as individuals interpret moral problems, and formulate, select and execute a moral action in response. The seminar will explore the work of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and James Rest, among others, and apply moral psychology theories and methods to contemporary issues and cases in media professions.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7031
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7034 (3) Media and Health Communication
Advanced seminar that examines and critiques the literature on health communication in two specific areas: news about health and its impact on individuals, and health promotion campaigns.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7034
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

APRD 7051 (3) Qualitative Methods in Mass Communication
Provides a survey of various qualitative modes of inquiry, attending to the philosophical, conceptual, and practical foundations of qualitative research in media, communication, and information. The course is designed to support students in developing a critical understanding of the different considerations in and stages of qualitative research, including the development of research questions, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, methodological approaches, data collection, data analysis, and assessment of reliability and validity of qualitative data. Previously offered as a special topics course.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7051
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7061 (3) Quantitative Research Methods
Introduces graduate students to concepts and applications in quantitative research methods. The course prepares students for dissertation writing through hands-on experience in developing research designs and conducting independent quantitative research.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7061
Requisites: Requires prerequisite course of APRD 7061 or JRNL 7061 (minimum grade D-)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7062 (3) Advanced Statistical Analysis for Mass Communication
Provides instruction on the following topics: ordinary least squares regression, statistical mediation and moderation, path analysis, count and categorical data modeling, and factor analysis.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7062
Requisites: Requires prerequisite course of APRD 7061 or JRNL 7061 (minimum grade D-)
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7063 (3) Text Analytics for Computational Mass Communication Research
This course tackles advanced advertising and marketing analytics through three advanced methods aimed at solving these problems: text classification, text topic modeling, and semantic network analysis. Each key area will involve a deep dive into the leading computer science methods aimed at solving these methods using Python. Students will walkthrough conceptual overviews of the methods, and dive into real-world datasets through instructor-led tutorials. Students will also conduct a major project for each of the 3 key methods.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7063
Requisites: Requires prerequisite course of APRD 7061 or JRNL 7061 (minimum grade D-).
Grading Basis: Letter Grade
APRD 7133 (3) Digital Games
Seminar that explores digital games, analog games, and play, and looks at the relatively new field of game studies; the field has moved toward issues of culture and social justice.
Requisites: Restricted to doctoral students.

APRD 7841 (1-3) Independent Study
Provides opportunities for independent study and research on the graduate level. Students perform independent research under faculty supervision.
Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 9.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.
Grading Basis: Letter Grade

APRD 7871 (3) Special Topics
Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 15.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

APRD 7880 (3) Persuasion Theory
This seminar acts as an overview of psychological knowledge as it pertains to capturing consumer insight, and includes a consideration of how the brain works, what factors influence consumer choice, and a critical evaluation of psychological assessment tools.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: JRNL 7880
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

APRD 8991 (1-10) Doctoral Dissertation
Dissertation research and writing. A minimum of 30 hours is required.
Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 40.00 total credit hours.
Requisites: Restricted to PhD students only.

MDRP 7871 (3) Special Topics
Special topics.
Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 15.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.
Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.