

# JOURNALISM, JBA

The Bachelor of Journalism degree in the College of Letters & Science's School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) provides you with a connected, collaborative, and inclusive community of passionate communicators and prepares you for careers in a wide variety of fields. Whether you are interested in advertising and public relations, investigative journalism, or magazine publishing, you will be equipped with an education grounded in the liberal arts and a unique blend of hands-on skills training, theoretical learning, and real-world practice. As a result, you will graduate from SJMC and UW–Madison as a skilled communicator, critical thinker, seasoned problem-solver, and innovator who is ready to hit the ground running in your career.

This degree prepares you to:

- inform and persuade audiences with compelling messages, across a variety of contemporary media;
- think strategically, creatively and critically to solve problems in a professional context;
- meet the demands of an ever-changing communication industry with a wide variety of practical skills and real-world experience;
- understand the responsible and ethical use of mass media;
- appreciate the media's relationship with social, political, legal, and economic systems; and
- develop effective practices to advance inclusion and social justice in media professions and communication research.

## HOW TO GET IN

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Requirements	Details
How to Get in	Application required. Meeting the requirements listed below does not guarantee admission. ( <a href="https://sjmc.wisc.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-admissions">https://sjmc.wisc.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-admissions</a> ( <a href="https://sjmc.wisc.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-admissions/">https://sjmc.wisc.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-admissions/</a> ))
Courses required to get in	Students must complete JOURN#160;201 by the end of the semester in which they apply.
GPA requirements to get in	None.
Credits required to get in	Students may have earned no more than 16 credits in Journalism (JOURN) courses completed in residence at UW–Madison when applying for admission.
Other	None.

Semester	Deadline to apply	Decision notification timeline
Fall	Early December	Early January
Spring	Early May	Early June
Summer	This program does not accept applications to start in the summer.	

## ADMISSION TO THE JOURNALISM DEGREE PROGRAM

Students who wish to declare themselves as degree candidates in journalism must submit an application to the School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC). Prospective degree candidates must present to the school a record of academic achievement, writing ability and extracurricular participation that indicate a probability of success in some field of communication.

The number of students to be admitted in a given semester is subject to change based on the school's capacity to provide adequate access to required courses. Admissions decisions are based on the entire application, with particular emphasis on academic performance and writing ability. The academic advisor conducts one-hour information sessions for applicants each semester, with dates and times listed on the application; these sessions are highly recommended and provide more information for applicants than is possible in a one-on-one advising meeting.

After admission to the school, the student's classification will be changed to JBA or JBS to reflect this change in status.

## REQUIREMENTS

### UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate students must complete both the following Core General Education (Core GenEd) and University Degree and Quality of Work requirements. The requirements below apply to students whose first term at UW–Madison or whose earliest post-high school college attendance at any institution is Summer 2026 or later.

Students whose first term at UW–Madison or whose earliest post-high school college attendance at any institution occurred before Summer 2026 should refer to the archived Guide (<https://guide.wisc.edu/archive/>) for the requirements that apply to them.

### CORE GENERAL EDUCATION (CORE GENED) REQUIREMENTS

Civics & Perspectives	3 credits of Civics & Perspectives coursework.
Communication & Literacy	6 credits of Communication & Literacy coursework. This requirement may be partially satisfied by a qualifying placement test score. More information: <a href="https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingenglishplacement">https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingenglishplacement</a> ( <a href="https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingenglishplacement/">https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingenglishplacement/</a> )
Humanities & Arts	6 credits of Humanities & Arts coursework.
Mathematics & Quantitative Reasoning	6 credits of Mathematics & Quantitative Reasoning coursework. This requirement may be partially satisfied by a qualifying placement test score. More information: <a href="https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingmathplacement">https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingmathplacement</a> ( <a href="https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingmathplacement/">https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingmathplacement/</a> )
Natural Science & Wellness	Complete both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 credits of Natural Science &amp; Wellness or Natural Science &amp; Wellness + Laboratory coursework.</li> <li>• one course must be in Natural Science &amp; Wellness + Laboratory coursework.</li> </ul>

Social & Behavioral Science 3 credits of Social & Behavioral Science coursework.

Total Credits 30 credits.

For more information see the policy (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1095/>).

## UNIVERSITY DEGREE AND QUALITY OF WORK REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate degree recipients must complete the following minimum requirements. Requirements for some programs will exceed these requirements; see program requirements for additional information.

Total Degree 120 degree credits.

Residency Complete 30 credits in residence. A course is considered "in residence" if it is taken when in undergraduate degree-seeking status and:

- is offered by UW-Madison and completed on the UW-Madison campus or at an approved off-site location, or
- is offered by UW-Madison in an online or distance format, or is completed during participation in a UW-Madison study abroad/study away program.

Quality of Work Achieve at least the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, and/or academic program.

Math Demonstrate minimal mathematics competence by:

- placing above MATH#160;96, or
- successfully completing MATH#160;96, or
- successfully completing a more advanced mathematics course such as MATH#160;112, MATH#160;113, MATH#160;114, MATH#160;141, MATH#160;211, or MATH#160;221.

English Language If required to take the UW-Madison English as a Second Language Assessment Test (MSN-ESLAT), demonstrate minimal English language competence by:

- earning credit for ESL#160;118, or
- achieving a qualifying MSN-ESLAT placement test score.

Language Complete one:

- 2 high school units of a single language other than English, or
- one course with the second semester Language designation.

Major Declaration Declare and complete the requirements for at least one major.

## COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: BACHELOR OF ARTS–JOURNALISM (JBA)

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is a professional school within the College of Letters & Sciences (L&S). The College confers the Bachelor of Arts–Journalism (JBA) degree. The JBA is a special degree program; it is not a major. The JBA degree is not available

to students who intend to earn a degree outside the College of Letters & Science.

Students pursuing a Bachelor of Arts–Journalism (JBA) degree in the College of Letters & Science must complete all of the requirements below. Some courses satisfy more than one L&S degree requirement (visit College of Letters & Science: Requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/#requirementstext>) for details).

## BACHELOR OF ARTS–JOURNALISM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Communications Complete both:

- Part A: one course with the Communication A designation or eligible UW Placement Score; and
- Part B: one course with the Communication B designation

Quantitative Reasoning Complete both:

- Part A: one course with the Quantitative Reasoning A designation or eligible UW Placement Score; and
- Part B: one course with the Quantitative Reasoning B designation

Ethnic Studies one 3+ credit course with the Ethnic Studies designation

Language Complete either:

- the fourth unit of one language other than English; or
- the third unit of one language other than English and the second unit of an additional language.

L&S Breadth: Humanities Complete 12 credits with the Humanities or Literature designation, which must include at least 6 credits with the Literature designation.

L&S Breadth: Social Sciences Complete 12 credits with the Social Science designation.

L&S Breadth: Natural Sciences Complete 12 credits with the Natural Science, Biological Science, or Physical Science designations, which must include both:

- one 3+ credit course with the Biological Science designation, and
- one 3+ credit course with the Physical Science designation.

Liberal Arts and Science (LAS) Coursework at least 108 credits

Depth of Intermediate/Advanced Coursework at least 60 credits at the Intermediate or Advanced level

Major Declare and complete at least one major.

Total Credits at least 120 credits

UW–Madison Experience

- 30 credits in residence, overall; and
- 30 credits in residence after the 86th credit

Quality of Work	• 2.000 in all coursework at UW–Madison
	• 2.000 in Intermediate/Advanced level coursework at UW–Madison

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR

Students must complete 32 credits in major course work, to include:

### INTRODUCTORY REQUIREMENTS

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Introduction to Journalism</b>		
JOURN 201	Introduction to Mass Communication	4
JOURN 202	Mass Communication Practices	6
JOURN 203	Information for Communication	3
<b>Social Science and Humanities</b>		<b>12</b>
Intermediate/Advanced courses from at least three distinct Subjects <sup>1</sup>		
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>25</b>

<sup>1</sup> Courses cross-listed in JOURN **may not count** toward this requirement.

### CONCENTRATIONS

Students must complete one of two concentrations: **Journalism**, which focuses on reporting, or **Strategic Communication**, which focuses on forms of persuasive communication that includes advertising and public relations).<sup>3</sup>

#### Journalism

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Journalism Concentration</b>		
JOURN 335	Principles and Practices of Reporting	4
<b>Advanced Reporting - one course:</b>		<b>4</b>
JOURN 401	In-Depth Reporting	
JOURN 405	Creative Nonfiction	
JOURN 411	Multimedia Design	
JOURN 417	Magazine Publishing	
JOURN 415	Science and Environmental Journalism	
JOURN 420	Investigative Reporting	
JOURN 425	Video Journalism	
JOURN 426	Community-Based Reporting	
JOURN 455	Emerging Media and the News	
JOURN 456	Long Form Video	
JOURN 457	Storytelling Through Sound	
JOURN 475	Special Topics in Advanced Concepts and Skills <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>8</b>

#### Strategic Communication

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Strategic Communications Concentration</b>		
JOURN 345	Principles and Practice of Strategic Communication	4

#### Advanced Strategic Communication—one course: 4

JOURN 411	Multimedia Design
JOURN 417	Magazine Publishing
JOURN 445	Creative Campaign Messages
JOURN 447	Strategic Media Planning
JOURN 449	Account Planning and Strategy
JOURN 455	Emerging Media and the News
JOURN 456	Long Form Video
JOURN 457	Storytelling Through Sound
JOURN 463	Digital Media Strategies
JOURN 464	Public Relations Strategies
JOURN 465	Social Media Marketing Communications
JOURN 475	Special Topics in Advanced Concepts and Skills <sup>2</sup>

**Total Credits 8**

### PERSPECTIVES, TOPICS AND ADVANCES

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Perspectives (Two courses): 8</b>		
JOURN/ HISTORY 560	History of U.S. Media	
JOURN 561	Mass Communication and Society	
JOURN 562	Mass Media and Racial Diversity	
JOURN 563	Law of Mass Communication	
JOURN 564	Media and the Consumer	
JOURN 565	Effects of Mass Communication	
JOURN 566	Communication and Public Opinion	
JOURN 567	Mass Media and Global Communication	

**Topics or Advances (1 course): 3-4**

JOURN/ MARKETNG 605	Digital Brand Building	
JOURN/ COM ARTS/ HDFS 616	Mass Media and Youth	
JOURN 618	Mass Communication and Political Behavior	
JOURN 620	International Communication	
JOURN 649	Brand Strategy in Advertising & Integrated Communications	
JOURN 657	Understanding Research Design & Statistics in Mass Communication	
JOURN 658	Communication Research Methods	
JOURN/ ASIAN AM 662	Mass Media and Minorities	
JOURN 669	Literary Aspects of Journalism	
JOURN 675	Topics in Government and Mass Media	
JOURN 676	Special Topics in Mass Communication	
JOURN/ COM ARTS/ LSC 617	Health Communication in the Information Age	
JOURN 622	The Impact of Emerging Media	

JOURN/LIS 677 Concepts and Tools for Data Analysis and Visualization

**Total Credits** **11-12**

- <sup>2</sup> Special Topics courses may count for either concentration, or no concentration, depending on Topic. Consult the advisor for this major to determine eligibility of JOURN 475 to meet a major requirement.
- <sup>3</sup> Students planning to complete both concentrations should consult with the undergraduate academic advisor about course availability and planning.

## RESIDENCE AND QUALITY OF WORK

- 2.000 GPA in all JOURN and all major courses
  - 2.000 GPA on 15 upper-level major credits, taken in residence <sup>5</sup>
  - 15 credits in JOURN, taken on the UW-Madison campus
- <sup>5</sup> JOURN 400-699 are upper-level in the major.

## HONORS IN THE MAJOR

Students may declare Honors in the Major in consultation with the Journalism undergraduate advisor.

## HONORS IN THE JOURNALISM MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

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

- Earn a 3.300 University GPA
- Earn a 3.400 GPA for all JOURN courses and all courses that count toward the major
- Complete one additional Topics or Advances course, for a total of two Topics or Advances courses
- Earn a grade of B or better in the four Perspectives, Topics and Advances courses
- Complete a two-semester of Senior Honors Thesis in JOURN 681 and JOURN 682, for a total of 6 credits.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Convey information and express ideas effectively in contemporary media.
2. Understand the responsible and ethical use of mass media.
3. Appreciate the media's relationship with social, political, legal and economic systems.
4. Think strategically, creatively and critically, to solve problems in a professional context.
5. Develop effective practices to advance inclusion and social justice in media professions and communication research.

## FOUR-YEAR PLAN

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This Four-Year Plan is only one way a student may complete an L&S degree with this major. Many factors can affect student degree planning, including placement scores, credit for transferred courses, credits earned by examination, and individual scholarly interests. In addition, many students have commitments (e.g., athletics, honors, research, student organizations, study abroad, work and volunteer experiences) that necessitate they adjust their plans accordingly. Informed students engage in their own unique Wisconsin Experience by consulting their academic advisors, Guide, DARS, and Course Search & Enroll for assistance making and adjusting their plan.

#### First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Communication A	3 JOURN 201	4
Quantitative Reasoning A	3-4 Ethnic Studies	3
Science Breadth	3 Biological Science Breadth	3
Language (if needed)	4 Language (if needed)	4
<b>13</b>		<b>14</b>

#### Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
JOURN 202	6 JOURN 335 or 345	4
JOURN 203	3 Literature Breadth	4
Quantitative Reasoning B	3 Physical Science Breadth	3
Social Science Breadth	4 Social Science Breadth	4
	JOURN 601	1
<b>16</b>		<b>16</b>

#### Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Journalism or Strategic Communication course	4 Perspectives course	4
Intermediate/Advanced Humanities or Social Science for JBA/JBS	4 Intermediate/Advanced Humanities or Social Science for JBA/JBS	4
Literature Breadth	4 Intermediate/Advanced COMP SCI, MATH, or STAT (if JBS)	3-4
Science Breadth	3 Science Breadth	3
<b>15</b>		<b>15</b>

#### Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Perspectives course (JOURN 500+)	4 Topics or Advances course (JOURN 600+)	3-4
Intermediate/Advanced Humanities or Social Science for JBA/JBS	4 Electives	11
Intermediate/Advanced COMP SCI, MATH, or STAT (if JBS)	3-4	

Electives	5	
	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

**Total Credits 120**

## ADVISING AND CAREERS

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#### ACADEMIC ADVISING

All current UW–Madison undergraduate students interested in the Bachelor of Journalism degree are welcome to schedule an academic advising appointment (<https://sjmc.wisc.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-academic-advising/>).

Are you a prospective student? The School of Journalism and Mass Communication welcomes prospective students to take a tour of Vilas Hall and attend our admission information sessions. Learn more about the application process and requirements for admission (<https://journalism.wisc.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-admissions/>).

#### CAREER SERVICES & ADVISING

One of the benefits of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication is access to a dedicated and experienced communications industry career advisor. The School also provides an up-to-date list of job postings (<https://journalism.wisc.edu/careers/job-listings/>). Through our large network of active alumni, relationships with industry professionals, and hands-on skills curriculum, over 90% of our students find jobs within three to six months of graduation.

#### STUDY ABROAD

Learning in Letters & Science emphasizes discovery, growth, understanding different perspectives, and challenging yourself, which makes studying abroad an excellent fit for many L&S students: [studyabroad.wisc.edu](https://studyabroad.wisc.edu) (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/>)

As a university with global influence, we have more than 300 study abroad programs (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/programs/>) in over 80 countries. These vary in length, academic focus, teaching format, language requirements, cost, and level of independence. There are many programs to complement every major (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/academics/major-advising-pages-maps/#L&S>) and any year of college (including the final semester)—and all meet UW–Madison’s high academic standards. Students admitted into Letters & Science can even choose a short program in the summer before they start college or their whole first year: [studyabroad.wisc.edu/launch](https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/launch) (<http://studyabroad.wisc.edu/launch/>). Talk with your academic advisor about how studying abroad might fit with your academic plan.

#### SUCCESSWORKS

SuccessWorks (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/>) at the College of Letters & Science helps you turn the academic skills learned in your classes into a fulfilling life, guiding you every step of the way to securing jobs, internships, or admission to graduate school.

Through one-on-one career advising, events, and resources, you can explore career options, build valuable internship and research experience, and connect with supportive alumni and employers who open doors of opportunity.

- What you can do with your major (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/what-you-can-do-with-your-major/>) (Major Skills & Outcomes Sheets)
- Make a career advising appointment (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/make-an-appointment/>)
- Learn about internships and internship funding (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/finding-a-job-or-internship/>)
- Try “Jobs, Internships, & How to Get Them,” (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/canvas/>) an interactive guide in Canvas for enrolled UW–Madison students