Three available tracks:\footnote{These tracks are internal to the program and represent different pathways a student can follow to earn this degree. Track names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.}

1. Professional-track master’s focused on specialized training in multimedia skills that lead to careers in mass media industries.
2. Thesis-track master’s focused on developing skills in mass communication research and typically leading to enrollment in a doctoral program.
3. Non-thesis master’s for students interested in basic concepts and theories in journalism and mass communication studies but not in advanced doctoral-level training.

Graduate programs in journalism and mass communication are designed for advanced academic preparation in the various fields of mass communication and journalism, and for training in research and teaching. The School of Journalism and Mass Communication offers three paths for the master of arts: professional-track M.A. (30 credits in multi-media communication and topic specialization); thesis-track M.A. (30 credits in theory and methods plus thesis); and non-thesis M.A. (30 credits with tight focus on journalism and mass communication concepts).

The school is a recognized leader in teaching and research in a variety of topics including the process and effects of mass communication; communication campaigns; community and social movements; consumer and popular culture; health and science communication; history of mass communication; international communication; media accountability and criticism; media law and policy; new media technology; political communication and public opinion; and race, gender and mass communication. Graduate work prepares students to use and contribute to the research and scholarship in these and many other areas. Identifying important questions, gathering evidence, and understanding standards of inference are dominant features of all graduate degree programs.

Facilities

The Center for Journalism Ethics (https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/) advances the ethical standards and practices of democratic journalism through discussion, research, teaching, professional outreach, and newsroom partnerships. Students, faculty, leading journalists and members of the public participate in conferences, workshops, and publications. The center tracks and analyzes ethical issues for all media platforms on its website. The center contributes to the teaching of ethics in the school’s curriculum. Students have the opportunity to write for the center’s website, cover conferences, and contribute to research.

The Mass Communication Research Center (https://mcrc.journalism.wisc.edu/) is an interdisciplinary research facility that conducts research into all phases of communication and provides a common meeting ground for scholars with an interest in communication behavior. It also provides an opportunity for graduate students to participate in research programs and to initiate and conduct their own thesis projects.

The Center for Communication and Democracy (https://ccd.journalism.wisc.edu/) is a research and action project at UW–Madison. The goals of the center are to study how citizens can use new communications technologies to advance democratic discussion and civic participation; to explore the relationships between geographic communities and the emerging world of cyberspace; to explore the structural relations among communications and information markets, the civic sector, and government to find relationships necessary to build and sustain a public sphere in communication that is not dominated by the market, while sustaining economic growth and technological innovation; and to ask what government policies are most appropriate for combining the vibrancy of the market with the common needs of citizens in the sphere of communication.

The Mass Communication History Center, a part of the Wisconsin Historical Society, provides scholars access to private collections, papers, and various types of unpublished materials relating to the growth of mass communication in the United States and other parts of the world. The Wisconsin Historical Society also has a large collection of bound and microfilm files of American and foreign newspapers.