

COMMUNICATION

Graduate study in communication foregrounds the symbolic and material dimensions of social life, with special attention to the role communication plays in both transmitting messages and constituting relationships. Contexts of study include interpersonal interaction, workplaces and institutions, communities and public/civic life.

Graduate students pursue research within three main areas—community & social interaction, organizational communication, and rhetoric & culture—crafting unique programs of study to meet individual needs.

The master's program provides students with knowledge of key bodies of communication scholarship and develops their skills in analyzing complex communication situations. The program prepares graduates for positions in businesses, nonprofit institutions and community groups, in addition to doctoral study in communication.

The doctoral program provides students with opportunities to conduct theoretically grounded and methodologically rigorous research on pressing communication issues, while also traversing traditional academic boundaries. The program prepares graduates primarily for faculty positions at leading universities, although some graduates pursue positions in business, the nonprofit sector, social services or government.

Course code for this program is COMM.

Master's Degree

- Communication - Master of Arts (MA) (<https://catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/media-communication-information/programs-study/communication/communication-master-arts-ma/>)

Doctoral Degree

- Communication - Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (<https://catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/media-communication-information/programs-study/communication/communication-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.

Ackerman, John Martin (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_144951/)
Professor; PhD, Carnegie Mellon University

Ashcraft, Karen Lee (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_147453/)
Professor; PhD, University of Colorado Boulder

Boromisz-Habashi, David (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_145833/)
Associate Professor, Associate Chair; PhD, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Cruz, Joelle (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_157594/)
Assistant Professor; PhD, Texas A&M University

Frey, Lawrence R. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_125937/)
Professor Emeritus; PhD, University of Kansas

Gries, Laurie Ellen (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_155951/)
Associate Professor; PhD, Syracuse University

Hickerson, Ruth Lynne (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_151159/)
Senior Instructor; PhD, University of Denver

Hodge, Danielle (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_167427/)
Assistant Professor; PhD, University of Colorado Boulder

Jahn, Jody L. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_153426/)
Associate Professor; PhD, University of California, Santa Barbara

Koschmann, Matthew A. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_145807/)
Associate Professor; PhD, University of Texas at Austin

Kuhn, Tim (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_118144/)
Chair, Professor; PhD, Arizona State University

Maurer, Christy (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_148831/)
Senior Instructor; PhD, University of Colorado Boulder

Pezzullo, Phaedra Carmen (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_156204/)
Associate Professor; PhD, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Shrikant, Natasha (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_157954/)
Assistant Professor; PhD, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Simonson, Peter D. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_143251/)
Professor Emeritus; PhD, University of Iowa

Skerski, Jamie L. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_149871/)
Senior Instructor; PhD, Indiana University Bloomington

Sprain, Leah M.H. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_151292/)
Associate Professor, Faculty Director; PhD, University of Washington

Taylor, Bryan Copeland (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_107421/)
Professor; PhD, University of Utah

White, Cindy Hagemeyer (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_107461/)
Associate Professor; PhD, University of Arizona

Courses

COMM 5000 (3) Organizational Culture

Focuses on theory and practice associated with the successful development of organizational culture. Topics covered include symbolic artifacts, beliefs, and assumptions that distinguish organizational, corporate, and occupational/professional identities. Related coverage of the communication practices (e.g., performance, ritual, etc.) through which the cultural elements of organizing are created, maintained and transformed. Special emphasis placed on issues of cultural leadership, cultural control, and cultural change in the contexts of contemporary globalization and technological innovation.

Requisites: Restricted to Organizational Leadership (ORGL-MS) students only.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 5210 (3) Readings in Communication Theory

Provides a critical overview of influential theoretical traditions in communication studies. Emphasizes the discipline's social scientific and humanistic heritage, while also considering emerging trends. Introduces standards for evaluating and critiquing communication theories.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 5220 (3) Seminar: Functions of Communication

Topical seminar on the functions of communication across interpersonal, group, organizational, and public contexts. Reviews current theory and research on topics such as communication and conflict, persuasion, and ethical dimensions of communication practices.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 5225 (3) Environmental Communication

Investigates key concepts in environmental communication and considers which theoretical frameworks and practical actions can inform the effects of various constituents to address environmental issues.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 5230 (3) Applied Communication

Examines the study of applications of communication concepts, theories, methods, interventions, and other practices to address real-world issues and problems. Discusses conceptual issues framing applied communication, examines purposes and methods informing such scholarship, and provides opportunity to evaluate and propose research.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 5300 (3) Seminar: Rhetoric

Reviews current theory and research on topics such as rhetoric and publics, rhetoric as an interpretive social science, and rhetoric of social movements and political campaigns.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 5310 (3) Contemporary Rhetorical Criticism

Advanced critical analysis of rhetorical texts in terms of how they shape issues and appeals for judgment, create identities for speakers and their audiences, and construct perceptions of time, space, and the human condition.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 5320 (3) Readings in Rhetoric

Survey of classical and contemporary readings in rhetoric. Required for doctoral students in communication; optional for master's students.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 5435 (3) Readings in Community and Social Interaction

Focuses on how everyday communication practices shape and are shaped by community contexts. Contains theoretical and empirical readings that illustrate how interactions among group members negotiate and maintain distinct communities and how group communication practices reflect shared norms among community members. Also reviews methods to study everyday interactions among community members (e.g., discourse analysis, qualitative coding, surveys and applied approaches/methods).

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 5600 (3) Seminar: Organizational Communication

Reviews current theory and research on topics such as communication and organizational decision making, organizational culture, gender relations, communication technology, and power and control in organizations.

Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: COMM 4600

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 5610 (3) Organizational Ethnography

Focuses on the historical influence of the ethnographic tradition in organizational communication studies. Reviews landmark studies of organizational culture and power/control, emphasizing issues of ethics and politics associated with the writing and reading of organizational ethnography. Reviews trends in contemporary organizing such as neoliberal globalization and the adoption of artificial intelligence, and their implications for the future of ethnography.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 5620 (3) Readings in Organizational Communication

Survey of historical and contemporary readings in organizational communication. Treats theory, research, and application from a variety of perspectives.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 5720 (3) Readings in Communication and Technology

Survey of multidisciplinary research that examines various relationships between communication and technology. Students are encouraged to develop critical skills in perceiving assumptions and perspectives that motivate major theories in this area, and to examine how these phenomena have changed over time.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 5930 (1-6) Graduate Internship

Offers opportunities for graduate-level communication related work projects. Limited to 3 hours in spring and fall semesters, 6 hours in summer. The 6-hour limit at MA level and 9-hour limit at PhD level applies to any combination of independent study and internship credit.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 9.00 total credit hours.

COMM 6010 (3) Communication Research and Theory

Provides an introduction to graduate study of communication, offering an overview of the discipline and its scholarship. Required for MA and Ph.D. communication students.

Requisites: Restricted to Communication (COMM or COMN) graduate students only.

COMM 6020 (3) Quantitative Research Methods

Introduces students to the practice of quantitative research in communication: conceptualization and critique of research projects, measurements, methods (e.g., experimental and survey), statistical data analysis, and written reports.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 6030 (3) Qualitative Research Methods

Introduction to the epistemology, methodology, and representational practices associated with qualitative communication research. Fieldwork methods emphasized include participant observation, interviewing, and document/artifact analysis.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 6200 (3) Seminar: Selected Topics

Facilitates understanding of current and past theory and research on a selected topic in communication and the ability to develop new theory and research on that topic.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 9.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 6310 (3) Advanced Rhetorical Criticism

Reviews current critical methods and issues related to rhetorical criticism and rhetorical field methods.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Recommended: Prerequisites COMM 5310 and COMM 5320.

COMM 6320 (3) Rhetorical Theory

Reviews current theory and research on topics such as contemporary rhetorical theory, rhetoric and public life, rhetoric as an interpretive social science, and rhetoric of social movements and political campaigns.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Recommended: Prerequisite COMM 5320.

COMM 6330 (3) Rhetoric of Inquiry

Surveys foundational texts and contemporary research in the rhetoric of inquiry. Focuses on the role of persuasion in the production of knowledge. Critical analysis of major theoretical and methodological traditions and topics, with an emphasis on social dimensions of inquiry.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Recommended: Prerequisite COMM 5320.

COMM 6340 (3) Rhetoric and Civic Community

Considers performances of public life as rhetorical inducements of civitas. Topics include negotiation of self-regulation among interdependent partners, rhetorical exclusions and/or counterpublics, and dialectical tensions of public/private as these contribute to and have civic consequences for publicness, community, and social will.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Recommended: Prerequisite COMM 5320.

COMM 6350 (3) Seminar in Argumentation

Surveys foundational texts and contemporary research in argumentation. Analysis of distinctions between philosophical and rhetorical approaches to argument. Critical analysis of major theoretical and methodological traditions and topics with an emphasis on social dimensions of argument.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Recommended: Prerequisite COMM 5320.

COMM 6360 (3) Social and Cultural Theory

Traces select traditions in social and/or cultural theory, emphasizing how those traditions affect and are affected by the field of rhetoric studies.

Examines the origins and resolutions of major debates in social and/or cultural theory from a rhetorical perspective.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Recommended: Prerequisite COMM 5320.

COMM 6370 (3) Rhetorics of Transgression and Resistance

This course examines contemporary philosophies, analyses, and practices of transgression and resistance. Overall, it encourages greater reflexivity about why, how, and for what ends we study the intersections of rhetoric, culture, and social change, including but not limited to choices about naming, stories, discourses, tactics, coalitions, and movements.

Recommended: graduate students only.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 6410 (3) Discourse Analysis

Acquaints students with the main types of discourse analysis: conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis, and rhetorically informed discourse approaches. Teaches how to conduct discourse analysis, including transcribing, selecting excerpts, documenting inferences, and linking findings to scholarly controversies.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 6420 (3) Interaction Analysis

Educates students in one of a selected set of methodological specializations used in the study of human interaction.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 6425 (3) Writing, Reporting, and Publishing

Helps students hone their abilities to write, report, and publish a scholarly article in the field of communication and beyond. Students gain familiarity with the genre of the scholarly article, engage with theories of writing genres, delve into the politics of scholarly publishing, and learn various strategies for crafting a scholarly article. Students are expected to develop a manuscript for submission to a peer-reviewed journal or other scholarly forum.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 6440 (3) Grounded Practical Theory

Examines theory, method, and application of grounded practical theory, an approach to building normative theory through description, critique, and theoretical reconstruction of situated communicative practices. Semester project involves analysis of a sample of discourse from a public or field observation setting.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Recommended: Prerequisite COMM 5210.

COMM 6445 (3) Intercultural Communication

Focuses on cultural foundations of social interaction, with a special emphasis on ideology (including potentially contested cultural norms, values and premises) as a basic condition of meaningful interaction. Identities are discussed as culturally variable, historically embedded interactional accomplishments, constructed from communicative resources such as language and other types of signs, that serve the purpose of participation in communal life.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 6455 (3) Community-based Research Methods

Facilitates and supports graduate student-led community-based research. Working from multiple CBR traditions, students develop a thoughtful rationale for conducting CBR and practice a repertoire of CBR methods (e.g., group decision-making, managing ethical dilemmas, collaborative data collection and analysis, and communicating findings).

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 6460 (3) Ethnography of Communication

Introduces graduate students to the theory, methodology, and practice of the ethnography of communication. Students read existing literature in the tradition, and design and implement a field-based project that centers on culturally patterned forms and styles of communicative conduct.

Prior graduate-level coursework in basic qualitative research methods is required.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 6470 (3) Public Deliberation and Dialogue

Explores the theory, research and practices of deliberative democracy and dialogue. Considers "ideal" communicative conduct and common interactional troubles, cross-cultural differences and routine communication practices.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 6730 (3) Constitutive Approaches to Organizational Communication

Explores theory and research that explain how organizing processes are constituted through communication. Course themes might include collaboration, authority, identity, knowledge, risk/resilience, or socio-material arrangements.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Recommended: Prerequisites COMM 5620 and COMM 6010.

COMM 6740 (3) Theory and Philosophy of Organizing and Organizations

Reviews theory and philosophy of organizations and organizing where communication processes are seen as constitutive. Focuses on discursive and material practices in the formation and change of organizational structure, culture, and operation.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Recommended: Prerequisite COMM 5620.

COMM 6750 (3) Critical-Cultural Approaches to Organizational Communication

Addresses critical and cultural approaches to communicating and organizing. Topics include relations of culture, power, resistance, identity, and difference as theorized in and around organizational life. Major theoretical works on these topics are highlighted throughout, although specific themes may vary.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Recommended: Prerequisite COMM 5620.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 6780 (3) Roles, Relationships, and Identities in Interaction

Examines how social roles influence communicative practices, the development of relationships, and the impact of relationships on identity. Considers these processes in contexts, such as personal relationships and institutional settings. Topic varies.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 6840 (1-3) Master's Independent Study

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 6910 (1) Communication Research and Theory Practicum

Focuses primarily on the professionalization of graduate students new to CU's Department of Communication. Introduces them to the department, university, and discipline; develops practical skills related to professionalization (e.g., submitting to conferences, publishing research, and mentoring students); and considers the politics of professionalization. Runs concurrently with COMM 6010, "Communication Research and Theory.

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

COMM 6940 (1) Master's Candidate for Degree

Registration intended for students preparing for a thesis defense, final examination, culminating activity, or completion of degree.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 3.00 total credit hours.

COMM 6950 (1-6) Master's Thesis

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 6.00 total credit hours.

COMM 7118 (3) Foundations of Environmental Justice

Examines environmental justice movements, policies, institutions, objectives, and scholarship. Identifies factors that contribute to environmental inequality, and efforts to reduce it. Formerly offered as a special topics course.

Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: GEOG 7118, ENVS 7118 and PSCI 7118

Requisites: Restricted to graduate students only.

COMM 8840 (1-6) Doctoral Independent Study

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 18.00 total credit hours. Allows multiple enrollment in term.

COMM 8990 (1-10) Doctoral Dissertation

All doctoral students must register for not fewer than 30 hours of dissertation credit as part of the requirements for the degree. For a detailed discussion of doctoral dissertation credit, refer to the Graduate School section.

Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 30.00 total credit hours.