

# MEDIA RESEARCH AND PRACTICE - DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

The media research and practice (MDRP) PhD program is an umbrella that includes three distinct doctoral tracks in three separate departments in the College of Media, Communication and Information:

1. Strategic communication, offered by the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Media Design.
2. Journalism studies, offered by the Department of Journalism.
3. Media studies, offered by the Department of Media Studies.

## Program Tracks

### Strategic Communication Track

The strategic communication PhD track offered by the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Media Design is one of three separate and distinct tracks of the Media Research and Practice doctoral program within the College of Media, Communication and Information.

Strategic communication is a distinct track that is designed to provide students with rigorous training in theory and research through coursework, independent studies and research assistantships. Students gain an understanding of scholarship through required coursework that explores theories and methods that shape strategic communication research and elective coursework that expands into areas of sociology, psychology, gender studies, politics, economics, business and ethics. 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 strategic communication and journalism studies tracks for the PhD are administered together by the departments of Advertising, Public Relations and Design and Journalism. Students in both tracks are taught by and have access to the faculties of both departments. The curriculum includes an overview of mass/public communication literature with specific modules and courses dedicated to advertising, journalism and public relations. Classes also focus on areas that straddle each industry such as social media, political communication, ethics, media organizations, health communication and video games. We welcome and appreciate both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. Graduates pursue teaching and research positions at universities as well as work in the private sector.

### Journalism Studies Track

The journalism studies PhD track focuses on exploring the intersection of journalism, journalism practice and society. Students gain a solid foundation through coursework that explores the theories and methods that shape mass communication research. The multidisciplinary program examines not only traditional journalism, but also the ever-increasing boundaries of the industry, including user-generated content, citizen journalism, the audience's impact on news production, the new

technologies shaping practice, social media's role in news, new quasi-journalistic outlets, etc.

Students research institutions, content, audiences and publics—and they can approach these subjects through a multitude of methodologies and theoretical lenses: sociological, psychological, historical, cultural, political, economic, legal and more. Students are encouraged to develop their own approach (both theoretical and methodological) to the study of mass communication and journalism, all while learning and collaborating with faculty who have a diverse range of specialties. An integral part of our doctoral students' education is their participation in the department's research and teaching missions through their assignments as research assistants, teaching assistants and graduate instructors.

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### Media Studies Track

Drawing largely from contemporary cultural and critical theory, the media studies track focuses on interactions among the major components of modern communication—media institutions, their contents and messages, and their audiences—as a process by which cultural meaning is generated. It examines this process on an interdisciplinary basis through social, economic, political, historical, legal/policy/regulatory and international perspectives, with a strong emphasis on issues involving new communication technology and policy.

Students graduate from the program with broad knowledge of the intellectual history of media studies as an important interdisciplinary field of research—its origins; its perennial questions and controversies; its evolution in response to technological, political, economic and cultural change; the full range of methods it employs, both humanistic and social scientific—and a demonstrated capacity to design and execute original and socially significant research about media and their historical and contemporary power and importance. The program strives to produce graduates who demonstrate intellectual leadership, nationally and internationally, in the area(s) of research specialization they choose and/or pioneer, and an interest in and aptitude for generating public awareness and conversation about their scholarship. An important part of doctoral students' education is their participation in the department's research and teaching missions through their assignments as research assistants, teaching assistants and instructors.

## Requirements

### Application Guidelines

Applicants to the PhD program in media research and practice are expected to hold a master's degree or have completed equivalent graduate work. In exceptional cases, applicants without a master's degree may be considered for admission.

Completed domestic applications must be received by the program no later than Jan. 10 prior to the fall semester for which entrance is

sought. International applications should be submitted by Dec. 1. Late applications may be considered under special circumstances.

Successful applicants typically meet or exceed the following criteria:

- Have an undergraduate cumulative GPA of at least 3.2 and a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 in previous graduate work.
- Provide three letters of recommendation, with at least two being academic references.
- Provide a 700-word statement of purpose.
- Provide a resume or CV that includes academic and employment experience.
- Provide a writing sample that exhibits the ability to undertake the conceptual and empirical studies required of doctoral students (e.g., a chapter from a master's thesis or graduate-level term paper).
- International applicants must also have a TOEFL score of 625 (IBT 106).

Meeting these criteria does not guarantee acceptance into the program. The program accepts relatively few new doctoral students each fall; there may be more qualified applicants than there are available openings.

In the online application, select "Advertising, Public Relations and Design" as the department, select "Media Research & Practice" as the degree, and then select your chosen program track.

For review and decision purposes, students are required to upload an unofficial copy of their transcript(s) in the online application. The program requires one copy of the scanned transcript from each undergraduate and graduate institution attended. This includes community colleges, summer sessions and extension programs. While credits from one institution may appear on the transcript of a second institution, unofficial transcripts must be submitted from each institution, regardless of the length of attendance and whether courses were completed.

*Failure to list and submit transcripts from all institutions previously attended is considered a violation of academic ethics and may result in the cancellation of admission or dismissal from the university.*

## General Requirements

Students take a minimum of 72 hours to complete their degrees, although they may take additional coursework if there is a justified need. Students are expected to complete their coursework and defend their dissertations in 4–5 years.

It is expected that students will devote their full time to the doctoral program and assistantship duties during the fall and spring semesters while enrolled in the program, unless other arrangements have been made with the department.

## Program Tracks

### Journalism Studies and Strategic Communication Tracks

Students are expected to complete the required courses listed below, in addition to 30 credits of electives.

Students are expected to take courses at the 6000 level or above. There are some exceptions to this in which doctoral students may receive permission to take 5000-level courses.

Students may take a maximum of two independent study courses in their course of study, either inside APRD and JRNL or outside of those

home departments. Generally, these will be taken no earlier than the third semester of the program.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
<b>Required Courses</b>		
JRNL/APRD 7001	ProSeminar in Mass Communication Theory I	3
JRNL/APRD 7003	ProSeminar in Mass Communication Theory II	3
JRNL/APRD 7004	Doctoral Professionalization Seminar (1 credit per semester)	4
JRNL/APRD 7061	Quantitative Research Methods (Quantitative Methods in Mass Communication)	3
JRNL/APRD 7051	Qualitative Methods in Mass Communication	3
JRNL/APRD 7002	Research Design	3
JRNL/APRD 8991	Doctoral Dissertation	30
<b>Electives</b>		
Three additional graduate research methods courses (taken inside or outside the departments).		9
A minimum of 18 hours of coursework selected on the basis of the student's area(s) of research interest (taken inside or outside the departments).		18
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		<b>76</b>

### Media Studies Track

Students may take up to 15 credit hours of coursework outside the Department of Media Studies, through a required outside emphasis (9 hours), which complements the student's plan of study, and through advanced methods in media research and practice (6 hours), which may include relevant courses offered either inside or outside of the department.

In general, courses in the media studies track emphasize the following cross-cutting themes that are treated throughout the curriculum:

- sophistication in the treatment of theoretical issues
- rigor and high ethical standards in the collection, analysis and presentation of research
- thorough knowledge of the historical context of media institutions and practices
- sustained focus on issues of social and cultural diversity (race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality), and on issues arising due to the increase in transnational media and information flows and influences

Code	Title	Credit Hours
<b>Required Courses</b>		
MDST 7011	Proseminar in Media Communication Theory 1	3
MDST 7021	Proseminar in Media and Communication Theory 2	3
MDST 7061	Quantitative Research Methods in Media 1	3
MDST 7051	Qualitative Research Methods in Media	3
MDRP 8991	Dissertation	30
<b>Electives</b>		

Advanced research methods	3
One additional graduate research methods course or one media practice course	3
Inside emphasis (4-5 Media Studies courses)	12-15
Outside emphasis (3-4 courses in other units)	12-9
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>	<b>72</b>

<sup>1</sup> Or comparable approved course on data methodologies.

## Comprehensive Examinations

Each doctoral student will be required to pass comprehensive examinations, consisting of four questions, which are generally administered after the last semester in which the student takes coursework. The examinations are individually tailored for each student and comprise both written and oral examinations.

## Dissertation

A minimum of 30 hours of dissertation credit, JRNL 8991/MDST 8991, must be taken. Various restrictions apply to these hours, including:

- No more than 10 dissertation credit hours may be taken in any one semester
- No more than 10 dissertation credit hours may be taken prior to the semester in which comprehensive examinations are taken
- No more than 10 dissertation credit hours may be taken in the semester in which comprehensive examinations are taken
- After passing comprehensive examinations, student must enroll for at least 5 dissertation credit hours (full time) or 3 dissertation credit hours (part time) each semester until graduation

Typically students enroll for 10 dissertation hours in the semester in which they are taking comprehensive examinations and 10 dissertation hours each in the following fall and spring terms. Students must be aware of Graduate School rules (<http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/policies/>) regarding registration for dissertation hours.

## Time Limit

Students are expected to complete the program and defend the dissertation in four years.