

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

Students interested in pursuing the communication arts major are encouraged to meet with a communication arts advisor. To declare the major, Letters & Science students complete a major declaration form. Forms are available in the communication arts academic advising offices and the communication arts main office. Non–Letters & Science students will need permission from their school or college to pursue an additional major in communication arts. Students **may not** declare communication arts as a second major if they have earned more than 100 credits.

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/#requirementsforundergraduatestudytext>) 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 BREADTH AND 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. View a comparison of the degree requirements here. (<https://pubs.wisc.edu/home/archives/ug15/images/babs2009.pdf>)

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Mathematics Fulfilled with completion of University General Education requirements Quantitative Reasoning a (QR A) and Quantitative Reasoning b (QR B) coursework. Please note that some majors may require students to complete additional math coursework beyond the B.A. mathematics requirement.

Foreign Language

- 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

Note: A unit is one year of high school work or one semester/term of college work.

L&S Breadth

- Humanities, 12 credits: 6 of the 12 credits must be in literature
- Social Sciences, 12 credits
- Natural Sciences, 12 credits: must include one 3+ credit course in the biological sciences; must include one 3+ credit course in the physical sciences

Liberal Arts and Science Coursework	108 credits
Depth of Intermediate/Advanced work	60 intermediate or advanced credits
Major	Declare and complete at least one (1) major
Total Credits	120 credits
UW-Madison Experience	30 credits in residence, overall 30 credits in residence after the 90th credit

Minimum	2.000 in all coursework at UW–Madison
GPA	2.000 in intermediate/advanced coursework at UW–Madison

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* and do not need to complete the L&S breadth and degree requirements above. Please note that the following special degree programs are not considered majors so are not available to non–L&S degree-seeking candidates:

- Applied Mathematics, Engineering and Physics (Bachelor of Science–Applied Mathematics, Engineering and Physics)
- Journalism (Bachelor of Arts–Journalism; Bachelor of Science–Journalism)
- Music (Bachelor of Music)
- Social Work (Bachelor of Social Work)

REQUIREMENTS IN 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 in the major.

STUDENTS MUST SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

- 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>)
- Communication Arts: Radio-Television-Film (<http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/communication-arts/communication-arts-ba/communication-arts-radio-television-film-ba>)
- Communication Arts: Radio-TV-Film/Communication Science and Rhetorical Studies (<http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/communication-arts/communication-arts-ba/communication-arts-radio-tv-film-communication-science-rhetorical-studies-ba>)

RESIDENCE AND QUALITY OF WORK

2.000 GPA in all COM ARTS and major courses
2.000 GPA on 15 upper-level major credits, taken in residence³
15 credits in COM ARTS, taken on campus

³ Intermediate- and advanced-level COM ARTS courses are upper level in the major.

DISTINCTION IN THE MAJOR

Students not enrolled for Honors in this major, and who have earned a 3.750 or higher GPA in COM ARTS and major courses are eligible for Distinction in the major.

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 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:

- Earn a 3.300 overall university GPA
- Earn a 3.500 GPA for all COM ARTS 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.¹
 - A two-semester senior honors thesis in COM ARTS 681 Senior Honors Thesis and COM ARTS 682 Senior Honors Thesis, for a total of 6 credits²

¹ Online courses taken through the University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Communication Arts are considered on-campus for this purpose

² 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. Demonstrate an understanding of core content in either of the two tracks: Communication Science and Rhetorical Studies or Radio-TV-Film.
2. Conduct theoretical, historical, and critical analyses of communication.
3. Demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively in writing, orally, or via the creation of media content (e.g., digital, film).

ADVISING AND CAREERS

COMMUNICATION ARTS ACADEMIC ADVISING

Communication arts academic advisors (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/advising>) assist students throughout their undergraduate studies. They offer individual appointments, drop-in advising, and group advising.

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

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, tweets (https://twitter.com/uwcommarts_adv), and postings provide communication arts majors with information on opportunities across the country.

Communication arts offers a 1-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, such as guest speakers, career panels, and the advertising and communications career fair.

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/sites/default/files/files/2017/11/22/CA%20career%20alumni%20by%20area%20%26R.pdf>)
- Radio–Television–Film Alumni Careers (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/files/2017/11/22/CA%20career%20alumni%20by%20area%20RTF.pdf>)

L&S CAREER RESOURCES

SuccessWorks at the College of Letters & Science helps students leverage the academic skills learned in their major, certificates, and liberal arts degree; explore and try out different career paths; participate in internships; prepare for the job search and/or graduate school applications; and network with professionals in the field (alumni and employers).

SuccessWorks can also assist students in career advising, résumé and cover letter writing, networking opportunities, and interview skills, as well as course offerings for undergraduates to begin their career exploration early in their undergraduate career.

- SuccessWorks (<https://careers.ls.wisc.edu>)
- Set up a career advising appointment (<https://careers.ls.wisc.edu/make-an-appointment>)
- INTER-LS 210 L&S Career Development: Taking Initiative (1 credit, targeted to first- and second-year students)—for more information, see Inter-LS 210: Career Development, Taking Initiative (<https://careers.ls.wisc.edu/inter-ls-210-career-development-taking-initiative>)
- Learn how we're transforming career preparation: L&S Career Initiative (<http://ls.wisc.edu/lsci>)

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; Robert Glenn Howard, Professor; Jenell Johnson, Associate Professor; Stephen Lucas, Professor; Marie-Louise Mares, Professor; Sara McKinnon, Associate Professor; Zhongdang Pan, Professor; Catalina Toma, Associate Professor; Lyn Van Swol, Professor; Michael Xenos, Professor; Susan Zaeske, Associate Dean and Professor

RADIO–TELEVISION–FILM

Maria Belodubrovskaya, Assistant Professor; Kelley Conway, Professor; Jonathan Gray, Professor; Eric Hoyt, Associate Professor; Lea Jacobs, Associate Vice Chancellor for Arts & Humanities and Professor; Derek Johnson, Associate Professor; Lori Lopez, Associate Professor; Jeremy Morris, Associate Professor; J.J. Murphy, Professor; Ben Singer, Associate Professor; Jeff Smith, Professor

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Aaron Granat, Lecturer; Erik Gunneson, Faculty Associate; Jason Lopez, Visiting Assistant Professor; Sarah Jedd, Associate Faculty Associate; Mary McCoy, Faculty Associate

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Steffie Halverson, Academic Advisor
Mary Rossa, Senior Student Services Coordinator

CAREER ADVISING

Pam Garcia-Rivera, Senior Student Services 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
- Badger Podcast Network

See the Department of Communication Arts website for a sampling of other UW student organizations (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/opportunities>) 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 My Scholarships (<https://scholarships.wisc.edu/Scholarships>). The Department of Communication Arts offers the following scholarships:

- **Christopher Neal Heinlein Memorial Scholarships**
- **Charline M. Wackman Awards for Summer Session**
- **Charline M. Wackman Awards (Fall Term)**
- **Keith Harris Wyche Memorial Scholarships**

See the scholarship section (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/scholarships>) of the department website for additional details.