

# Doctor of Philosophy in Communication Studies

The Communication Studies program offers a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) 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 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 assistance 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

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (<https://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/>) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (<https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/>) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

## Graduate Admission

Eligibility criteria for admission to the Ph.D. program follow Graduate Studies' admission policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>). Non-native speakers of English must meet Graduate Admissions' English proficiency requirements (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>).

Potential students must submit a complete online graduate application (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>). For all domestic and international Ph.D. applicants, please check the most updated application requirements and deadline on the COMS PhD Admissions page. (<https://coms.ku.edu/admissions-phd/>)

For additional questions regarding program requirements and application processes, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Yan Bing

Zhang (<https://coms.ku.edu/people/yan-bing-zhang/>), or the Graduate Program Coordinator, Alec Graham (<https://coms.ku.edu/staff/>).

## Ph.D. Degree Requirements

The Communication Studies Ph.D. program is designed for students who have previously completed a Master's degree in communication. Students are required to complete 42 credit hours of coursework, with at least 30 of those credit hours taken within Communication Studies. In addition to coursework, doctoral students will complete a comprehensive exam including both written and oral components. Following the comprehensive exam, doctoral candidates will complete a written dissertation and defend the dissertation in an oral defense.

Requirements include:

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Basic Communication Theory</b>		
COMS 859	Proseminar in Communication Studies	3
<b>Research Methodology <sup>1</sup></b>		
Courses required of all students:		
COMS 851	Communication Research: Historical and Descriptive	3
or COMS 852	Communication Research: Behavioral and Social Science	
Choose 12 additional hours appropriate to the student's research/dissertation interest. A list of approved courses is provided below.		12
<b>Additional subject matter courses</b>		
A minimum of 18 hours of additional subject matter courses. These courses must represent 2 emphases. These areas are developed by the student in consultation with the advisor and the Director of Graduate Study.		18
<b>Electives</b>		
Electives may be chosen from another department or any phase of the program. These hours need not be all in the same department. They may be used to broaden or intensify the program, as long as they constitute a meaningful course of study. A list of potential electives is available to students on the COMS Graduate Studies Canvas page.		6

<sup>1</sup> In lieu of 3 hours of methodological course work, a student may elect to enroll in 3 hours of applied research in which they will produce original research using one of the above methods. The final paper must meet the approval of the student's advisor and must be submitted to a professional society for presentation on a convention program or to a professional journal for possible publication.

In lieu of 3 hours of methodological course work, a student may elect to demonstrate a high level of writing competence in one foreign language if they can show that knowledge of this language directly relates to their research and academic interests. Competence levels are determined through consultation with the appropriate language department or program.

All new GTAs must take COMS 920: Seminar in Teaching Oral Communication, this can be an elective or potentially part of a content area.

Any adjustment to the required number of COMS course hours must be approved by the Graduate Committee through a formal petition.

That petition should offer a full explanation of why the adjustment is being requested and have the full support of the advisor. If a student has received an M.A. degree from the Department of Communication Studies at KU, they will need to replace the required courses they have already taken during their MA studies (e.g., COMS 859; COMS 852 or COMS 851) with additional electives to reach 42 hours of doctoral coursework.

## Research Skills & Responsible Scholarship requirement:

- The university requires that every doctoral student have training in responsible scholarship and research skills pertinent to the field of research and appropriate to the doctoral level. This requirement must be met before taking the Comprehensive Oral Exam.
- This requirement may be fulfilled by taking either COMS 851 Communication Research: Historical & Descriptive or COMS 852: Communication Research: Behavioral & Social Science, in addition to four graduate research methods courses as approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Successful candidates will satisfactorily complete both a written and an oral comprehensive examination over communication theory, research methodology, and the student's two areas of emphasis. All students must enroll in dissertation hours (COMS 999) in accordance with the University policy on Doctoral Candidacy (<http://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-candidacy/>).

Doctoral students will complete a written dissertation in consultation with their faculty advisor & committee members and must successfully defend this work in a final oral examination.

## Approved Methodology Courses

The following lists identify methods courses taught in and outside of the department for the two main research areas: Relationships & Social Interaction and Rhetoric & Political Communication. The faculty of the Communication Studies Department agrees that these courses qualify as methods courses toward the course requirements for doctoral candidates.

Three caveats:

1. These lists are not comprehensive. Other courses may count as methods courses provided the student receives approval from the advisor.
2. The courses on these lists are not required. These are recommended courses for training in each methods type.
3. All methods courses should be chosen with the advisor's input.

Rhetorical methods courses include but are not limited to:

Code	Title	Hours
COMS 930	Seminar in Speech: _____ (Postmodern Rhetorical Theories)	1-4
COMS 930	Seminar in Speech: _____ (Contemporary Theories in Public Address)	1-4
COMS 930	Seminar in Speech: _____ (Critical Theory as Critical Method)	1-4
COMS 930	Seminar in Speech: _____ (Feminist Theory)	1-4
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

Please consult with your advisor and other relevant faculty members about courses that may meet the research methods requirement. Courses that may be used to meet a Methods requirement instead of Theory, because they involve systematic and explicit reflection on research methods including appropriate research questions, objects of study, and units of analysis include:

Code	Title	Hours
COMS 933	Theories of Rhetoric: Neo-Classical	2-3

Courses outside of COMS may qualify as a rhetorical methods course subject to advisor approval.

## In Department Qualitative Methods Courses

Code	Title	Hours
COMS 855	Qualitative Research Methods in Communication Studies	3
COMS 930	Seminar in Speech: _____ (Analyzing Qualitative Data)	1-4
COMS 930	Seminar in Speech: _____ (Ethnography and Social Interaction)	1-4

It is recommended that graduate students complete COMS 855 prior to taking qualitative methods courses outside of Communication Studies

## Qualitative Methods Graduate Courses at KU that are Not in Communication Studies:

Courses with an asterisk have been recommended by our graduate students or affiliate faculty. Please review all course selections with your advisor prior to enrolling.

Code	Title	Hours
American Studies:		
AMS 803	Research Methods in American Studies *	3
AMS 998	Seminar in: _____ (special topics) *	3
Anthropology:		
ANTH 783	Doing Ethnography *	3
Journalism:		
JOUR 829	Marketing Communications Research	3
Political Science:		
POLS 708	Advanced Qualitative Research Methods	3
Public Administration:		
PUAD 937	Qualitative Methods in Public Administration	3

\* Courses with an asterisk have been recommended by our graduate students or affiliate faculty.

## In Department Quantitative Methods Course

Code	Title	Hours
COMS 856	Communication Research: Quantitative Analysis	3
COMS 930	Seminar in Speech: _____ (Conditional and Indirect Effects in Statistics)	1-4
COMS 930	Seminar in Speech: _____ (Social Network Analysis)	1-4

It is recommended that graduate students complete COMS 856 prior to taking quantitative methods courses outside of Communication Studies

## Introductory Outside COMS Quantitative Courses

Code	Title	Hours
PSYC 790	Statistical Methods in Psychology I	4
or EPSY 810	Regression and ANOVA: General Linear Models	
PSYC 818	Experimental Research Methods in Social Psychology	3
EPSY 811	Analysis of Variance	3

## Advanced Outside COMS Quantitative Courses

Code	Title	Hours
PSYC 791	Statistical Methods in Psychology II	4
PSYC 887	Factor Analysis	4
PSYC 893	Multivariate Analysis	4
PSYC 894	Multilevel Modeling	4
EPSY 940	Advanced Studies in Educational Psychology and Research	3
PSYC 896	Structural Equation Modeling I	4