

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Phone: 703-993-1090
Website: communication.gmu.edu

Undergraduate Programs

The department offers a bachelor of arts in communication, which prepares students for future graduate study or professional positions in such fields as human relations and organizational communication, media and journalism, political communication, and public relations.

Students majoring in communication complete a concentration from one of the following areas: interpersonal and organizational communication, journalism, media production and criticism, political communication, or public relations.

Bachelor's/Accelerated Master's Program

The department offers highly qualified undergraduate majors in communication the opportunity to apply to an accelerated master's degree program in communication (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/archives/2020-2021/colleges-schools/humanities-social-sciences/communication/communication-ma/#acceleratedmasterstext>). If accepted, students will be able to earn both the undergraduate and graduate degrees after satisfactory completion of 147 credits, generally within five years.

Internships

The department has an active internship program. Many students pursue an internship during their junior and/or senior year to earn credit while gaining practical experience with public relations firms, national and international businesses, associations, or government agencies.

Student Activities

All students are encouraged to participate in the following communication-related student activities: Communication Ambassadors, Debate, Forensics, Fourth Estate (student journalism), GMView, Mason Cable Network, Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), Lambda Pi Eta, Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), or WGMU.

Minors

The department offers minors in communication, health communication, journalism, political communication, professional experience in communication, and sport communication. The political communication minor is offered jointly with the Schar School of Policy and Government (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/archives/2020-2021/colleges-schools/policy-government/>), and the sport communication minor is offered jointly with the School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/archives/2020-2021/colleges-schools/education-human-development/school-sport-recreation-tourism-management/>) in the College of Education and Human Development (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/archives/2020-2021/colleges-schools/education-human-development/>). Department faculty also participate in these minors:

- Film and Media Studies Minor (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/archives/2020-2021/colleges-schools/humanities-social-sciences/english/film-media-studies-minor/>)
- Well-Being Minor (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/archives/2020-2021/colleges-schools/humanities-social-sciences/integrative-studies/well-being-minor/>)

- Women and Gender Studies Minor (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/archives/2020-2021/colleges-schools/humanities-social-sciences/women-gender-studies/women-gender-studies-minor/>)

Students majoring in communication may also choose to minor in any discipline that offers an undergraduate minor.

Graduate Programs

The department offers both MA and PhD degrees in communication with three major areas of emphasis: strategic communication, health communication, and science communication. The programs provide students with a strong foundation in communication theory and research while at the same time encouraging students to apply their skills in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

The faculty in strategic communication, drawing on their expertise in organizational, public relations, and political communication theory and research, teach courses on planning, developing, executing, and evaluating public communication campaigns and interventions. Faculty in health communication teach courses which explore the relationship between communication practices and the health and well-being of individuals and communities. This includes how to improve cooperation and coordination between health care providers and consumers, how to effectively utilize health information technologies, and how to develop influential health promotion campaigns. The faculty in science communication offer courses designed to improve students' knowledge of the particular challenges involved in making science and technology understandable to a variety of audiences, as well as exploring solutions to those challenges. Science communicators work in media and in other organizations and agencies involved in promoting and disseminating science, as well as facilitating public engagement in considering science-related issues.

Strategic, health, and science communication are three of the most rapidly expanding specialties within the broad field of communication. Graduates of these programs find a very welcoming employment market for their expertise.

Funding

The department offers graduate teaching and research assistantships, which are awarded on a competitive basis. Other sources of funding such as grants, loans, and employment on campus are also available. Students awarded assistantships must register for a minimum of six credits a semester and show satisfactory progress toward their degree.

Faculty

Department Faculty

Professors

Botan, Decker, Kreps, Lichter, Maibach, Nicotera (chair), Rowan, K. Wright, Zhao

Emeritus Professors

Boileau, Friedley, Looney, Lont, Manchester, McAuley, Taylor

Associate Professors

Broeckelman-Post, Cai, Clarke, Gibson (associate chair), Hopson, Muir

Assistant Professors

Craig, S. Kim

Term Professor

Tucker

Term Associate Professor

Finn, C. Wright

Term Assistant Professor

Mathis

Term Research Assistant Professor

Cook

Term Instructors

Lowry, Miller, Samoilenko, Schmeidler, R. Smith, Steele, Sweeney, Tomasovic

Programs

- Communication Minor
- Communication, BA
- Communication, MA
- Communication, PhD
- Health Communication Minor
- Journalism Minor
- Political Communication Minor (CHSS)
- Professional Experience in Communication Minor
- Science Communication Graduate Certificate
- Sport Communication Minor (CHSS)