

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION - BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BS)

In the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Media 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 media design to accomplish their goals. Undergraduate students can choose to specialize in one of four 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.

Advertising Creative

The Advertising Creative track is an application-only sequence that prepares students for opportunities in art direction and copywriting. It is an intensive program designed to provide students with an impressive portfolio of work as well an in-depth appreciation for the ethics and challenges of the creative process. Application and admission to the Advertising Creative track typically occurs at the end of the sophomore year. Students should select the Advertising Strategy track prior to applying. Students who are not accepted into Advertising Creative track will complete the Advertising Strategy track unless they decide, with guidance from their academic adviser, to shift to another STCM track.

Public Relations

The Public Relations track will prepare you 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.

Media Design

The Media Design 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 Media Design 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. In the past year alone, 25 media design students made the One Show finals, with 12 students earning pencil trophies. Our graduates are employed as digital producers, social media managers, app designers, graphic designers, user experience strategists and interaction designers.

Requirements

General Requirements

Each degree track requires 41 credit hours, comprised of the 23-credit-hour departmental Core Curriculum and 18 credit hours of specialized coursework (the Advertising Creative track requires 19-20 credit hours).

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 CMCI, 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 Platforms | 3 |
| APRD 3009 | Brand Solutions | 3 |
| APRD 3010 | Consumer Insights | 3 |
| Electives | | |
| APRD 3003 | Strategic Communication Research Methods | 3 |
| APRD 3004 | Account Management | 3 |
| APRD 3005 | Content Strategy and User Engagement | 3 |
| APRD 3006 | History of Advertising | 3 |
| APRD 3301 | Social Media Strategies | 3 |
| APRD 4100 | Brands and Culture | 3 |
| APRD 4101 | Advertising Media Planning | 3 |

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|---------------------------|---|-----------|
| 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 4543 | Strategic Brand Management | |
| APRD 4873 | Special Topics (repeatable up to 6 credits) | |
| APRD 4931 | Internship | |
| Total Credit Hours | | 18 |

Advertising Creative Track

The advertising creative track is an application-only sequence and consists of six required courses and two electives totaling 19–20 credit hours. Up to three credit hours of elective requirements can be satisfied by an internship.

| Code | Title | Credit Hours |
|---------------------------|---|--------------|
| Required Courses | | |
| APRD 3501 | Software Applications 2 | 1 |
| APRD 3503 | Concepting | 3 |
| APRD 3504 | Software Applications 3 | 1 |
| APRD 4505 | Art Direction Seminar ¹ | 3 |
| or APRD 4504 | Copywriting Seminar | |
| APRD 4506 | Creative Track Portfolio Development I | 3 |
| APRD 4507 | Creative Track Portfolio Development II | 3 |
| Electives | | |
| APRD 3002 | Communication Platforms | |
| APRD 3004 | Account Management | |
| APRD 3005 | Content Strategy and User Engagement | |
| APRD 3006 | History of Advertising | |
| APRD 3301 | Social Media Strategies | |
| APRD 4100 | Brands and Culture | |
| APRD 4102 | Sustainable Brand Practices: Ethics Cases in Advertising and PR | |
| APRD 4301 | Social Media Listening | |
| APRD 4873 | Special Topics (repeatable up to 6 credits) | |
| APRD 4931 | Internship | |
| Total Credit Hours | | 20 |

¹ APRD 3504 is only required for students following the Art Direction sequence.

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 | Strategic Writing for Public Relations | 3 |

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|---------------------------|---|-----------|
| 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 | |
| APRD 3105 | Public Relations Strategy and Implementation | 3 |
| 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 4000 | Public Relations Event Planning | |
| 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 4406 | Advanced PR Campaigns BATEMAN COMPETITION | |
| APRD 4543 | Strategic Brand Management | |
| APRD 4873 | Special Topics (repeatable up to 6 credits) | |
| APRD 4931 | Internship | |
| Total Credit Hours | | 18 |

Media Design Track

The media design 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 3001 | Visual Design | 3 |
| APRD 3102 | Story Design I | 3 |
| APRD 3400 | Concept Design | 3 |
| Electives | | 9 |
| APRD 3006 | History of Advertising | |
| APRD 3100 | User Experience & User Interface Design | |
| APRD 3401 | Concept Design II | |
| APRD 3402 | Video Design | |
| APRD 3500 | Story Design II | |
| APRD 4501 | Design for Social Innovation | |
| APRD 4600 | Media Design Portfolio I | |
| APRD 4601 | Media Design Portfolio II | |

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

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, advertising creative, public relations and media design tracks. Specific details on the Core Curriculum requirements for the College of Media, Communication and Information can be found in 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 |
| CMCI 1040 | Foundational CMCI (4), or CMCI 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 |
| CMCI 1040 | Foundational CMCI (4), or CMCI Core or Elective (3) | 3 |
| | CMCI Core (Natural World with Lab) | 4 |
| Credit Hours | | 14 |

Year Two

Fall Semester

| | | |
|---------------------|--|-----------|
| APRD 2005 | Strategic Communication Writing | 3 |
| | CMCI Core Computing | 3 |
| | CMCI 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 |
| | CMCI Core (Natural World) | 3 |
| | CMCI 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 |
| | CMCI 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 |
| | CMCI 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 |
| | CMCI 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 |