

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION - BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BS)

In the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Design, students learn how to generate ideas and solve problems for businesses, organizations, brands and issues through a strategic thinking process that is grounded in analytical and creative thought. With the explosion of digital and social media, there's never been a more exciting time to work in the rapidly growing field of strategic communication.

The department offers a bachelor's degree in strategic communication—an umbrella term that refers to the way in which organizations use advertising, public relations and design to accomplish their goals. Undergraduate students can choose to specialize in one of three track areas below.

Program Tracks

Advertising Strategy

The advertising strategy track prepares students for careers in account management, account planning, brand and campaign management or media management. These advertising careers require knowledge of brand-building, audience engagement across media platforms, data analysis and strategy development.

Public Relations

The public relations track prepares students for a career in one of the nation's fastest-growing fields. Career opportunities within public relations include—but are not limited to—the roles of public relations director, media and communications manager, fundraising manager, director of communications, corporate communication manager, account manager, lobbyist, publicist, copywriter, event planner, social media manager and spokesperson.

Creative

The creative track involves the application of design thinking and design practices to create the targeted touchpoints of strategic communication for modern media in a commercial context, such as social media strategies, packaging design, app development and user experience. The creative track provides the methods and processes to solve a strategic communication problem, the experience and understanding to design an original concept, and the skills and best practices to bring those concepts to life. Graduates are employed as digital producers, social media managers, app designers, graphic designers, art directors, copywriters, user experience strategists and interaction designers.

Requirements

General Requirements

Each degree track requires 41-43 credit hours, comprised of the 23-credit-hour departmental Core Curriculum and 18-20 credit hours of specialized coursework.

The courses of Core Curriculum include Strategic Communication Capstone (APRD 4405), a 4-credit-hour capstone course completed in the student's final year.

Core Curriculum

Students must take the following courses to complete the department core requirement.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Required Courses		
APRD 1003	Principles of Strategic Communication	3
APRD 1004	Fundamentals of Grammar	1
APRD 2001	Strategic Thinking in Advertising and Public Relations	3
APRD 2004	Introduction to Research Methods and Insights	3
APRD 2005	Strategic Communication Writing	3
APRD 2006	Software and Design Applications	3
JRNL 3651	Media Law and Ethics	3
APRD 4405	Strategic Communication Capstone	4
Total Credit Hours		23

Secondary Area of Study

In addition to the coursework required for the major, all students in STCM must complete a secondary area of study outside of STCM. This secondary area of study can be met by any of the following: a minor, a second major within CMDI, a double degree or any credit-based certificate program of at least 12 credit hours.

Program Tracks

Advertising Strategy Track

The advertising strategy track consists of three required courses and three electives totaling 18 credit hours. Up to six credit hours of elective requirements can be satisfied by an internship.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Required Courses		
APRD 3002	Communication and Media Planning	3
APRD 3009	Brand Building	3
APRD 3010	Consumer Insights	3
Electives		9
APRD 3003	Strategic Communication Research Methods	
APRD 3004	Account Management	
APRD 3005	Content Strategy and User Engagement	
APRD 3006	History of Advertising	
APRD 3301	Social Media Strategies	
APRD 3402	Content Creation	
APRD 4100	Brands and Culture	
APRD 4102	Sustainable Brand Practices: Ethics Cases in Advertising and PR	
APRD 4300	Strategic Communication Analytics and Metrics	
APRD 4301	Social Media Listening	
APRD 4302	Marketing Data Visualization	
APRD 4303	Search Advertising Strategies	
APRD 4404	Advanced Ad Campaigns NSAC	
APRD 4406	Advanced PR Campaigns BATEMAN COMPETITION	
APRD 4543	Strategic Brand Management	
APRD 4800	Seminar in Honors Writing and Research	

APRD 4873	Special Topics (repeatable up to 6 credits)	
APRD 4931	Internship	
Total Credit Hours		18

Public Relations Track

The public relations track consists of three required courses and three electives totaling 18 credit hours. Up to six credit hours of elective requirements can be satisfied by an internship.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Required Courses		
APRD 3103	Public Relations Writing	3
APRD 3105	Public Relations Strategy and Implementation	3
APRD 3003	Strategic Communication Research Methods	3
or APRD 3104	Digital Storytelling for Public Relations	
or APRD 3112	International Public Relations	
or APRD 3300	Crisis Communication in Public Relations	
Electives		9
APRD 3003	Strategic Communication Research Methods	
APRD 3005	Content Strategy and User Engagement	
APRD 3006	History of Advertising	
APRD 3104	Digital Storytelling for Public Relations	
APRD 3112	International Public Relations	
APRD 3300	Crisis Communication in Public Relations	
APRD 3301	Social Media Strategies	
APRD 3302	Case Studies in Public Relations	
APRD 3402	Content Creation	
APRD 4000	Event Planning and Management	
APRD 4010	Strategic Health Communication	
APRD 4100	Brands and Culture	
APRD 4102	Sustainable Brand Practices: Ethics Cases in Advertising and PR	
APRD 4300	Strategic Communication Analytics and Metrics	
APRD 4301	Social Media Listening	
APRD 4302	Marketing Data Visualization	
APRD 4404	Advanced Ad Campaigns NSAC	
APRD 4406	Advanced PR Campaigns BATEMAN COMPETITION	
APRD 4543	Strategic Brand Management	
APRD 4800	Seminar in Honors Writing and Research	
APRD 4873	Special Topics (repeatable up to 6 credits)	
APRD 4931	Internship	
Total Credit Hours		18

Creative Track

The creative track consists of six required courses and two electives totaling 20 credit hours. Up to six credit hours of elective requirements can be satisfied by an internship.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Required Courses		
APRD 3001	Visual Design 1	3
APRD 3102	Copywriting 1	3
APRD 3400	Creative Concepting 1	3
APRD 3501	Software Applications 2	1
APRD 3504	Software Applications 3	1
APRD 4600	Creative Portfolio 1	3
Electives		6
APRD 3006	History of Advertising	
APRD 3011	Visual Design 2	
APRD 3100	UX and UI Design Workflows	
APRD 3401	Creative Concepting 2	
APRD 3402	Content Creation	
APRD 3500	Copywriting 2	
APRD 4404	Advanced Ad Campaigns NSAC	
APRD 4406	Advanced PR Campaigns BATEMAN COMPETITION	
APRD 4501	Design for Social Innovation	
APRD 4601	Creative Portfolio 2	
APRD 4800	Seminar in Honors Writing and Research	
APRD 4873	Special Topics (repeatable up to 6 credits)	
APRD 4931	Internship	
Total Credit Hours		20

Sample Plan of Study

The following provides an example of how the core requirements for a BS in Strategic Communication could be fulfilled within four years. Please refer to the specific track requirements to determine the number of electives required for the advertising strategy, public relations and creative tracks. Specific details on the Core Curriculum requirements for the College of Communication, Media, Design and Information Policies & Requirements (<https://catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/media-communication-information/policies-requirements/#corecurriculumtext>).

Year One

Fall Semester		Credit Hours
APRD 1003	Principles of Strategic Communication	3
CMDI 1040	Foundational CMDI (4), or CMDI Core or Elective (3)	4
	Quantitative Thinking	3
	Lower Division Writing	3
Credit Hours		13

Spring Semester

APRD 1004	Fundamentals of Grammar	1
APRD 2001	Strategic Thinking in Advertising and Public Relations	3

APRD 2004	Introduction to Research Methods and Insights	3
CMDI 1040 Foundational CMDI (4), or CMDI Core or Elective (3)		3
CMDI Core (Natural World with Lab)		4
Credit Hours		14
Year Two		
Fall Semester		
APRD 2005	Strategic Communication Writing	3
CMDI Core Computing		3
CMDI Core or Elective (P/S; H & A; Hist V; Div & Global)		6
Secondary Area		3
Credit Hours		15
Spring Semester		
APRD 2006	Software and Design Applications	3
CMDI Core (Natural World)		3
CMDI Core or Elective (P/S; H & A; Hist V; Div & Global)		6
Secondary Area		3
Credit Hours		15
Year Three		
Fall Semester		
APRD Program Track Core or Elective		9
CMDI Core or Elective (P/S; H & A; Hist V; Div & Global)		3
Secondary Area		3
Credit Hours		15
Spring Semester		
JRNL 3651	Media Law and Ethics	3
APRD Program Track Core or Elective		3
CMDI Core or Elective (P/S; H & A; Hist V; Div & Global)		7
Upper Division Composition or Elective		3
Credit Hours		16
Year Four		
Fall Semester		
APRD Program Track Core or Elective		3
CMDI Core or Elective (P/S; H & A; Hist V; Div & Global)		10
Secondary Area		3
Credit Hours		16
Spring Semester		
APRD 4405	Strategic Communication Capstone	4
APRD Program Track Core or Elective		3
Secondary Area		3
Electives		6
Credit Hours		16
Total Credit Hours		120

- Demonstrate an understanding of the structures, roles and key competencies within the strategic communication field.
- Work collaboratively across disciplines to achieve strategic communication goals.
- Critically analyze the role of strategic communication within broader social, cultural and global contexts, understanding its ethical implications and influence on diverse societies.
- Demonstrate proficiency with current and emerging tools, platforms and technologies essential for strategic communication.

Learning Outcomes

The Advertising, Public Relations and Media Design Department has established that these are vital learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate the ability to conduct and apply research, strategic analysis and creative problem-solving to develop and execute solutions for real-world strategic communication challenges.
- Communicate clearly and effectively across various formats—written, verbal, digital and visual—to a range of audiences.