

MASTERS OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION

The Department of Communication offers a diverse academic program with the common mission of fortifying the intellectual and social skills necessary for effective human communication. The Department's focus is on oral, written, and mediated Communication skills essential in both professional and personal lives. As such, the Department cultivates in its students the ability to think in creative and critical ways and to effectively communicate the results of that thinking. We are committed to the belief that Communication is essential to preserving democratic human communities. Equally important, as our personal and social realities are created, maintained, and recreated through Communication, the Department stresses not only competent, but also ethical, personal, and mediated Communication.

The Department of Communication offers a Master of Arts degree in Communication with three concentrations: Health Communication, Organizational Communication, and a general M.A. degree with no designated track, which allows students to create their own specializations under the guidance of program faculty. The Master's program consists of thirty credit hours that include core courses and electives in a student's area of specialization, culminating with his/her choice of a master's thesis, a major research project, or comprehensive exams. Placements are available in some of the most prestigious private, non-profit, and governmental organizations in the area. Courses are offered year-round, and students can enroll on a full or part-time basis. In addition, the Department offers Certificates of Graduate Study (CGS) in a variety of specific and general areas of professional communication. To earn a Certificate of Graduate Study, individuals must complete a coherent set of four courses chosen under the guidance of a faculty member.

Learning Objectives

Students graduating with an Master of Arts degree in Communication from Bryant University should be able to:

- Identify current issues and trends impacting the field of Communication;
- Design and conduct original scholarly or practical research through the complete cycle of preparation, problem definition, inquiry, analysis, and presentation;
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct scholarly or practical research in an ethical and responsible manner.
- Understand the importance of applying advanced communication concepts to scholarly or practical problems outside the academy.

Faculty

Graduate Program Director

Chris R. Morse

Professor

Stanley Baran

Professor

Wendy Samter

Associate Professor

Kristen Berkos

Associate Professor

Chris R. Morse

Associate Professor

Kevin Pearce

Assistant Professor

Julie E. Volkman

Admission Requirements for Master of Arts in Communication

Applications are accepted and considered at any time. There is no application deadline. To be admitted to the M.A. Communication program, prospective students must:

1. Have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. An official transcript is required.
2. Have earned an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in the Communication major or the major of some related field.
3. Non-Communication undergraduate majors with an overall GPA of 3.0 may be admitted to the program, but must achieve a 3.0 GPA by the end of six graduate course hours. Depending on their undergraduate degree and/or professional experience, non-Communication degree holders may be asked to take foundational coursework.
4. Submit three letters of reference, at least two of which should be academic references from individuals who can comment on the candidate's ability to be successful as a graduate student.
5. Complete a Graduate School admission application. Go to www.bryant.edu/macom.
6. Submit GRE or Miller Analogies Test score, OR submit a brief essay (approximately 1,000 words) to serve as a sample of the candidate's writing. Contact the Graduate Program Director, Chris Morse (mailto:cmorse2@bryant.edu (cmorse2@bryant.edu)) for more detail.
7. If English is not a candidate's native language, he/she must submit the writing sample.
8. Nonnative speakers may also be required, at the discretion of the Admission Committee, to submit TOEFL scores and/or to meet with the members of the committee for a personal interview.

For more information or to receive an application, contact Dr. Chris R. Morse, Graduate Program Director of the Department of Communication.

The total number of Master's-level credits required for graduation with an MA in Communication is 30.

"Foundations Courses" and "Foundations Assignments"

Foundations courses may be required for students entering the program with Bachelor's degrees in fields other than Communication. No graduate credits will be awarded for these Bachelor-level courses. Depending upon the individual's undergraduate degree and/or professional experience, either one or both courses may be required. Foundations courses can be taken concurrently with other graduate classes. However, the undergraduate versions (COM 390 and COM 491) must be taken before their graduate counterparts (COM 602 Communication Research Methods and Statistics, COM 601 Communication Theory). Equivalent courses may be taken at another university.

Alternatively, foundations assignments are designed for students who have some background in Communication Theory and/or Research Methods and Statistics (as determined by the graduate faculty) and thus may not need an entire course to bring them up to speed. In such cases, students may be asked to read and discuss with a graduate faculty member seminal readings and chapters that provide a foundation for graduate work in Communication.

Core Courses

COM 601	Communication Theory
COM 602	Communication Research Methods and Statistics

Required for the Health Communication Concentration

COM 603	Health Communication
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Required for the Organizational Communication Concentration

COM 604	Organizational Communication
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Electives

COM 610	Conflict Management and Negotiation in Organizations
COM 611	Communication in Small Groups Applied Theory
COM 612	Media Effects Theory and Research
COM 613	Communication, Persuasion, and Social Influence
COM 614	Ethical Public Communication
COM 615	Culture, Diversity, and Communication
COM 616	Seminar in Instructional Communication
COM 617	Media Ethics
COM 618	Risk and Crisis Communication
COM 619	Global Communication
COM 630	Lifespan Intergenerational Communication
COM 631	Community-Based Campaigns and Public Health
COM 690	Graduate Practicum
COM 697	Directed Study in Communication

Master's Thesis (COM 699)/Culminating Project (COM 698)/Comprehensive Exam

One of these is required of all students. The decision of which is best suited to the student's particular needs and career goals will be made in conjunction with a Graduate Advisor.

Master's Thesis

The thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished project (product) evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation. Students electing the thesis option should select an Advisor to oversee the project. They will complete a thesis proposal which must be approved by the student's Thesis Advisor and Thesis Committee, consisting of two additional faculty members in addition to the advisor. In some cases, it may be appropriate to include an additional faculty member from outside the department in lieu of a Communication faculty person.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive exam will consist of a series of written questions to be completed over several days for a total of 10 hours to be scheduled

by the student's Advisor. It is suggested (though not required) that 6 of the 10 hours should be devoted to the student's declared concentration or track, three should be devoted to the required courses, and 4 should focus on a secondary area of study. After consultation with the student, the student's Advisor will select two additional faculty members to write questions for the student. It is up to individual faculty members to determine if the questions or topics will be provided to the student in advance.

The student is strongly encouraged to meet with each member of his/her Comprehensive Exam Committee to gain guidance for study preparation.

Comprehensive exams are given three times a year, once each semester (usually around the eighth or ninth week of the semester) and during the summer term (the date of which will be determined by the student and his/her Committee members).

The exams are graded pass/fail. Typically, students will receive their exam results within two weeks. All students will schedule an oral defense of their comprehensive exams. If the student fails one area of the comprehensive exam only, he/she can study and re-take that area as soon as possible. If the student fails two or more areas, he/she must wait until the next time the comprehensive exam is offered. Students may take comprehensive exams twice. No academic credit will be awarded for completion of the comprehensive examination.

Culminating Project Requirements

Students electing the project option should select an Advisor to oversee the project. They will complete a project proposal which must be approved by the student's Culminating Project Advisor and Culminating Project Committee, consisting of two additional faculty members in addition to the advisor. In some cases, it may be appropriate to include an additional outside professional representative on the Culminating Project Committee in addition to faculty. The projects should have real-world application. Students should address a problem or need for an organization. After contacting the organization to gain approval, students should work to address a particular issue. Examples of a project may include the creation of a workshop manual, documentary video, public relations campaign, computerized or internet training program, or other projects similar in scope or application. Students will submit the final project to their Culminating Project Committee to review. They will then make an oral presentation of the project, which will include an oral defense of the project. Three academic credits will be awarded for completion of the Culminating Project.

Certificates of Graduate Study

The Department offers Certificates of Graduate Study (CGS) in Managerial Communication, Public Communication, and Professional Communication.

To earn a Certificate of Graduate Study, individuals must complete a coherent set of four courses chosen under the guidance of a faculty member. Admission requirements, tuition, and fees per CGS course will be the same as for other M.A. courses. All courses successfully completed in the pursuit of a Certificate of Graduate Study will apply toward the Master of Arts degree for those who are interested in continuing their education.