Communication, PhD

Banner Code: LA-PHD-COM
A307 Robinson Hall
Fairfax Campus
Email: commgrad@gmu.edu
Website: communication.gmu.edu/programs/la-phd-com

The PhD in communication explores key issues in the discipline such as communicating complex information, influencing health behaviors, the digital divide, public advocacy, intercultural sensitivity, media literacy, and national security. The PhD program offers two major areas of emphasis: health and strategic communication. Students may also emphasize science communication in conjunction with either of these. Faculty and students conduct research concerning consumer-provider relationships, risk communication, crisis management, organizational communication, media systems, health campaigns, new information technologies, communication policy, media advocacy, and health communication interventions.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions
Applicants to all graduate programs at George Mason University must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as specified in Graduate Admissions. Applicants must already have earned a master’s degree in a relevant field. For information specific to the PhD in communication, see Application Requirements and Deadlines (http://communication.gmu.edu/programs/LA-PHD-COM/application).

Policies
For policies governing all graduate degrees, see Graduate Policies.

Reduction of Credit
Students must have a master’s degree before being admitted to the PhD in communication. Most students receive a reduction of study of 30 credits based on their previous master’s degree.

Program Requirements
To receive the PhD in communication, students must complete a minimum of 90 credits, 60 beyond the master’s degree, including core courses in theory and research methods, coursework in substantive fields of study, and a research practicum. Following completion of all required coursework, students must pass a written qualifying examination and an oral defense of it, after which they are advanced to candidacy by the dean and complete a dissertation, an original and independent research project.

If specific requirements are waived, students must complete substitutions, which are recorded on their Program of Study. All substitutions to degree requirements must be approved by the graduate committee.

Requirements

Degree Requirements
Total credits: 90
Students should be aware of the specific policies associated with this program, located on the Admissions & Policies tab.

Core Courses
Four Theory Courses
COMM 700 Building Social Science Theory 3
Select one additional theory course from the following: 3
COMM 602 Theories and Research of Mass Communication
COMM 605 Intercultural Communication
COMM 632 Persuasion Theory
COMM 634 Theories of Interpersonal Communication
COMM 635 Organizational Communication
Select two additional theory courses from the following: 6
COMM 602 Theories and Research of Mass Communication
COMM 605 Intercultural Communication
COMM 620 Health Communication
COMM 630 Theories of Public Relations
COMM 632 Persuasion Theory
COMM 634 Theories of Interpersonal Communication
COMM 635 Organizational Communication
COMM 639 Science Communication
COMM 642 Science and the Public
COMM 706 Strategic Communication

Total Credits 12

Three Research Methods Courses
Methods Course
COMM 650 Research Methodologies in Communication 3

Qualitative methods course
COMM 725 Qualitative Methods 3

Additional Research Course
Select one course at the 700-level or above. 3

Total Credits 9

1 Or another course at 700-level or above as approved by the graduate committee.
2 This course should be chosen to help prepare for the dissertation and must be approved by the graduate committee.

Substantive Field of Study
Students choose one of the following substantive fields of study.

Health Communication
Select three courses from the following: 9
COMM 620 Health Communication
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 705</td>
<td>Intercultural Health and Risk Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 720</td>
<td>Consumer-Provider Health Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 820</td>
<td>Health Communication Campaigns</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select three elective courses chosen with approval of the advisor and director 9

Total Credits 18

**Strategic Communication**

Select three courses from the following: 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 630</td>
<td>Theories of Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 705</td>
<td>Intercultural Health and Risk Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 706</td>
<td>Strategic Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 735</td>
<td>Crisis Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select three elective courses chosen with approval of the advisor and director 9

Total Credits 18

**One Research Practicum**

Select 3 credits from the following: 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 604</td>
<td>Communication Research Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 890</td>
<td>Special Topics in Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 896</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits 3

**Elective Courses**

Students complete the remaining credits through additional elective courses chosen in consultation with an advisor 0-30

Total Credits 0-30

**Advancement to Candidacy**

To advance to candidacy, students must complete all coursework required on their approved program of study. Students must also successfully pass a written qualifying exam and an oral qualifying exam. In addition, students must have a dissertation committee appointed by the Dean’s Office as well as an approved proposal. Evidence of the approved proposal must be on file in the Dean’s Office before a student can advance to candidacy.

**Dissertation**

Once enrolled in COMM 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal, students in this degree program must maintain continuous registration for at least 1 credit. Once enrolled in COMM 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research, student must maintain continuous registration each semester (excluding summers) until the dissertation is submitted to and accepted by the University Libraries. Once enrolled in COMM 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research, students must follow the university’s continuous registration policy as specified in AP.6.10.6 Dissertation Research. Students who defend in the summer must be registered for at least 1 credit of COMM 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research.

Students complete a minimum of 3 credits of COMM 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal and 3 credits of COMM 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research. They must apply a minimum of 18 dissertation credits (COMM 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal and COMM 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research combined) to the degree. Because of the continuous registration policy, students may be required to register for additional credits of these courses.

At least eighteen credits of the following: 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 998</td>
<td>Doctoral Dissertation Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 999</td>
<td>Doctoral Dissertation Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits 18