

Master of Arts in Communication Studies

The Communication Studies program offers a Masters of Arts at the Lawrence campus. The program in Communication Studies at the University of Kansas is research intensive and primarily designed to train students for careers doing research and teaching in the field of human communication at institutions of higher education. More specifically, our graduate program expects students to focus on one of the department's two primary areas of research, with a narrower focus on one or two of the research subareas:

- Relationships & Social Interaction, with an emphasis on digital media, interpersonal, intercultural, and organizational communication.
- Rhetoric & Political Communication, with an emphasis on argumentation, democratic inclusion, digital media, political institutions, and public memory.

Across both areas of research, our department collectively focuses on communication as it relates to gender, race, social class, national identity, and other cultural indices. Moreover, the department offers training in qualitative, quantitative, and rhetorical methods.

Almost all Communication Studies graduate students are funded through the department as either Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) or Graduate Research Assistants (GRA), which both include competitive stipends, tuition coverage, and health care benefits. In addition, all GTAs and GRAs are provided annual travel assistant to attend academic conferences, and the department awards approximately \$25,000 a year in graduate awards for research, teaching, and service.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

Graduate Admission

Potential students must submit a complete online graduate application (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>). In addition to admission requirements listed above, applicants are required to provide three letters of recommendation, a statement of purpose, current resume or curriculum vita, and a writing sample. The deadline to apply for admission is January 5. For all domestic or international M.A. applicants, please review the information on the MA Admissions webpage (<https://coms.ku.edu/admissions-ma/>) for further details.

For additional questions regarding program requirements and application processes, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Jeffrey Hall (<https://coms.ku.edu/people/jeffrey-hall/>), or the Graduate Program Coordinator, Alec Graham (<https://coms.ku.edu/staff/>).

M.A. Degree Requirements

Communication Studies

The Master of Arts in Communication Studies is a 30-credit hour program. Both a thesis and an exam degree completion option are available to M.A. students. At least 50% of the coursework taken to fulfill the degree requirements must be 700 level or above. The Communication Studies Graduate Student Handbook is available on the department's website (<https://coms.ku.edu/ma-overview/>).

Code	Title	Hours
COMS 851	Communication Research: Historical and Descriptive	3
or COMS 852	Communication Research: Behavioral and Social Science	
COMS 859	Introduction to Graduate Studies in Communication Studies	3
Select at least 6 hours in each of 2 areas of communication determined through consultation with a faculty advisor		12
Select 3 additional credit hours from any communication studies courses or from outside the department		3
Completion Option		9
Students complete one of the following options		
Thesis option: COMS 899 - Master's Thesis (6 hours) and a second methodology course chosen in consultation with your advisor (3 hours).		
OR		
Exam Option: 3 additional hours in each of the two areas of communication chosen in consultation with an advisor (6 hours) and one additional elective course (3 hours)		
Total Hours		30

THESIS Option

This option is designed for students who are interested in becoming researchers in the Communication Studies field, and/or view themselves as potential Ph.D. candidates. Students must complete a minimum of 6 thesis hours, with a minimum total of 30 credit hours of course work, and pass a final oral thesis defense.

Thesis and Final Oral Examination

M.A. students who have selected the thesis option are required to complete a written thesis in consultation with their faculty advisor and two additional committee members. In addition to the written thesis, students will be required to pass a final oral examination (thesis defense) conducted by their committee.

Exam Option

This option is designed for students who are primarily interested in acquiring knowledge and skills that they can apply in the areas of their professional activities. Students finish a minimum of 30 credit hours of coursework and then must pass a written and oral examination.

Final Written and Oral Exam

In their final semester, degree candidates must satisfactorily complete both a written and oral examination. The examination is administered and evaluated by the student's faculty committee. The examination is structured as follows:

- 1 hour written over content from basic communication theories & methods (COMS 859 and COMS 851/COMS 852)
- 2 hours written over the first major area of communication
- 2 hours written over the second major area of communication
- 1 hour oral examination

Electives

Code	Title	Hours
COMS 741	Special Topics in Communication Studies: _____	2-3
COMS 844	Seminar in Interpersonal Communication	3
COMS 851	Communication Research: Historical and Descriptive	3
COMS 852	Communication Research: Behavioral and Social Science	3
COMS 855	Qualitative Research Methods	3
COMS 898	Directed Research for Master's Students	1-8
COMS 907	Seminar in Political Communication	3
COMS 910	Organizing Identity, Identification, and Stigma	3
COMS 920	Introduction to Teaching Oral Communication	3
COMS 930	Seminar in Speech: _____	1-4
COMS 946	Seminar in Communication and Intergroup Relations	3
COMS 948	Seminar in Organizational Communication	3
COMS 951	Seminar in Movement Theory and Genre Criticism	3
COMS 952	Seminar in Mythic and Narrative Approaches to Rhetorical Criticism	3
COMS 955	Seminar in Rhetorical Criticism	3
COMS 956	Statistical Moderation and Mediation	3
COMS 958	Comparative Theories of Speech Communication	3
COMS 945	Seminar in Social Support	3

Students should selective elective hours in consultation with their faculty advisor. All graduate level courses in Communication Studies, listed above, may count as an elective credit. Graduate level courses outside of Communication Studies may count toward the degree with approval of the faculty advisor.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Conduct original, ethical, and publishable research in Communication Studies independently and/or in research teams (Research).
- Demonstrate competence in at least one method for conducting research in Communication Studies.
- Demonstrate an understanding of humanistic or social science theories in Communication Studies.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how communication is shaped by and in turn shapes factors such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, age, ability, geography, and/or culture.

- Demonstrate competence in effective, ethical, and inclusive instruction within Communication Studies.