

COMMUNICATION ARTS, B.A.

The communication arts major offers a liberal arts approach to studying communication. The value of the liberal arts approach is that students not only learn specific skills, they also gain a deep understanding of communication theory, history, research, and criticism. Majors learn to apply communication principles in different contexts and with a variety of different media. As a result, the communication arts major prepares students for a wide range of jobs and careers, including those that don't exist yet.

Courses in communication arts deal with a diverse range of communication-related topics and approach them from a variety of theoretical, practical, and aesthetic perspectives. The curriculum is designed to foster an understanding of communication processes, improve communication and digital literacy skills, and develop the capacity for critical appraisal and reflection.

The Department of Communication Arts offers two concentrations in the major:

1. **Communication Science and Rhetorical Studies:** Students explore the social, psychological, and practical aspects of communication and human behavior with a focus on public, mass, online, organizational, group, and interpersonal communication.
2. **Radio–Television–Film:** Students explore the history, theory, criticism, cultural uses, and production practices of television, film, radio, and digital media.

HOW TO GET IN

DECLARING THE MAJOR

The Communication Arts major does not have an admission requirement. Students interested in pursuing the major are encouraged to meet with a Communication Arts academic advisor. Please see the Communication Arts website (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/declaring/>) for instructions on how to declare the major. Non–Letters & Science students will need permission from their school or college to pursue an additional major in Communication Arts.

REQUIREMENTS

UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison are required to fulfill a minimum set of common university general education requirements to ensure that every graduate acquires the essential core of an undergraduate education. This core establishes a foundation for living a productive life, being a citizen of the world, appreciating aesthetic values, and engaging in lifelong learning in a continually changing world. Various schools and colleges will have requirements in addition to the requirements listed below. Consult your advisor for assistance, as needed. For additional information, see the university Undergraduate General Education Requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergradatestudytex>) section of the *Guide*.

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| General Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breadth—Humanities/Literature/Arts: 6 credits • Breadth—Natural Science: 4 to 6 credits, consisting of one 4- or 5-credit course with a laboratory component; or two courses providing a total of 6 credits • Breadth—Social Studies: 3 credits • Communication Part A & Part B * • Ethnic Studies * • Quantitative Reasoning Part A & Part B * |
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* The mortarboard symbol appears before the title of any course that fulfills one of the Communication Part A or Part B, Ethnic Studies, or Quantitative Reasoning Part A or Part B requirements.

COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.)

Students pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in the College of Letters & Science must complete all of the requirements below. The College of Letters & Science allows this major to be paired with either a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science curriculum.

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Mathematics Complete the University General Education Requirements for Quantitative Reasoning A (QR-A) and Quantitative Reasoning B (QR-B) coursework.

Foreign Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the fourth unit of a foreign language; OR • Complete the third unit of a foreign language and the second unit of an additional foreign language.
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L&S Breadth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 credits of Humanities, which must include 6 credits of literature; and • 12 credits of Social Science; and • 12 credits of Natural Science, which must include one 3+ credit Biological Science course and one 3+ credit Physical Science course.
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Liberal Arts and Science Coursework	Complete at least 108 credits.
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Depth of Intermediate/Advanced work	Complete at least 60 credits at the intermediate or advanced level.
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Major	Declare and complete at least one major.
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Total Credits	Complete at least 120 credits.
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UW-Madison Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 credits in residence, overall; and • 30 credits in residence after the 86th credit.
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Quality of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.000 in all coursework at UW–Madison • 2.000 in Intermediate/Advanced level coursework at UW–Madison
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NON–L&S STUDENTS PURSUING AN L&S MAJOR

Non–L&S students who have permission from their school/college to pursue an additional major within L&S only need to fulfill the

major requirements. They do not need to complete the L&S Degree Requirements above.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR

Communication Arts offers two options within the major:

- Communication Science and Rhetorical Studies
- Radio–Television–Film

Students declare one of the two options and complete a minimum of 10 courses and at least 30 credits in the major. Please note that COM ARTS courses numbered below 200 as well as COM ARTS 605, COM ARTS 614, and COM ARTS 615 do not count in the major.

STUDENTS MUST SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

View as listView as grid

- **COMMUNICATION ARTS: COMMUNICATION SCIENCE AND RHETORICAL STUDIES** ([HTTP://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/LETTERS-SCIENCE/COMMUNICATION-ARTS/COMMUNICATION-ARTS-BA/COMMUNICATION-ARTS-COMMUNICATION-SCIENCE-RHETORICAL-STUDIES-BA/](http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/communication-arts/communication-arts-ba/communication-arts-communication-science-rhetorical-studies-ba/))
- **COMMUNICATION ARTS: RADIO-TELEVISION-FILM** ([HTTP://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/LETTERS-SCIENCE/COMMUNICATION-ARTS/COMMUNICATION-ARTS-BA/COMMUNICATION-ARTS-RADIO-TELEVISION-FILM-BA/](http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/communication-arts/communication-arts-ba/communication-arts-radio-television-film-ba/))

RESIDENCE AND QUALITY OF WORK

- Minimum 2.000 GPA in all COM ARTS and major courses
- Minimum 2.000 GPA on at least 15 credits of upper-level work in the major, in residence. (Major courses with Intermediate or Advanced level are considered upper-level).
- 15 credits of COM ARTS major courses (200-699) taken on the UW-Madison campus.

HONORS IN THE MAJOR IN COMMUNICATION ARTS

Students may apply to pursue Honors in the Communication Arts major in consultation with a Communication Arts undergraduate advisor. To be accepted students must have:

- Completed the fundamentals course and the two core courses for their declared option and
- Earned a minimum 3.500 GPA in all COM ARTS courses

HONORS IN THE COMMUNICATION ARTS MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

To earn Honors in the Major in Communication Arts, students must satisfy both the requirements for the major (above) and the following additional requirements:

- Minimum 3.300 University GPA
- Minimum 3.500 GPA for all COM ARTS major courses
- Complete the requirements for the declared major option, to include:

- All theory, history, criticism courses taken to meet the regular major requirements within the declared option must be 400 level or higher.
- One additional theory, history, criticism course at the 400 level or higher.
- Three theory, history and criticism courses must be completed on campus.
- A two-semester senior honors thesis in COM ARTS 681 and COM ARTS 682, for a total of 6 credits.¹

FOOTNOTES

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Submission and approval of a Senior Honors Thesis Proposal is required prior to the term in which students enroll for COM ARTS 681 Senior Honors Thesis. See the Communication Arts undergraduate advisor for current process. Approval of the completed thesis by the thesis advisor and a second Communication Arts faculty member is required.

UNIVERSITY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Total Degree To receive a bachelor's degree from UW–Madison, students must earn a minimum of 120 degree credits. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 degree credits. Students should consult with their college or department advisor for information on specific credit requirements.

Residency Degree candidates are required to earn a minimum of 30 credits in residence at UW–Madison. "In residence" means on the UW–Madison campus with an undergraduate degree classification. "In residence" credit also includes UW–Madison courses offered in distance or online formats and credits earned in UW–Madison Study Abroad/Study Away programs.

Quality of Work Undergraduate students must maintain the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, or academic program to remain in good academic standing. Students whose academic performance drops below these minimum thresholds will be placed on academic probation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Explain core content in either of the two tracks: Communication Science and Rhetorical Studies or Radio-TV-Film.
2. Analyze communication from theoretical, historical, and critical perspectives.
3. Communicate effectively in writing, orally, or via the creation of media content.
4. Participate in communication practices that support diversity, equity, and inclusion for the historically marginalized.

FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Please see any of the Named Options for a four-year plan.

ADVISING AND CAREERS

COMMUNICATION ARTS ACADEMIC ADVISING

Communication arts academic advisors (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/advising/>) assist students throughout their undergraduate studies. Please see the Communication Arts website (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/advising/>) for advising options.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Steffie Halverson, 6114 Vilas Hall, 608-262-2285,
advising@commarts.wisc.edu

Mary Rossa, 6068 Vilas Hall, 608-262-0992,
advising@commarts.wisc.edu

COMMUNICATION ARTS COURSES

The Communication Arts Department offers a wide array of courses. All the courses listed in the Guide are not offered each semester. Please see Course Search and Enroll for current course offerings.

CAREER ADVISING

The communication and media career advisor (<https://journalism.wisc.edu/career-services/advising/>) assists students with career preparation, such as exploring career options, learning internship and job search strategies, and writing resumes and cover letters.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Pam Garcia-Rivera, 5114 Vilas Hall, 608-890-1046, pgarciariver@wisc.edu

CAREER EXPLORATION AND PREPARATION GAIN EXPERIENCE

The Department of Communication Arts encourages students to apply the knowledge and skills they attain through coursework to professional settings. Internships and part-time jobs at television networks, nonprofit organizations, talent agencies, magazines, radio stations, advertising agencies, production companies, government agencies, and other communication-related businesses help students gain work-related experience and explore career options. Advising emails and postings provide communication arts majors with information on opportunities across the country.

Communication arts offers a one-credit, online academic course to accompany a student's internship experience: COM ARTS 614 Field Experience in Communication and COM ARTS 615 Second Field Experience in Communication .

ATTEND EVENTS

Throughout the academic year, students have the opportunity to participate in several communication-focused, career-related events.

COMMUNICATION ARTS ALUMNI CAREERS AT A GLANCE

After completing a liberal arts education with a communication arts major, communication arts alumni pursue a variety of careers. In a recent survey, communication arts alumni were asked to provide and

categorize their occupation. The results are available on the Department of Communication Arts website:

- Communication Science & Rhetorical Studies Alumni Careers (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/careers/>)
- Radio–Television–Film Alumni Careers (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/careers/>)

L&S CAREER RESOURCES

Every L&S major opens a world of possibilities. SuccessWorks (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/>) at the College of Letters & Science helps students turn the academic skills learned in their major, certificates, and other coursework into fulfilling lives after graduation, whether that means jobs, public service, graduate school or other career pursuits.

In addition to providing basic support like resume reviews and interview practice, SuccessWorks offers ways to explore interests and build career skills from their very first semester/term at UW all the way through graduation and beyond.

Students can explore careers in one-on-one advising, try out different career paths, complete internships, prepare for the job search and/or graduate school applications, and connect with supportive alumni and even employers in the fields that inspire them.

- SuccessWorks (<https://careers.ls.wisc.edu/>)
- Set up a career advising appointment (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/make-an-appointment/>)
- Enroll in a Career Course (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/career-courses/>) - a great idea for first- and second-year students:
 - INTER-LS 210 L&S Career Development: Taking Initiative (1 credit)
 - INTER-LS 215 Communicating About Careers (3 credits, fulfills Comm B General Education Requirement)
- Learn about internships and internship funding (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/finding-a-job-or-internship/>)
- Activate your Handshake account (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/handshake/>) to apply for jobs and internships from 200,000+ employers recruiting UW-Madison students
- Learn about the impact SuccessWorks has on students' lives (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/about/mission/>)

PEOPLE

Please see the People (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/people/>) section of the Department of Communication Arts website for additional information.

FACULTY

COMMUNICATION SCIENCE AND RHETORICAL STUDIES

Robert Asen, Professor; Anirban Baishya, Assistant Professor; Robert Glenn Howard, Professor; Jenell Johnson, Associate Professor; Marie-Louise Mares, Professor; Sara McKinnon, Associate Professor; Zhongdang Pan, Professor; Allison Prasch, Assistant Professor; Catalina Toma, Professor; Lyn Van Swol, Professor; Lillie Williamson, Assistant Professor; Susan Zaeske, Associate Dean and Professor

RADIO–TELEVISION–FILM

Kelley Conway, Professor; Jonathan Gray, Professor; Aaron Greer, Associate Professor; Eric Hoyt, Professor; Derek Johnson, Professor;

Jason Lopez, Assistant Professor; Lori Lopez, Professor; Darshana Mini, Assistant Professor; Jeremy Morris, Associate Professor; Ben Singer, Associate Professor; Jeff Smith, Professor

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Lisa Ellis, Lecturer; Erik Gunneson, Teaching Faculty II; Sarah Jedd, Teaching Faculty III; Mary McCoy, Teaching Faculty II; Amanda Shubert, Lecturer

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Steffie Halverson, Academic Advisor; Mary Rossa, Academic Advising Manager

CAREER ADVISING

Pam Garcia-Rivera, Career Development Coordinator

WISCONSIN EXPERIENCE

WISCONSIN EXPERIENCE

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

UW–Madison offers many opportunities to get involved. Communication arts majors join student organizations across their areas of interest.

Department-Affiliated Organizations:

- Communication Arts Student Association (CASA)
- Hollywood Badgers

See the Department of Communication Arts website for a sampling of other UW–Madison student organizations (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/student-orgs/>) that may be of interest to communication-focused students.

STUDYING ABROAD

Communications arts majors are encouraged to look at study abroad programs and opportunities across the globe. Our students have studied in cities such as London, Rome, Tel Aviv, Prague, Galway, Sydney, Madrid, Bologna, Cape Town, Paris, Copenhagen, and Buenos Aires. When planning for their semester abroad, students should think beyond courses required for their major. Students are encouraged to take courses from a variety of subjects to satisfy requirements and elective credits for their degree.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Communication science research team members gain hands-on research experience. Undergraduate research assistants may learn to code and enter data, interview participants, gather and prepare research materials, run experiments, and perform other activities required to complete a research study. Reading and writing assignments related to the research activities are assigned throughout the semester. Opportunities to participate in a research team vary from semester to semester.

RESOURCES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

SCHOLARSHIPS

Students apply for scholarships online through Wisconsin Scholarship Hub (<https://wisc.academicworks.com/>). The Department of Communication Arts offers the following scholarships:

- Christopher Neal Heinlein Memorial Scholarships
- S. Nelson and Carmella M. Nelson Scholarship
- Charline M. Wackman Awards for Summer Session
- Charline M. Wackman Awards (Fall Term)
- Keith Harris Wyche Memorial Scholarships

SUMMER INTERNSHIP FUND

The Communication Arts Department and Alumni Summer Internship Fund helps Communication Arts majors participate in internships with businesses or non-profit organizations.

See the scholarship (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/scholarships/>) and internship fund (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/internship-fund/>) sections of the department website for additional details and opportunities.