

# COMMUNICATION ARTS, MA

*(Program note: Though terminal MA degrees may occasionally be awarded, the programs are designed with successful completion of the PhD as the goal.)*

The Department of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin–Madison has long been one of the world's leading centers for study and research in communication. It was the first department in the United States to award a PhD degree in the field, and its graduates serve on the faculties of leading universities, in research institutions, and in public and private agencies throughout this country and abroad.

The graduate programs in Communication Arts are designed to educate research scholars. Through intensive coursework within the department and in other departments, and through close professional association with appropriate faculty, graduate students in communication arts gain proficiency and sophistication in their chosen areas of study. Their attainment of doctoral degrees signifies their readiness to work as independent scholars in their areas and to make original contributions to human knowledge.

Communication Arts offers four distinct areas of graduate study:

## COMMUNICATION SCIENCE<sup>1</sup>

Communication science is concerned with how people interact with one another in various means, modes, and contexts. It involves social scientific exploration utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Reflecting the multi-faceted nature of the subject matter and a cross-disciplinary orientation of the field, students in communication science typically complete course work both in the department and in other social science fields. Graduate study in communication science is flexible and tailored to the individual. With a low faculty-to-student ratio and close collaboration with related academic units on campus, students have high access to faculty and with it, opportunities to work closely with faculty on research and broaden their horizon. Students are expected to develop fluency in at least two of the following areas:

- *Social influence* that focuses interpersonal interactions, both online and offline, as well as group and organizational dynamics. It examines information exchange, persuasion, and other influence processes in various social contexts.
- *Computer-mediated communication* that examines individuals' uses of the media with digital, interactive, and networking features, as well as the effects of such usage on self, relationships, group dynamics, and other social processes.
- *Human development and communication* that addresses communication in relation to life cycle, focusing in particular on life cycle patterns in the means and modes of communication, as well as the effects of communicative engagement and media usage of youths and aging.
- *Political communication* that focuses on patterns and effects of communication, both face-to-face and mediated, on the democratic process. In particular it concerns how communication shapes the public sphere, how public deliberation over political issues takes place, and how the media may be related to civic and political engagement.

## FILM<sup>1</sup>

The study of film concentrates primarily on motion picture history, theory, and criticism, approached through intensive critical analysis of individual films; research into the primary documents of filmmakers and the film industry; and the construction of theoretical models of film forms and styles, national cinemas, film genres, and the economics of the film industry. The program believes in the connection between film studies and film practice. Courses in film production enhance our understanding of motion picture history, theory, and criticism by revealing the practical decisions filmmakers confront. The program is not designed for students whose sole interest is in film production.

## MEDIA AND CULTURAL STUDIES<sup>1</sup>

The media and cultural studies (MCS) program emphasizes the study of media in their historical, economic, social, and political context. MCS courses examine the cultural forms created and disseminated by media industries and the ways in which they resonate in everyday life, on the individual, national, and global level. Focusing primarily on sound and screen media—television, new media, film, popular music, radio, video games—but reaching out across boundaries, MCS encourages interdisciplinary and transmedia research. MCS courses draw on a broad range of cultural theories spanning a spectrum of concerns all centrally relevant to the functioning of sound and screen media in a diverse and globalizing cultural environment.

## RHETORIC, POLITICS, AND CULTURE<sup>1</sup>

Whether speaking from the podium or chatting on Facebook, people use discourse to craft identities, enact social change, and form a shared sense of community. Seeking to better understand this social force, the study of discourse explores significant themes, trajectories, and transformations in politics and society while considering particular individuals and groups, cultures, eras, genres, and topics. Courses in this area explore issues of power, digital media, citizenship, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, globalization, religion, inclusion and exclusion, social status, and marginalization.

Graduate work in rhetoric focuses on three interrelated areas: discourse, theory, and method. All three areas of study in rhetoric, politics, and culture are united by a common commitment to understanding the role of discourse in society as we act together to engage in culture and politics. Students are encouraged to investigate a wide range of discursive phenomena as they develop expertise that will empower them to conduct significant research and to take an active role in scholarly communities.

<sup>1</sup> These tracks are internal to the program and represent different pathways a student can follow to earn this degree. Applicants choose their area of study when applying to the program; however, the specific area of study will not appear on the transcript.

## ADMISSIONS

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Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet the minimum requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>) of the**

**Graduate School as well as the program(s).** Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	December 15
Spring Deadline	This program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	This program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required but may be considered if available.
English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not exclusively in English, must provide an English proficiency test score earned within two years of the anticipated term of enrollment. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/</a> ).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

**(Program note:** Though terminal MA degrees may occasionally be awarded, the programs are designed with successful completion of the PhD as the goal.)

Applicants must have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. The Graduate School minimum GPA is 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. The department likes to see at least a 3.25 in courses relevant to the area in which you apply, although successful applicants usually have much higher GPAs.

Since COVID-19, there have been challenges for students attempting to take the GRE. For students applying in Fall 2025 (for admissions in Fall 2026), the GRE requirement is optional. Regardless of whether GRE scores are submitted, all applications will be held in equal regard.

Within the department, **students may apply to only one pathway of study, which must be indicated on the statement of purpose:** Communication Science; Film; Media and Cultural Studies; or Rhetoric, Politics, and Culture.

## APPLICATION MATERIALS

There are six supporting documents which complete the application:

1. **Statement of purpose** clearly telling us what you want to study and why you think you can do it here. Although it cannot be said to be the most important part of your application, the statement of purpose is our introduction to you as a student and as such, you will want it to be as professional and persuasive as possible to put your application in the best light.
2. **A supplemental question** asking about how your background and life experiences have motivated your decision to pursue a graduate degree here.
3. **Three letters of recommendation**, preferably from academic sources. Email addresses of recommenders are submitted within the online application.
4. **Submission of GRE scores is currently optional. Students who elect to submit official GRE scores, should do so through ETS.** UW–Madison is institution #1846; no department code is necessary.
5. **PDFs of unofficial transcripts** from all postsecondary schools attended after high school. Official transcripts will be requested upon admission.
6. **A writing sample** (in English), 8–25 pages long. The best writing sample is an academic paper you wrote for a class related to the area in which you apply. It should have citations and footnotes. If you submit a paper from graduate coursework, it should be 15 to 25 pages in length. If you submit a paper from undergraduate coursework, it should be 8 to 12 pages. If you have a relevant published paper or article, you may submit that instead of a course paper. Include a cover page identifying it as a chapter or section of a longer work.

## FUNDING

### FUNDING GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

The Bursar's Office provides information about tuition and fees associated with being a graduate student. Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

*(Program note: Though terminal MA degrees may occasionally be awarded, the programs are designed with successful completion of the PhD as the goal.)*

Beginning graduate students in Communication Arts receive 6 consecutive semesters of guaranteed support if they are entering to begin PhD coursework or 10 consecutive semesters of guaranteed support if they are entering to begin MA coursework and then continue through PhD coursework.

Guaranteed funding comes in the form of teaching assistantships (TA), project assistantships (PA), lectureships (LSA), and fellowships. The guaranteed funding package for graduate students includes full tuition remission, biweekly stipend, and benefits eligibility, including health insurance. To maintain their funding guarantee, students must remain in good standing (see Comm Arts Graduate Handbook section: VII. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/graduate/graduate-handbook/satisfactory-academic-progress/>)).

### GRADUATE SCHOOL–SUPPORTED FELLOWSHIPS

A limited number of fellowships are available funded through the graduate school. All students are considered for fellowships at the time of application and during the course of their studies; no separate application is necessary. These fellowships may be for terms from one semester to two years and include tuition remission and benefits including health insurance. Additional awards for dissertators (e.g. The Dana-Allen Award) are available through a competitive application process.

### DEPARTMENT AWARDS

The Department of Communication Arts is pleased to be able to grant yearly monetary awards to graduate students based on scholastic performance. Nominations for the awards are generated by the faculty in the four areas of graduate study. To be eligible for consideration, graduate

students must be continuing in the program, must be making satisfactory progress toward their degree, and must not have any incompletes on their transcript. The amount and number of awards vary from year to year depending on funds available. For full details on department awards, please see the department's funding and financial information page (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/graduate/graduate-handbook/funding-finance-resource-information/>).

## RESEARCH AWARDS

The Department of Communication Arts also offers funding during the course of a student's studies to support research activities. For example, students have access to:

- *Elliott Dissertation Scholarships*: Given to students who have successfully defended their dissertation proposal, this award is designed to facilitate progress on researching and writing the dissertation.
- *Betty and Vance Kepley Research Awards*: Awarded to one student annually, through a competitive application process, who faces significant research costs for their dissertation project and who proposes transformative ways to conduct research that otherwise would not have been possible.
- *Marilynn R. Baxter Research Awards*: Awarded on a rolling basis to students looking for assistance with research costs associated with a dissertation chapter or other publication.

For full details on department awards, please see the department's funding and financial information page (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/graduate/graduate-handbook/funding-finance-resource-information/>).

## CONFERENCE TRAVEL AWARDS

The department provides annual travel stipends for students to present academic papers at conferences. Students not residing in Madison during the semester in which they present at the conference may not be eligible for this funding. For full details on department awards, please see the department's funding and financial information page (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/graduate/graduate-handbook/funding-finance-resource-information/>).

**Evening/Weekend:** Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

**Face-to-Face:** Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

**Hybrid:** These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

**Online:** These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

## CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail	
Minimum Credit Requirement	40 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	16 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	20 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/</a> ).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. (See below for GPA requirement of coursework taken within the department.) Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/</a> ).
Other Grade Requirements	A cumulative GPA for coursework within the department of 3.5 or above.

## REQUIREMENTS

### MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum degree requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#requirementstext>) and policies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiestext>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

### MAJOR REQUIREMENTS MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

#### Mode of Instruction Definitions

**Accelerated:** Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

**Assessments and Examinations** To assess satisfactory progress toward the degree and to facilitate determinations of good standing, graduate students must complete a Professional Activities Report (PAR) each spring. A PAR indicates a student's academic and professional activities on and off campus each year. Faculty will use the PAR in their annual evaluations of student progress. A PAR represents one means of communication between graduate students and faculty, providing graduate students with an opportunity to enumerate their activities in a single document. PARS must be completed by April 1 each spring.

MA comprehensive examinations or theses are generally done in the student's fourth semester of study. To take comprehensive exams or complete a thesis, a student must be in good standing, and must have completed the basic and specific area course requirements. Additional requirements vary by area of study. They are as follows:

- Communication Science students continuing on to the PhD program must complete and defend an MA thesis. Those completing the MA as a terminal option will pursue the non-thesis option. For this option, in lieu of the thesis and oral defense, two of the courses in Communication Science must be numbered 800 or above, and students must pass a four-hour written comprehensive examination which covers communication theory, research methodology, and a topic area of the student's specialization.
- Film students' Comprehensive Exam consists of six hours of writing and an oral defense. The writing portion is divided into three two-hour sittings concentrating respectively on the areas of film theory, film history, and film analysis and criticism. The oral defense—affording students an opportunity to correct, inflect, or expand upon their written answers—takes place a week or two later and typically runs about an hour. There is no option to write a thesis in lieu of the comprehensive exam.
- Media and Cultural Studies students' comprehensive exam, consists of six hours of writing, normally distributed across four questions, followed by an oral defense. Exam areas are drawn from the coursework the examinee has taken in media and cultural studies. Reading lists are determined in consultation with the student's advisor and core faculty members. There is no option to write a thesis in lieu of the comprehensive exam.
- Rhetoric, Culture, and Politics students continuing on to the PhD program must complete and defend an MA thesis. Those completing the MA as a terminal option will pursue the non-thesis option. For this option, students may complete the non-thesis, terminal option by taking a comprehensive exam consisting of three, one-hour written exams addressing theory, critical method, and public discourse.

**Language Requirements** Students interested in writing a dissertation on a national cinema other than the US are expected to complete two years of foreign language study.

REQUIRED COURSES

Each area of graduate study has further specific requirements for the completion of the MA.

Communication Science Pathway <sup>1</sup>

Code	Title	Credits
COM ARTS 760	Advances in Communication Theories	3
COM ARTS 762	Communication Research Methods	3
Four additional Communication Science courses numbered 500 or above <sup>2</sup>		12
At least two courses in statistics (see below for options)		6
COM ARTS 904 <sub>3</sub>	Communication Science Colloquium	4
Electives		12
Total Credits		40

<sup>1</sup> These pathways are internal to the program and represent different curricular paths a student can follow to earn this degree. Pathway names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

<sup>2</sup> Only one of these courses may be COM ARTS 990 Research and Thesis. Colloquium does not satisfy this requirement.

<sup>3</sup> One credit of COM ARTS 904 Communication Science Colloquium must be completed each semester.

Code	Title	Credits
Statistics Course options		
ED PSYCH 760	Statistical Methods Applied to Education I	3
ED PSYCH 761	Statistical Methods Applied to Education II	3
ED PSYCH 762	Introduction to the Design of Educational Experiments	3
ED PSYCH 763	Regression Models in Education	3
ED PSYCH 773	Factor Analysis, Multidimensional Scaling and Cluster Analysis	3
ED PSYCH/CURRIC/ L I S 803	Computational Research Methods	3
ED PSYCH 871	Test Theory II	3
ED PSYCH 960	Structural Equation Modeling	3
ED PSYCH 964	Hierarchical Linear Modeling	3
ED PSYCH 965	Applied Bayesian Statistics for Education Research	3
SOC/C&E SOC 360	Statistics for Sociologists I	4
SOC/C&E SOC 361	Statistics for Sociologists II	4
SOC 362	Statistics for Sociologists III	4
SOC 952	Seminar-Mathematical and Statistical Applications in Sociology	3
PSYCH 610	Design and Analysis of Psychological Experiments I	4
PSYCH 710	Design and Analysis of Psychological Experiments II	4
POLI SCI 812	Introduction to Statistical Methods in Political Science	4

POLI SCI 813	Multivariable Statistical Inference for Political Research	3
POLI SCI 818	Maximum Likelihood Estimation	3

### Film Pathway<sup>1,2</sup>

Code	Title	Credits
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#### Production Course

COM ARTS 355	Introduction to Media Production or COM ARTS 609 Special Topics in Production	3-4
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#### Required Courses

COM ARTS 454	Critical Film Analysis	3
COM ARTS 669	Film Theory	3

#### National Cinema Courses 3

Select one of the following:

COM ARTS 455	French Film	
COM ARTS 556	The American Film Industry in the Era of the Studio System	
COM ARTS 613	Special Topics in Film <sup>3</sup>	

#### Modes-and-Practices Courses 3

Select one of the following:

COM ARTS 358	History of Documentary Film	
COM ARTS 461	Global Art Cinema	
COM ARTS 463	Avant-Garde Film	
COM ARTS 552	Contemporary Hollywood Cinema	
COM ARTS 556	The American Film Industry in the Era of the Studio System	
COM ARTS 613	Special Topics in Film <sup>3</sup>	

#### Power, Identity, and Representation Course 3

Select one of the following:

COM ARTS/ GEN&WS 418	Gender, Sexuality, and the Media	
COM ARTS 613	Special Topics in Film <sup>3</sup>	

#### Seminar

One seminar numbered 900 or above	3
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#### Film Colloquium

COM ARTS 902	Film Colloquium <sup>4</sup>	4
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#### Electives 15

#### Total Credits 40

<sup>1</sup> These pathways are internal to the program and represent different curricular paths a student can follow to earn this degree. Pathway names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

<sup>2</sup> Some required courses may be transferred if the student already has taken equivalent courses. A determination about transferring courses is made by a student's advisor after reviewing syllabi and other relevant materials. Students who enter the program without an undergraduate degree in film may be required to take additional coursework.

<sup>3</sup> As COM ARTS 613 Special Topics in Film includes a range of offerings, students should work with their advisor to select appropriate topics.

<sup>4</sup> One credit of COM ARTS 902 Film Colloquium must be completed each semester.

### Media and Cultural Studies Pathway<sup>1,3</sup>

All students are required to complete at least 24 credits numbered 600 and above.

Code	Title	Credits
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#### Media Production Elective

COM ARTS 355	Introduction to Media Production or COM ARTS 609 Special Topics in Production	3-4
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#### Seminar 9

Three MCS Seminars numbered 900 or above <sup>2</sup>	
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#### Colloquium

COM ARTS 903	Media and Cultural Studies Colloquium <sup>4</sup>	4
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#### Electives 24

Courses numbered at least 400 and above. At least 9 credits must be in MCS (in addition to those listed above). Students may take COM ARTS 609 as an elective if it was not taken as a Media Production Elective.	
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#### Total Credits 40

<sup>1</sup> These pathways are internal to the program and represent different curricular paths a student can follow to earn this degree. Pathway names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

<sup>2</sup> Seminar options include COM ARTS 950 Seminar-Radio Television Film and COM ARTS 955 Media History and Historiography.

<sup>3</sup> Students who enter the program without an undergraduate degree in media studies may be required to take additional coursework.

<sup>4</sup> One credit of COM ARTS 903 Media and Cultural Studies Colloquium must be completed each semester.

### Rhetoric, Politics, and Culture Pathway<sup>1,2</sup>

Code	Title	Credits
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COM ARTS 570	Classical Rhetorical Theory	3
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COM ARTS 969	Seminar: Contemporary Rhetorical Theory	2-3
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#### Seminar

COM ARTS 976	Seminar in Rhetorical Criticism	3
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#### Colloquium

COM ARTS 905	Rhetoric Colloquium <sup>3</sup>	4
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#### Electives (courses numbered 300 above) 27

At least two courses must be in COM ARTS.	
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At least two courses must be numbered 700 and above.	
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At least one course must have primary content focused on issues of race and ethnicity.	
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#### Total Credits 40

<sup>1</sup> These pathways are internal to the program and represent different curricular paths a student can follow to earn this degree. Pathway names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the preceding courses may be transferred if a student has taken the equivalent elsewhere. All other courses should be chosen in consultation with the student's advisor. Of the remaining courses, at least two courses must be numbered 700 or above.



<sup>3</sup> One credit of COM ARTS 905 Rhetoric Colloquium must be completed each semester.

## POLICIES

### GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) serve as the official document of record for Graduate School academic and administrative policies and procedures and are updated continuously. Note some policies redirect to entries in the official UW-Madison Policy Library (<https://policy.wisc.edu/>). Programs may set more stringent policies than the Graduate School. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

### MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES PRIOR COURSEWORK

#### Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 9 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

#### Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

#### Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

#### Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW-Madison

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

### PROBATION

All graduate students must stay "in good standing" in the department to be eligible for teaching assignments, awards, and fellowships, and in order to be considered to be making satisfactory progress in the program. Students whose progress is rated unsatisfactory by their faculty may face loss of funding and/or dismissal from the program.

The department's minimum criteria for good standing are:

1. Timely progress through the program, consisting of successful completion of MA requirements and compliance with coursework, advising, and thesis/comprehensive exam expectations.
2. A cumulative grade point average for coursework within the department of 3.5 or above.
3. No grades of Incomplete on the student's record.
4. Fulfillment of responsibilities for teaching/project assistantships or lectureships.

Students are expected to carry a full load, defined as three courses (nine credits) plus colloquium (one credit) per semester, unless a student's advisor recommends an exception.

### ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Although an initial faculty advisor is assigned to each student during the summer prior to matriculation in the graduate program, students should seek out regular advisors by the end of their first year in residence. The regular advisor should be a faculty member whose research interests and methodological expertise match closely to those that the student intends to acquire. While no faculty member is obliged to accept a student's request to serve as advisor, invitations are usually accepted except where the faculty member judges that a different advisor would serve the student's needs and interests better.

Early in the semester in which the comprehensive exam/thesis will be completed, students will form an MA defense committee consisting of three to four faculty members, one of which is their advisor. In the case of comprehensive examinations, all committee members will write exam questions, read the answers, and sit on the MA defense. In the case of a thesis, all committee members will read the manuscript and sit on the MA defense.

### CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

10-credit maximum unless additional credits are approved by faculty advisor, up to 15

### TIME LIMITS

Master's degrees are generally expected to be completed within five semesters of matriculation.

### GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
  - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employeeabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)

- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

## L&S POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS

Graduate students have the right to appeal an academic decision related to an L&S graduate program if the student believes that the decision is inconsistent with published policy.

Academic decisions that may be appealed include:

- Dismissal from the graduate program
- Failure to pass a qualifying or preliminary examination
- Failure to achieve satisfactory academic progress
- Academic disciplinary action related to failure to meet professional conduct standards

Issues such as the following cannot be appealed using this process:

- A faculty member declining to serve as a graduate student's advisor.
- Decisions regarding the student's disciplinary knowledge, evaluation of the quality of work, or similar judgements. These are the domain of the department faculty.
- Course grades. These can be appealed instead using the L&S Policy for Grade Appeal (<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/22258/>).
- Incidents of bias or hate, hostile and intimidating behavior (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>), or discrimination (Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>), Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/eo-complaint/formal-investigations/>)). Direct these to the linked campus offices appropriate for the incident(s).

### Appeal Process for Graduate Students

A graduate student wishing to appeal an academic decision must follow the process in the order listed below. Note time limits within each step.

1. The student should first seek informal resolution, if possible, by discussing the concern with their academic advisor, the department's Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the department chair.
2. If the program has an appeal policy listed in their graduate program handbook, the student should follow the policy as written, including adhering to any indicated deadlines. In the absence of a specific departmental process, the chair or designee will be the reviewer and decision maker, and the student should submit a written appeal to the chair within 15 business days of the academic decision. The chair or designee will notify the student in writing of their decision.
3. If the departmental process upholds the original decision, the graduate student may next initiate an appeal to L&S. To do so, the student must submit a written appeal to the L&S Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Academic Affairs within 15 business days of notification of the department's decision.
  - a. To the fullest extent possible, the written appeal should include, in a single document: a clear and concise statement of the academic decision being appealed, any relevant background on what led to the decision, the specific policies involved, the relief sought, any relevant documentation related to the departmental appeal, and the names and titles of any individuals contributing to or involved in the decision.
  - b. The Assistant Dean will work with the Academic Associate Dean of the appropriate division to consider the appeal. They may seek additional information and/or meetings related to the case.

- c. The Assistant Dean and Academic Associate Dean will provide a written decision within 20 business days.

4. If L&S upholds the original decision, the graduate student may appeal to the Graduate School. More information can be found on their website: Grievances and Appeals (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>) (see: Graduate School Appeal Process).

## OTHER

Incoming MA students who move on for the PhD are generally offered five academic years (fall semester and spring semester) of support in the form of teaching assistantships, project assistantships, fellowships, and lectureships. This support includes a stipend, tuition remission, and benefits.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

Graduate students should consider opportunities for professional development as they begin their programs of graduate study. As students plan programs of study, participation in campus and disciplinary organizations, scholarly presentations at academic conferences, and potential outlets for publication of research, they should consider the ways that these activities begin to establish areas of scholarly and pedagogical competence, connections with other researchers and teachers in the field, and audiences for their scholarship. Some of the best resources for professional development are the people—both faculty and other graduate students—in the Department of Communication Arts. These people may serve as sources of valuable advice and information, and their actions may provide examples of practices that promote professional development. Further, campus-wide resources are available to enrich students' graduate studies and enhance their professional skills. A full list of departmental resources can be found in the Communication Arts Graduate Student Handbook page about Professional Development and Career Planning. (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/graduate/graduate-handbook/professional-development-and-career-planning/>)

### DEPARTMENT RESOURCES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Two important departmental resources for professional development are a **graduate student's advisor** and the **department colloquia**.

The **advisor** is concerned with a graduate student's academic progress as well as with the professional development of advisees. Throughout a graduate student's residence in the program (and often beyond), an advisor will discuss and answer questions and concerns about professional development. For instance, as submission deadlines to academic conferences approach, an advisor may discuss with a student potential submission options and the appropriate venues for these submissions. If a student is working on revising a seminar paper for potential publication in an academic journal, an advisor will often guide the student through the revision process. When a student is applying for jobs, an advisor will often edit application materials. When a student is interviewing for a position or negotiating a job offer, an advisor will often provide tips for how to proceed.

The **department colloquia** offers additional resources for professional development. The four areas of study (Communication Science; Film; Media and Cultural Studies; and Rhetoric, Politics, and Culture) hold individual and joint colloquia on most Thursday afternoons during the academic year. Often, these colloquia are devoted to research presentations from department faculty and graduate students as well as campus visitors. Sometimes, the colloquia will address issues of professional development. Colloquia topics on professional development include practicing conference presentations; preparing a teaching dossier; practicing job talks; negotiating the revise and resubmit process in journal publishing; and networking. Colloquia on professional development engage graduate students in discussion on professional topics, workshop materials, and offer advice on best practices.

## FACULTY REVIEWS OF GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING

Since most Communication Arts PhD students pursue academic careers, developing teaching skills constitutes an important aspect of professionalization. Some colleges and universities may ask a student to prepare a teaching demonstration as part of the on-campus interview process, or otherwise seek evaluation and evidence of a graduate student's teaching abilities. To facilitate the development of graduate student teaching, faculty will provide reviews of teaching assistants (TA) in courses in which they have worked directly with graduate students in the classroom. Graduate students should expect these reviews in every semester in which they serve as a TA in one of these faculty-led courses (e.g., a lecture-discussion section course taught by a faculty member). These reviews are intended to help students identify strengths in their teaching as well as areas in which they may improve. In relevant courses, faculty will deposit an electronic copy of a teaching review with the graduate coordinator no more than two weeks after a semester has concluded. The graduate coordinator will maintain files of teaching reviews for each graduate student in the department. The graduate coordinator will send a copy of the review to the student's advisor. Faculty also will share a copy of the review with the student reviewed, who may wish to incorporate favorable reviews and quotations into a teaching dossier. Graduate students should feel welcome to discuss all reviews with their supervising faculty members. Graduate students should note, too, that these reviews will assist faculty in addressing matters of pedagogy when preparing letters of recommendation for academic employment, which will benefit students in their job searches.

## TRAVEL TO MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

The Department of Communication Arts provides a once-per-academic-year travel stipend for those students who will be presenting a paper at an academic conference. Students who are not residing in Madison during the semester in which they present at a conference are not eligible for this funding.

## INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA CENTER

Located on the third floor of Vilas Hall, the Instructional Media Center (IMC) provides media and technology services for the entire department. The IMC houses the Hamel Family Digital Media Lab, the Walter Mirisch Seminar Room, and Communication Arts media production classrooms. The IMC circulates laptops, video projectors, and other equipment to graduate students for instruction and short-term use. The IMC also maintains a media library containing thousands of DVDs and blu-rays of films, television shows, video games, and off-air recordings. Graduate students may check out any item not reserved for classroom use for their research. IMC staff can assist graduate students with their research needs. Upon request, the IMC can provide film to video transfers, media creation

(files, DVDs, blu-rays), and video capture, as well as training in these areas. The IMC provides assistance for the Center for Communication Research. The IMC is staffed by individuals with a wide range of media knowledge and skills to assist graduate students.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Articulates, critiques, or elaborates the theories, research methods, and approaches to inquiry or schools of practice in the field of study.
2. Identifies sources and assembles evidence pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
3. Demonstrates understanding of the primary field of study in a historical, social, or global context.
4. Selects and/or utilizes the most appropriate methodologies and practices.
5. Evaluates or synthesizes information pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
6. Communicates clearly in ways appropriate to the field of study.
7. Recognizes and applies principles of ethical and professional conduct.