

Graduate Program Handbook

Department of Communication Studies

University of North Texas



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Welcome to the Department of Communication Studies

Mission Statement (in brief)

The Department of Communication Studies at the University of North Texas is dedicated to encouraging the study of communication through concomitant commitments to education, research and scholarship, outreach activities, and service. We foster academic freedom and open communication in each of our activities.

An integral part of our mission, therefore, is to ensure that activities conducted with undergraduate and graduate students instill an appreciation for the confluence of education and scholarship. A second part of our mission is to encourage research and scholarship that contribute knowledge and understanding to the lives of our students, our university, our profession, and our communities. A third part of our mission is to facilitate an interactive partnership with the community-at-large by seeking to establish ties with agencies and individuals who can assist us in furthering the goals of education. A fourth part of our mission is to translate our expertise into serving university, professional, and non-academic communities.

Further, we regard the goals of supporting a culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse environment and advocating mutual respect for all members of our society as especially befitting our mission. Constituted of a strong coalition of perspectives, methodologies, professional activities, interests, and values, the Department of Communication Studies is exceptionally well suited to communicate, perpetuate, and develop a variety of means of understanding human communication differences and commonalities.

Overview of the Master of Communication Studies Degree

The department offers graduate programs leading to the following graduate degrees and each student can decide which option is most well-suited to their professional goals, interests, and background:

Master of Arts in Communication Studies

Master of Science in Communication Studies

These are equivalent degree paths within the Department of Communication Studies. If a student wants to earn a Master of Arts degree, then they must exhibit mastery at or complete two years of a foreign language. The foreign language requirement may have been completed as part of an undergraduate degree.

GRADUATE FACULTY

The faculty in the Department of Communication Studies exemplifies diverse approaches to the study of communication and includes exemplary scholars in the field. The faculty members are not only scholars and academicians; they are also professors who have won many awards for outstanding teaching. In addition to teaching, they are active in various professional and community undertakings including professional leadership, coaching debate, directing performances, authoring groundbreaking research, and consulting for businesses and non-profits.

Brian Richardson (Full Professor)

Department Chair

Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin

Organizational Communication; Whistleblowing; Disaster/Crisis; Stress/Trauma.

Iftekhar Ahmed (Assistant Professor)

Ph.D., Texas A & M University

Group & organizational communication; Team, task & technology; Human-Computer interaction; Social media & virtual worlds.

John M. (Jay) Allison, Jr. (Associate Professor)

Ph.D., Louisiana State University

Literary and performance theory & criticism; Narrative theory; Southern culture & fiction.

Karen Anderson-Lain (Senior Lecturer)

Basic Course Director

Ph.D., University of Kansas

Popular culture and pedagogy; service-learning and community engagement; online and blended learning; assessment; instructor's identity negotiation of "otherness"; interpersonal communication; communication and aging; family communication.

Suzanne Enck (Associate Professor)

Director of Graduate Studies

Ph.D., Indiana University

Feminist criticism; Rhetorical theory & criticism; Critical pedagogy; Gender violence; Narratives of incarceration; Rhetorics of death.

Mark Hlavacik (Assistant Professor)

Ph.D., Penn State University

Public address; Rhetorical criticism; Rhetorics of public policy & public deliberation.

Brian Lain (Associate Professor)

Ph.D., University of Iowa

Director of Debate

Argumentation and debate; Rhetorical theory and criticism; Visual/Material rhetoric and culture; Asian American rhetorics.

Joseph McGlynn (Assistant Professor)

Ph.D., University of Texas

Intersection of health communication & technology; Persuasion and social messaging campaigns.

Megan Morrissey (Assistant Professor)

Ph.D., University of Colorado - Boulder

Rhetorics of race, sexuality, and citizenship

Justin T. Trudeau (Associate Professor)

Ph.D., Louisiana State University

Performance of literature; Performance art; Performance theory and criticism.

Holley Vaughn (Lecturer)

Ph.D., Louisiana State University

Undergraduate Advisor and Undergraduate Internship Coordinator

Performance & culture; Performance as critical praxis; Tourism; Historiography;

Hauntology; Performance art; Narrative theory; Ethnography.

Zuoming Wang (Associate Professor)

Ph.D., Cornell University

Interpersonal communication; Computer-mediated communication; Virtual group studies.

About the Program

The Department of Communication Studies offers masters degrees in Communication Studies. Theory and research in Communication Studies examine communication in human affairs and the symbolic processes through which humans interact. The curriculum is designed to facilitate student mastery of theory and scholarship, to develop student research capabilities, and to enhance student preparation for a variety of careers or for further graduate study.

The department offers course work in rhetorical, performance, and social science traditions. Students are afforded opportunities to explore communication from applied and theoretical perspectives using analytical, critical, quantitative, and qualitative methodologies. Coursework features the investigation of communication in interpersonal, organizational, aesthetic, health, cultural, legal, political, and international contexts. Among the topics that students will encounter in their graduate program are gender and diversity issues, social influence, ethics, narrative, and social change. The graduate experience often is enhanced by opportunities to engage in consulting, conduct research with faculty members, participating in regional and national festivals and professional conferences, and/or completing internships with corporations, social service organizations, arts organizations, and government agencies.

Research Interests

While we generally have three tracts of departmental faculty and coursework, the research interests of our faculty in the Department of Communication span a wide array of areas, including:

- ❖ Rhetorical analysis and criticism of persuasive public communication in historical, political, and cultural contexts;
- ❖ The role of communication in organizations, professions, and groups, including planned social change, training and consulting, health contexts, stress, trauma, and social support, virtual groups, social media, and small group communication and decision making;
- ❖ Performance of texts, literary and performance theory and criticism, history of performance studies, intertextuality, phenomenology, and literary and rhetorical applications of narrative theory;
- ❖ Health communication;
- ❖ Computer-mediated communication;
- ❖ Critical and cultural studies of communication, cultural values, ideologies, and politics;
- ❖ Investigations into rhetorical support for and against public policies and practices;
- ❖ Intercultural communication; and
- ❖ Narrative studies.

Areas of Emphasis

Interpersonal/Organizational

Interpersonal/Organizational – (I/O) communication examines the impact of communication theory in multiple interpersonal and organizational contexts. Students emphasizing in IO explore how human communication influences and is influenced by societal, group, and individual levels. The goal of the I/O emphasis is to blend theory, research, and practical application, while fostering development of analytical and applied skills in multiple contexts related to human communication interactions.

The I/O emphasis offers a broad-based curriculum consisting of core courses in theory (COMM 5325: Communication Theory) and method (COMM 5325: Qualitative Methods; COMM 5320: Quantitative Methods) enriched by courses from a variety of contexts including:

- Crisis Communication
- Communication Consulting
- Computer-Mediated Communication

- Group Processes
- Health Communication
- Human Behavior Analysis in Virtual Environments
- Interpersonal Communication
- Internships in Professional Organizations
- Networking and Team Environments (Virtual Groups)
- Organizational Communication
- Pedagogy and Communication
- Special Topics Courses such as:
 - Communication in the Family
 - Cultural Narratives
 - Relational Narratives

Performance Studies

An emphasis in performance studies is grounded in the philosophy that performance is central to the development of human beings and human cultures. As a central mode of human experience, knowledge, and action, performance is a significantly humanizing event. It often provides a strong sense of self and other and leads to self-expansion and an enriched sense of cultural pluralism.

Through critical, historical, and empirical investigations, through experiential learning in the classroom, and through sharing discoveries about texts with public audiences, performance studies promotes an understanding of human beings and human cultures.

Graduates of the performance studies emphasis should:

- Understand contemporary and classical theories of performance and their necessary relationship with theories in sister disciplines.
- Understand the dynamic history of performance studies and styles.
- Understand the performative dimensions of everyday life.
- Understand the role of performance in the creation, maintenance, and evolution of cultures.
- Know how to conduct traditional and creative research and appropriate means for documenting and reporting research findings.
- Be able to create performances that honor, question, and/or critique literary, social, political, and cultural texts.

Students in performance studies are encouraged to be broad-based in pursuing their graduate degrees, supplementing the curriculum in performance studies with courses from other areas of emphasis that reflect their commitments and goals. Course work blends theory and practice, with an emphasis on research and presentation of scholarship in a variety of forms and venues.

Rhetorical Studies

The emphasis on rhetorical studies is based on the foundational assumption that communication is influential in the formation and growth of every culture. Only through intensive study, analysis, and critique of various circulating discourses (e.g., public speeches, visual messages, popular culture, resistance movements, embodied actions, and legislation/policies) can an individual comprehend and meaningfully contribute to the development of culture. To that end, UNT's emphasis in Rhetoric offers theoretical and applied education, through historical/critical and qualitative research, designed to explore the power of communication in co-creating our understanding of the worlds in which we live.

Graduates with a rhetorical studies emphasis should:

- Understand classical and contemporary theories of criticism.
- Know how to conduct various types of rhetorical research and how to write scholarship in conversation with relevant research in the field of rhetoric.
- Be able to explain how symbolic influence operates culturally and how historical, political, and social ideas and events develop and emerge through communication.

Students in rhetorical studies take graduate coursework designed to provide an understanding of rhetorical communication principles and knowledge of how to apply those principles in a variety of situations. Students emphasizing rhetorical studies often supplement their curriculum with courses from other areas of emphases to acquire a broad-based knowledge of communication studies.

Degree Hours & Exit Options

To be awarded a master's degree from the Department of Communication Studies at UNT, students must complete at least 36 hours of graduate coursework as part of an approved Master's Degree Plan. Three options are available for completing the degree, one thesis track option and two non-thesis track options:

Thesis Track Option:

- For students wishing to complete a thesis, they may choose (in close consultation with their Major Professor and committee) between a traditional thesis project (research & writing project) or a Performance-Centered Thesis (craft and stage a performance that addresses a particular relevant question or argument and then write a shorter thesis which includes your script, director's notebook, and theoretical support for your reflections on your project).
- **36 hours:** 30 hours of coursework, 6 hours of **COMM 5950** (master's thesis hours), and an oral thesis defense.

Non-Thesis Track Options:

- **36 hours:** 33 hours of coursework, 3 hours of **COMM 5930** (Problem in Lieu of Thesis), and written and oral comprehensive examinations; or
- **OR**
- **36 hours:** 33 hours of coursework, 3 hours of **COMM 5481** (Graduate Internship in Communication Studies), and written and oral comprehensive examinations.

Required Coursework

The UNT Department of Communication Studies master's program is designed to offer a robust program of study that will be flexible enough for you to mold your program of study to diverse research interests and career aspirations. All students are expected to build their degree programs around the following requirements:

1. Each student is expected to take **COMM 5080** (Introduction to Graduate Study and Research in Communication Studies) during the first semester in which it is offered once you have been accepted into the graduate program.
2. Each student is expected to take at least **one course from each of the three areas** of the Department of Communication Studies (Interpersonal/Organizational, Performance Studies, and Rhetorical Studies).
3. Each student is expected to enroll in at least one Methods course and one Theory course while completing the graduate program (See Appendix I).
4. Teaching Assistants are expected to take **COMM 5085** (Pedagogy and Communication) during the first semester in which it is offered once you have been accepted into the graduate program.

Transfer Hours, Courses Outside of Dept., Special Problems & Practicums

Transferring Graduate Hours

A student who wishes to transfer graduate hours from another institution and have those hours apply toward a graduate degree at the University of North Texas, must obtain the approval of the Department of Communication Studies' Graduate Standards Committee, prior to submitting a degree plan. **A student may apply no more than 6 hours completed at another graduate institution toward the master's degree in Communication Studies at UNT.**

The student must supply a transcript demonstrating that the hours were taken for graduate credit and were not taken to satisfy undergraduate requirements. The student also must supply a copy of the catalog description from the institution where the course was taken. If the catalog description provides insufficient information for evaluation or if the course is listed as "independent research," "independent study," or "special problems/topics," the student must supply a syllabus or a complete description of the problem or project.

Graduate Coursework Outside of Communication Studies

Graduate students are also permitted to pursue relevant coursework in other cognate disciplines, in close consultation with one's Major Professor and Graduate Standards Committee, seeking approval prior to enrollment. This flexibility acknowledges the interdisciplinary nature of the field of Communication Studies, while also affirming the importance of preserving the coherence of a master's degree in Communication Studies.

- Prior to enrolling in a course outside the department, the student must consult with their Major Professor to ensure that the course will meet the expectations of their Degree Plan.
- In consultation with the student's Major Professor, the student is responsible for drafting a detailed proposal to the Graduate Standards Committee (to be submitted by the student's Major Professor). This proposal should clearly articulate how this outside course will fit with the student's degree plan and overall master's degree in Communication Studies.
- No students will be permitted to enroll in courses outside of the Department of Communication Studies until all courses in the department have met minimum enrollments set by the University.

***No student can count more than 6 outside hours total toward their degree plans (i.e., through transfer credits and/or coursework outside the department).**

Requests for Special Problems or Practicums

COMM 5480: The Communication Practicum course, is designed for students who are especially interested in developing their pedagogical skills in a particular area of communication research and teaching. Coordinated under the supervision of a graduate faculty member, the student prepares and presents instructional units, conducts class discussions, and handles administrative matters peculiar to the type of course involved.

Prior to enrolling in COMM 5480, the student is expected to have coordinated with a member of the graduate faculty to establish the parameters specific to their practicum. In consultation with the faculty member, the student is responsible for submitting a detailed proposal to the Graduate Standards Committee. This proposal should include the following information:

- Name & course number of the undergraduate Communication Studies course with which the practicum will align.
- Primary duties for the student over the course of the semester.
- Timeline for completing the practicum.
- Rationale for how this practicum will assist the student's program of study and mastery of Communication Studies.

In consultation with their practicum professor, the student should write some sort of final reflection paper that is informed by scholarship in the area of the field the student is seeking to better develop. Students are encouraged to work in close consultation with their practicum advisors to ensure that this paper meets minimum expectations for content, length, scholarship, etc. **No students will be permitted to enroll in a practicum until all courses in the department have met minimum enrollments set by the University.**

COMM 5900/5910: Special Problems course, is designed for a student who has a particular interest in a unique communication topic that will not be covered in that student's coursework rotation while they are enrolled in the program. Coordinated in conjunction with a graduate faculty member willing to guide the student through weekly readings on one sustained and carefully chosen topic, this course should culminate in some sustained final project.

Prior to enrolling in COMM 5900/5910, the student is expected to have coordinated with a member of the graduate faculty to establish the parameters specific to this special problem course. In consultation with the faculty member, the student is responsible for submitting a detailed proposal to the Graduate Standards Committee. This proposal should include the following information:

- Name & course number of the undergraduate Communication Studies course with which the practicum will align (if Special Problem is coordinated with an undergraduate course).
- Sample bibliography of readings to address over the course of the semester.
- Timeline for completing the special problem project.
- Rationale for how this special problem will assist the student's program of study and mastery of Communication Studies.

No students will be permitted to enroll in a special problem course until all courses in the department have met minimum enrollments set by the University.

Degree Plans, Major Professor, and Committees

Selecting a Major Professor

Students are expected to select a Major Professor from the faculty in the student's primary area of emphasis prior to or soon after completion of nine hours of graduate study (students cannot register for their third semester unless they have a Major Professor selected and degree plan filed with the Graduate School). Since the Major Professor will be instrumental in guiding the student through their degree program, it is important for students to select Major Professors wisely – taking into account mutual scholarly interests, coursework taken with your Major Professor, the style of mentoring that would serve you best from the person serving as your Major Professor.

Please Note: If you are planning on taking the non-thesis route, you should select a faculty member with whom you will have taken two courses by your third semester in the program – this will ensure an abundance of material for you to write your comprehensive exams over (since your Major Professor will be responsible for 4 of your 8 hours of exam questions).

The Major Professor is responsible primarily for:

- Chairing the student's graduate advisory committee
- Advising the student in their thesis of comprehensive examination process
- Supervising the completion of the degree plan

Students secure approval for a Major Professor by completing and filing a "Request for Major Professor" form (see sample request form in Appendix II). This form is available on the department website. Students should secure permission from the Major Professor before making such designation on a degree plan. The Major Professor must hold a doctoral degree, and must be a Category II or Category III member of the graduate faculty. If a student wishes to change Major Professors, they should consult with the department's Director of Graduate Studies.

Degree Plan

Once admitted to graduate study in the Department of Communication Studies and prior to taking any graduate courses, an incoming graduate student must seek advice from the departmental Director of Graduate Studies, who will serve as their temporary graduate advisor during the first nine (9) hours of graduate study. Either during or soon after that first nine hours, graduate students are expected to select their Major Professor, acquire the Major Professor's consent to serve, and file the appropriate paperwork with the department.

Requirements for the Degree Plan

- **Graduate students are responsible for seeing that a degree plan is filed immediately upon completion of 9 hours of study** (students cannot register for their third semester unless they have a Major Professor selected and degree plan filed, so this needs to occur by the mid-points of the student's second full semester of coursework).
- Students obtain a blank degree plan form from the department website. The original must be signed by the Major Professor and the Department chair, and the original and four copies must be filed with the Toulouse School of Graduate Study. Students should follow the sample degree plan shown in Appendix III.
- Students file a single degree plan for their course of study. A student's graduate Major Professor must approve any amendments to student degree plans. To amend a degree plan, the Major Professor notifies the Director of Graduate Studies who sends a memo to the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies indicating approved changes. Once students have submitted an original degree plan, they are NOT required to submit a new degree plan detailing changes; a memorandum from the Director of Graduate Studies will suffice.

Selecting a Graduate Advisory Committee

Generally, students will select their committees during their 3rd semester of coursework. The specific role of the committee will differ depending on the track a student has selected (e.g., thesis or non-thesis). For students on a thesis track, the graduate advisory conducts the prospectus defense, makes recommendations regarding the thesis, and conducts the oral defense of the thesis. For students on a non-thesis track, the graduate advisory committee conducts the student's comprehensive examination process.

The Graduate Advisory Committee consists of three members:

- The Major Professor
- Two additional members from the faculty in the department

The student is responsible for securing the consent of each member to serve. Please note that individual graduate faculty may need to decline serving on a student's committee due to workload imbalances (e.g., if one faculty member is already serving on multiple advisory committees for other graduate students or if a faculty member will be on research leave during a particular semester). Further, some tenure-track faculty are limited in the number of graduate students they advise so that they may focus on their own research efforts.

The Thesis Track

The Department of Communication Studies has established procedures for the submission of a thesis that are designed to help the student and, at the same time, ensure a high degree of quality in what is submitted to the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies. *The final decision regarding whether a student is permitted to write a thesis rests with the student's Major Professor.* The student's scholarly writing skills, methodological competence, and professional goals are the primary factors influencing that decision.

Selecting a Major Professor to direct a thesis project is an important decision for the student and the department. The student wants to select a Major Professor with whom they can work effectively and efficiently. Further, that professor's direction should contribute significantly to the quality of the study. At the same time, the department has a significant interest in distributing the workload associated with directing theses across all members of the graduate faculty in the department. Therefore, a student should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies for advice regarding which professors to consult regarding theses.

Please Note: Any student seeking to complete a thesis must successfully defend their prospectus by the end of the first semester in which they are enrolled in thesis hours (typically a student's third long semester). If the prospectus is not successfully defended by this time, the student will be moved into the non-thesis track, must complete comprehensive exams during the following semester, must complete either an internship or problem-in-lieu of thesis, and will need to take one additional course to account for the non-productive thesis hours.

Preparing the Prospectus

1. When the Major Professor and the student decide that it is time to begin work on a thesis, the student registers for COMM 5950, designating the section number of the professor who is directing the thesis. Once a student registers for COMM 5950, they must continue to register for that course each semester until the final thesis is submitted to the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies.
2. The student works with the Major Professor to select a topic, limit its scope, conduct preliminary research, determine the appropriate methodology, and prepare the thesis prospectus.
3. The written prospectus should be a fully developed explanation of the proposed thesis. Although the format of a prospectus may be different according to your disciplinary area of study, items that typically are included in a prospectus are:
 - An introduction to the topic
 - A review of pertinent literature in the area(s) being investigated
 - A clear description of the methodology and procedures that will be used in conducting the study

Presenting the Prospectus

When the Major Professor is satisfied with the prospectus, they will notify the student to schedule a prospectus meeting and to distribute copies of the prospectus to their committee members. ***A student must not schedule a prospectus meeting or distribute copies of the prospectus without approval of the Major Professor.***

1. In consultation with the Major Professor and the advisory committee members the student selects a date and time for the oral presentation of the thesis proposal. Students must consult each committee member regarding the date and time for the meeting. When the date and time have been established (students should schedule 2 hours for this meeting period), the student is responsible for contacting the department administrative assistant to reserve a conference room for the meeting.
2. At least **one week** prior to the prospectus meeting, the student should distribute an invitation to all members of the faculty (a sample prospectus meeting invitation is included as Appendix IV).
3. At least **one week** prior to the prospectus meeting, the student should distribute copies of the prospectus to:
 - The Major Professor
 - The advisory committee members

The student is responsible for all typing and reproduction costs associated with the prospectus and the thesis. Students may not use department equipment to reproduce copies of the prospectus or thesis.

4. The purpose of the prospectus meeting is to save the student from investing a great deal of work in a project that may have serious flaws or that lacks substantial scholarly merit. The prospectus meeting has two functions:
 - To determine whether the thesis, as proposed, is acceptable, and
 - To help the student with suggestions for completing the thesis in a thorough, yet manageable fashion.

The student must attend the prospectus meeting in person.

5. On the day of the prospectus meeting, the student should bring a personal copy of the prospectus for reference purposes.

The Major Professor will chair the prospectus meeting. They will ask the student to leave at the beginning of the prospectus meeting in order for the committee to discuss procedures and potential concerns. Upon reentering the meeting, the student will defend the prospectus orally. This process begins with a presentation by the student, followed by questions from faculty members in attendance. When the questioning ceases, the Major Professor will ask the student to leave the room again, whereupon the committee decides to accept or reject the proposed study. Upon reaching a decision, the committee calls the student back into the conference to disclose the decision.

Frequently, the committee will require amendments to the proposal and, in some cases, will require a second prospectus meeting. A student on the thesis track must successfully defend their prospectus during the first semester during which thesis hours are taken for credit.

Defending the Thesis

Only after the thesis has been completed *to the satisfaction of the Major Professor* may preparations for the final thesis defense be made. *A student must not schedule a thesis defense or distribute copies of the thesis without approval of the Major Professor.*

1. In consultation with the Major Professor and other graduate advisory committee members, the student selects a date and time for the thesis defense. When the date and time have been established (students should schedule 2 hours for this meeting period), the student is responsible for contacting the department administrative assistant to reserve a conference room for the meeting.
2. Prepare reading copies of the thesis for distribution to advisory committee.
3. Prepare an abstract of the thesis. In their abstract, the student summarizes the study and their findings. The thesis abstract, which must be attached to the notification of the final thesis defense, must not exceed 150 words.
4. Prepare a "Notification of Thesis Defense" to be sent to the Department of Communication Studies (see sample in Appendix V).
5. At least **one week** prior to the final thesis defense, copies of the notification of thesis defense, the abstract, and reading copies of the thesis must be distributed to:
 - The Major Professor
 - The advisory committee members
6. The thesis defense affords the student an opportunity to explain the study, the methods used, the findings, and any conclusions drawn from the study. The defense also is a time for the thesis advisory committee to ask the student questions raised by the study. The Department Chair and other members of the Communication Studies faculty and graduate student body may participate in the examination. Thesis defenses are not open to individuals not attending or teaching at the University of North Texas.
7. It is the *responsibility of the student* to see that the final thesis defense is scheduled prior to the filing deadline set by the Graduate School each semester and advertised in the Graduate School Bulletin (typically by the end of **week eight** of the semester when a student plans to graduate). The candidate should schedule the defense at least **one week prior to this deadline** to allow time for any revisions required by the committee.
8. On the day of the thesis defense, the candidate should bring a personal copy of the thesis for reference purposes. The Major Professor chairs the thesis defense. In addition to answering questions, the candidate should make notes or changes suggested or required by committee members.

9. The thesis defense begins with a presentation by the student, followed by questions from faculty members in attendance. When the questioning ceases, the candidate and all other persons not on the student's thesis committee will be excused from the room, whereupon the committee decides whether to approve the thesis. Upon reaching a decision, the committee will call the student back into the conference to report their decision (at this point, individuals other than the student and their advisory committee will not be permitted in the room).

Submitting the Thesis

1. In consultation with the Major Professor, the student incorporates any changes specified by the graduate advisory committee. The final copy is then prepared and is delivered *in person* by the candidate to the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies. The Graduate School's website gives you exact directions regarding how to submit your final thesis project.
2. The Graduate School's official thesis reader will contact the student with a list of corrections to be made (if any) by the end of the semester. It is wise to review the correction list with the Major Professor. After corrections have been made, the student returns a final copy of the thesis to the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies in the format(s) they specify.
3. The candidate provides a bound copy of the thesis for the Major Professor.

Additional Notes on Thesis Procedure

1. After approval of the prospectus, the student writes the thesis under the direction of the Major Professor. Faculty members differ in the way they handle this role, but it is the responsibility of the *student* to seek whatever help is needed, submit drafts for approval/correction, and meet university deadlines. A thesis may be the most important task before a student at a given moment, but it is only one of the many tasks a faculty member must negotiate. Therefore, a student should not expect instantaneous responses to requests for feedback. In addition, faculty members are not expected to be available to work on thesis projects when they are not on staff (e.g., during summer terms or while on sabbatical leave). The degree to which the other graduate advisory committee members become involved in the writing of the thesis varies. To avoid misunderstandings, committee member involvement during the writing phase of the thesis should be discussed and understood by all parties during the prospectus meeting.
2. Obtain a copy of the Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Guide on the Graduate School's website. Following the guidelines they set forth from the beginning of the writing process will save a great deal of time and effort. Students who do not use the guide often must reformat the entire document for submission to the Graduate School.
3. Graduate students should consult with their advisor about which style manual (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago) to use for their theses and then use the most updated version of that style manual.

4. You may wish to seek the help of a copyeditor (the Graduate School can supply a list) *before* submitting the thesis. The Major Professor can assist in many ways, but they cannot be expected to rewrite a poorly written thesis or copyedit your work. Employing a copyeditor may save time, money, and frustration if this is an area in which you struggle.
5. When the student begins work on the thesis, they are required to enroll for thesis hours (COMM 5950) every semester until the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies approves the thesis. Enrollment is only required during one session of the summer sessions (should a student need to enroll during the summer term). The total number of semester credit hours recorded for a thesis that count toward a student's degree plan may not exceed six (6), regardless of the number of enrollments in COMM 5950.
6. In the semester when a student plans to defend their thesis, the student should apply for graduation with the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies by the deadline advertised in the Graduate Bulletin. The Graduate School will evaluate the student's degree plan and transcript prior to transmitting a form for reporting the results of the thesis defense.

The Non-Thesis Track

In the non-thesis track, the Major Professor helps the student plan a program of courses, supervises the student's efforts in the Problem in Lieu of Thesis course (COMM 5930) or in the Graduate Internship in Communication course (COMM 5481), and helps prepare the student for successfully completing their written and oral comprehensive examinations.

Problem in Lieu of Thesis (PIL)

A student enrolling in COMM 5930 (Problem in Lieu of Thesis) should do so under the section number of their Major Professor. To successfully complete the course, the student must present, in writing, a formal report or scholarly essay based upon the work completed in close consultation with the Major Professor.

Generally, a student will complete COMM 5930 during a single semester. If the project is completed to the satisfaction of the Major Professor during the semester, the Major Professor assigns a grade ("A," "B," "C," etc.). If the student makes satisfactory progress, but does not complete the research project during the semester, the student is assigned a grade of "I." Unlike a thesis, continuous enrollment is not required.

Graduate Internship in Communication Studies

After meeting with their Major Professor to determine expectations regarding the completion of an internship, the student assumes responsibility for securing an internship position that will augment their professional goals aligned with the master's degree in Communication Studies. When the student has secured a position, they prepare an internship proposal and submit it to the Major Professor along with contact information for the organizational supervisor of the internship. Once the Major Professor approves the

internship, the student enrolls in COMM 5481 under the section number of their Major Professor (the Major Professor can tell you what number that is). The internship should be completed during the semester in which the student is enrolled. When the internship is completed, the Major Professor assigns a grade (“A,” “B,” “C,” etc.).

Although internships are meant to be adaptive to the individual degree aspirations of each student, the baseline expectations for students pursuing the internship option are as follows:

- You will be expected to work approximately **50 hours for each hour of credit earned**; a student enrolled for three (3) semester credit hours should plan to work a minimum of 150 hours (10 hours per week in a regular semester) to complete the internship. **Note:** In coordination with the student’s major professor, internship hours may be initiated and/or completed during the summer with registration for COMM 5481 occurring during the subsequent fall semester.
- In addition to the successful completion of working hours, you will need to secure a written evaluation from your internship supervisor by the end of the semester (prior to the submission of final grades).
- Each student, in consultation with their Major Professor, should write some sort of final reflection paper that is informed by scholarship in the area of the field the student is seeking to better develop. Students are encouraged to work in close consultation with their Major Professor to ensure that this paper meets minimum expectations for content, length, scholarship, etc.
- Each student, in consultation with their Major Professor, should submit a detailed portfolio that demonstrates to the Communication Studies faculty your progress in completing this internship experience. Students are encouraged to work in close consultation with their Major Professors to ensure that this portfolio meets minimum expectations for content.
- Each student’s on-site coordinator or supervisor will be asked for an evaluation of the student’s performance during their internship. Major Professors may have unique evaluation forms that they use to solicit feedback from the student’s supervisor. The student should ask their Major Professor for their preferred method of evaluation during the last month of the student’s internship.

Comprehensive Examinations

The comprehensive examination is a test of the student’s understanding of the central tenets of the field of communication studies. Examinations are designed to determine the extent to which the student has mastered the theories and skills necessary for the degree and is a test of the student’s ability to describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate concepts in communication. Students are expected to demonstrate a broad knowledge of the communication discipline. The examination includes both a written and an oral component.

While the comprehensive examination certainly will address concepts covered in courses taken over the course of graduate study, the examination is by no means limited to course content. Graduate students should begin preparation for the written portion of the examination four (4) months prior to the scheduled date. The student should consult the members of their graduate advisory committee for suggestions on how to best prepare for the examination.

The student should plan to take comprehensive examinations during their last long semester of coursework. Students planning to graduate in the summer should take the comprehensive examination during the spring semester. Each long semester, the Director of Graduate Studies will announce the period when comprehensive examinations are scheduled. These dates, which fall during the week prior to the beginning of the semester, is selected to allow individuals adequate time to complete the comprehensive examination process (including any rewrites) in time for graduation. While students may rewrite comprehensive examinations at any time agreed upon with their graduate advisory committee, the student is responsible for scheduling them with adequate time to complete the entire comprehensive examination process, including oral examinations, before the deadline set by the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies in the Graduate School Bulletin (typically by the end of **week eight** of the semester when a student plans to graduate). The student should not expect their graduate advisory committee to rush the comprehensive examination process because of poor planning.

In preparation for taking the comprehensive examination, the student should apply for graduation with the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies by the deadline advertised in the Graduate Bulletin. The Graduate School will evaluate the student's degree plan and transcript prior to transmitting a form for reporting the results of comprehensive examinations.

The *student* assumes responsibility for scheduling the oral examination prior to the Graduate School deadline. The candidate should schedule the oral comprehensive examination prior to the deadline for degree filing set by the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies.

Procedure for the Written Comprehensive Examinations

1. The written portion of the comprehensive examination will last for eight (8) hours. Generally, the student writes four (4) hours for the Major Professor and two (2) hours for each of the other members of the graduate advisory committee. Specific days and times for writing are coordinated with the Director of Graduate Studies and administrative staff who will organize the proctoring of exams.
2. The Major Professor assumes responsibility for requesting comprehensive examination questions from the graduate advisory committee, receiving examination answers after the student has written each question, and distributing the student's answers to the advisory committee.
3. Graduate students taking the comprehensive examination are required to take their exams during the times proctored by UNT staff on computers provided by UNT staff.
4. Upon completion of the written examination, all questions and responses are submitted to all members of the student's graduate advisory committee for evaluation. All members of the graduate advisory committee must be given at least **one week** to evaluate the student's responses. The evaluation on the written portion will be based on the student's ability to describe, explain, analyze and evaluate communication concepts, as well as their written communication skills.

5. If a student successfully completes all portions of the written examination, they may schedule the oral portion of the examination. If, however, a student is deficient in any part(s) of the written examination, they will have as many as **two opportunities** to rewrite the deficient part(s). If rewriting is necessary, the student's graduate advisory committee will decide when the student will rewrite. Should the student fail to complete successfully the written portion after two rewrites, the student will not be permitted further opportunities to rewrite until they take additional coursework (to be determined by the student's graduate advisory committee). If the student's answers remain deficient after taking additional coursework and retaking the deficient part(s) of the written examination, no subsequent rewrites will be permitted. No student will be permitted to participate in the oral component of the comprehensive examination until all parts of the written examination have been completed successfully.

Procedure for the Oral Comprehensive Examinations

1. Upon successful completion of the written component of the comprehensive examination, the student must consult with the Major Professor, the other graduate advisory committee members, and the department chair to select a date and time for the oral examination. The student is required to consult each committee member and the department chair regarding the date and time for the meeting. When the date and time have been established (the meeting will require one to two hours), the student is responsible for contacting the department administrative assistant to reserve a conference room for the meeting.
2. Prepare a "Notification of Comprehensive Exams Oral Defense" to be sent to the Department of Communication Studies faculty (see sample in Appendix VI).
3. On the day of the oral examination, the student should bring a copy of their answers to the written comprehensive examination for reference purposes.
4. The Major Professor will chair the oral examination. The student will be asked to leave at the beginning of the oral comprehensive examination in order for the graduate advisory committee to discuss procedures and potential concerns. The oral examination begins with a brief presentation by the student (the content to be determined by the Major Professor) and is followed by questions from the graduate advisory committee and from any other faculty members in attendance. When the questioning ceases, the student and all other persons not on the student's graduate advisory committee will be excused from the room, whereupon the committee members decide whether the student's performance is satisfactory, taking into consideration the combined written and oral components of the comprehensive examination. Upon reaching a decision, the committee calls the student back into the conference to report the committee's decision.
5. After the student completes the oral portion of the comprehensive examination successfully, the Major Professor assumes responsibility for transmitting the results of the comprehensive examination to the Graduate School on the form provided by the Graduate School.

Academic Policies – Maintaining Good Standing in Program

Time Limits for Degree Completion

All requirements for the master's degree, including transfer hours, must be completed within six years. As individual courses exceed this time limit, they no longer count toward the master's degree in Communication Studies at UNT.

Grades of "Incomplete"

According to the [UNT Graduate Catalog – 2015-2016](#), incomplete; a nonpunitive grade given only during the last one-fourth of a term/semester and only if the student is (1) passing the course; (2) has a justifiable reason (such as serious illness), for not completing the work on schedule. The student must arrange with the instructor to finish the course at a later date by completing specified requirements. These requirements must be entered on the grade roster by the instructor.

Since the student must complete at least three-fourths of the semester before becoming eligible to request an incomplete, many professors will insist that at least three-fourths of the assignments be completed before considering a request for an incomplete. The "justifiable reason" referenced in the second point above is reserved generally for unforeseeable extended illness, military service, etc., and must be a reason that goes beyond simply being behind and unable to catch up in the course. If the student's reason for requesting an incomplete is not compelling, they should consider dropping the course prior to the deadline set by the university.

According to the [UNT Graduate Catalog – 2015-2016](#), A student may remove a grade of I within one year by completing the stipulated work. After the student completes the stipulated work, the instructor then records the final grade on the UNT Grade Change Form and obtains the department chair's signature. For graduate students, the office of the graduate dean in the Toulouse Graduate School completes processing with the Registrar's Office, where the grade point average is adjusted accordingly. If the student does not complete the stipulated work within the time specified (not to exceed one year after taking the course), the instructor may change the grade of I to a grade of F, if appropriate. The GPA is adjusted accordingly.

UNT Graduate School Probation/Suspension Standards

According to the [UNT Graduate Catalog – 2015-2016](#):

A graduate student is placed on academic probation at the end of the initial period of enrollment if the CGPA drops below 2.67. A graduate student is placed on academic probation at the end of any subsequent term in which the CGPA falls below a 3.0.

A graduate student who is placed on academic probation and who does not receive either a semester or a cumulative 3.0 graduate GPA during the term/semester of probation will be subject to academic suspension for a period of up to one calendar year before becoming eligible to reapply for graduate admission (see "[Readmission of Graduate Students](#)" in the Admission section) and enroll for further graduate courses. After the one-year period of suspension, students may re-enroll in graduate courses under probation. **Students who are then suspended a second time without having returned to good academic standing by achieving a CGPA of 3.0 or better will be dismissed from the university.**

Programs are not required to readmit students who left the university on probation or suspension and reapply.

The student whose UNT GPA in graduate work falls below 3.0 must make up the deficit, either by repeating courses in which the grades are low, or by completing other UNT courses with grades high enough to bring the UNT GPA up to 3.0. Low grades made in graduate courses at UNT may not be duplicated at other institutions.

Appendix I: List of Method & Theory Courses

Approved “Method” Courses

- Seminar on Group Performance (COMM 5260)
- Performance Methods
- Rhetorical Methods (COMM 5340)
- Qualitative Research Methods (COMM 5880)
- Quantitative Research Methods (COMM 5320)
- Seminar in Performance Studies – Performance Ethnography (COMM 5860)

Approved “Theory” Courses

- Performance Theory (COMM 5365)
- Narrative Theory (COMM 5460)
- Rhetorical Theory (COMM 5345)
- Public Address Studies (COMM 5440)
- Seminar in Rhetorical Studies (COMM 5840)
- Classical Rhetoric (COMM 5640)
- Visual Rhetoric (COMM 5740)
- Communication Theory (COMM 5325)

Note: Other courses may be added to this list as the repertoire for courses grows in the Department of Communication Studies. If you have a question about a particular course and whether it might count for the Method or Theory requirement, please ask the Director of Graduate Studies.

Appendix II Request for Major Professor/Sample

Request for Major Professor in Communication Studies

January 20, 2011
(Date)

Courtney Carter
(Student's name)

I request that Dr. Zuoming Wang serve as my major professor. I have consulted with her or him on this matter, and they have agreed to serve.

(Signature of Major Professor)

(Signature of Director of Graduate Studies)

(Signature of Department Chair)

Appendix III: Master's Degree Plan/Sample

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS GRADUATE SCHOOL
Master's Degree Plan**

The *original* of this form must be submitted to the Office of the Graduate Dean for approval.

Name: _____ ID Number: _____

Home address: _____

Master's degree to be earned: M.A. or M.S. Major: Communication Studies

Minor: [LEAVE THIS BLANK] Specialization Area: [LEAVE THIS BLANK]

Major Professor: _____ Minor Professor: [LEAVE THIS BLANK]

Any deficiencies in undergraduate prerequisites: NONE

Responsibility for reading catalog requirements and for knowing when program has been completed rests entirely upon the student. Application for graduation must be filed in Office of Graduate School before the deadline date in force during your final semester. See Graduate School calendar for deadline date.

The number of UNT off-campus residence courses which may be applied on the master's degree is limited by state regulations. Consult the office of the Graduate Dean for information concerning this restriction.

Identify transfer courses with school abbreviation and date completed. Official transcripts of transfer work must be filed before courses can be approved.

Courses to be completed for the master's degree

Course Prefix and No.	Date Completed	Course and Prefix No.	Date Completed

Total Semester hours required: 36

Admission to candidacy is recommended:

Major Professor/date

Department Chair/date:

To Be Completed by Graduate Dean

The student is admitted to candidacy: _____

Dean of the Graduate School/date

Appendix IV: Thesis Prospectus Invitation/Sample

Prospectus Invitation

To: Dr. Brian Richardson, Chair
Department of Communication Studies

Dr. Jay Allison, Major Professor

Dr. Suzanne Enck, Committee Member

Dr. Zuoming Wang, Committee Member

Members of the Faculty in the Department of Communication Studies:
Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed, Dr. Karen Anderson-Lain, Dr. Mark Hlavacik, Dr. Brian Lain, Dr. Megan Morrissey, Mr. Louie Petit, Dr. Justin Trudeau, Dr. Holley Vaughn.

Subject: Presentation of a Prospectus for an M.A. Thesis for Alvin Sneldorfheimer

Date: Monday, April 19, 2011

Time: 2:00p.m.

Place: General Academic Building 327

Title: "And Miles to Go Before I Sleep": The Public Discourse of Promise Keepers

Appendix V: Notification of Thesis Defense/ Sample

Notification of Thesis Defense

To: Dr. Brian Richardson, Chair
Department of Communication Studies

Dr. Jay Allison, Major Professor

Dr. Suzanne Enck, Committee Member

Dr. Zuoming Wang, Committee Member

Members of the Faculty in the Department of Communication Studies:

Dr. Iftexhar Ahmed, Dr. Karen Anderson-Lain, Dr. Mark Hlavacik, Dr. Brian Lain, Dr. Megan Morrissey, Mr. Louie Petit, Dr. Justin Trudeau, Dr. Holley Vaughn.

Graduate Students in the Department of Communication Studies at UNT.

Subject: Thesis Oral Examination for Hulga Hopewell

On Monday, September 22, 2011, at 11:00 a.m., in General Academic Building 327, you are invited to participate in the oral examination of Joy Hulga Hopewell. She is a candidate for a Master of Arts Degree in Communication Studies.

Thesis Title: "We Are Not Our Own Light": Mother-Daughter Communication as Refracted through the Philosophy of Malebranche

Appendix VI: Comprehensive Exam Defense Invitation/Sample

Comprehensive Exam Defense Invitation

To: Dr. Brian Richardson, Chair
Department of Communication Studies

Dr. Jay Allison, Major Professor

Dr. Suzanne Enck, Committee Member

Dr. Zuoming Wang, Committee Member

Members of the Faculty in the Department of Communication Studies:
Dr. Iftexhar Ahmed, Dr. Karen Anderson-Lain, Dr. Mark Hlavacik, Dr. Brian Lain, Dr. Megan Morrissey, Mr. Louie Petit, Dr. Justin Trudeau, Dr. Holley Vaughn.

Subject: Comprehensive Examination Oral Defense for Alvin Sneldorfheimer

Date: Monday, April 19, 2011

Time: 2:00p.m.

Place: General Academic Building 327

Appendix VII: Graduate Program Procedures Checklist

This checklist includes procedures that must be followed by graduate students from admissions through graduation. You should retain this checklist throughout your course of graduate studies. Each student is responsible for insuring that appropriate deadlines are met.

Degree Plan Procedures

Before enrolling in any classes:

_____ Seek advice from the department's Director of Graduate Studies.

During (or soon after) the first 9 hours of study:

_____ Select a Major Professor. Secure their consent and complete a "Request for Major Professor" form. This must be completed by the time registration for your third semester begins or you will encounter a "block" on your third semester course registration.

_____ In consultation with your Major Professor, file your **graduate degree plan** with the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies. Administrative office staff will send copies of your degree plan to Toulouse after it has been approved by your Major Professor and the department chair.

_____ In consultation with your Major Professor, select two additional committee members from among the faculty in the department. Secure consent from each professor.

Thesis Procedures

_____ Secure permission from your Major Professor to write a thesis.

_____ Obtain a copy of the thesis and dissertation preparation guide from the graduate school.

_____ Obtain an appropriate style manual (MLA, APA, or Chicago).

_____ Enroll in COMM 5950 each semester after beginning your thesis.

_____ Write prospectus.

_____ After securing permission from Major Professor, schedule prospectus meeting and reserve room with the department's administrative assistant.

- _____ Distribute copies of prospectus and invitation to the Department's faculty.
- _____ Participate in prospectus meeting early enough in the first semester in which you have enrolled in thesis hours to ensure that your committee has approved your thesis prior to the end of the semester. Students who do not have an approved thesis prospectus by the end of this first semester of taking thesis hours will not be permitted to continue with the thesis project. Any student who has not defended their prospectus by the end of their first semester enrolled in thesis hours will need to take comprehensive exams at the beginning of their last semester of coursework and will need to take an extra course to substitute for the defunct hours of prospectus/thesis enrollment.
- _____ Obtain IRB approval, if necessary.
- _____ Write thesis in on-going consultation with your Major Professor and advisory committee.
- _____ File for graduation by the deadline established by the Graduate School (at the beginning of your last semester of coursework)
- _____ When Major Professor advises, prepare reading copy of thesis for defense.
- _____ Write thesis abstract.
- _____ Schedule thesis defense and reserve room with the department's administrative assistant.
- _____ Distribute reading copies of the thesis, abstract, and notification of thesis defense to graduate advisory committee (**at least** one week prior to the defense and **at least two weeks** prior to the announced filing deadline of the Graduate School – typically midway through your final long semester of coursework).
- _____ Distribute notification of thesis defense and abstract to department faculty and other graduate students in the program (**at least one week prior to the defense**).
- _____ Participate in thesis defense (this should take place **at least** one week prior to the announced filing deadline of the Graduate School – typically midway through your final long semester of coursework).
- _____ Make corrections to thesis required by your graduate advisory committee.
- _____ Submit copy of thesis to the reader for the Graduate School by the Graduate School's announced deadline (typically midway through your final long semester of coursework). Note: This procedure has been moved completely to an online portal and all submissions of thesis materials to Toulouse will take place digitally.

_____ Make corrections required by the thesis reader for the Graduate School.

_____ Submit bound copy of the thesis to the Department.

Comprehensive Examination Procedures

During the long semester preceding your comprehensive exams (typically, a student's third long semester in the program):

_____ Near the beginning of the semester, set up an exam committee meeting between your Major Professor and other committee members. During this meeting, in consultation with your committee, you should determine how best to coordinate exam questions in line with the aims of the program and your individual degree goals. Agree to expected reading lists for each question.

_____ Study for comprehensive exams. Meet with your committee members as necessary in preparation for your exams.

Prior to the beginning of your last long semester in graduate school:

_____ Consult the Director of Graduate Studies for exact dates of comprehensive examinations (these will take place the week before the long semester begins).

_____ Office staff will inform you where you will write your exams in a space proctored by UNT staff.

_____ See that any prior grades of incomplete ("I") are removed from your transcript.

On the day(s) of the written portion of the comprehensive examination:

_____ You can take the following items into your exam space: pens/pencils, scratch paper provided by office staff, pre-recorded music on a CD or iPod shuffle (checked by office staff before going into the exam). **You cannot take into the exam space** phones or other electronic devices (unless part of an ADA accommodation) or notes/books. Please do not bring valuable items to campus with you that you are not comfortable leaving with a proctor during your exam.

_____ Take the written portion of the comprehensive examination, saving your work often.

At the beginning of your final semester of graduate school:

_____ File for graduation by the deadline established by the Graduate School.

After completing the written portion of the comprehensive examination:

- _____ Consult with your Major Professor to determine if your committee has requested any re-writes for your exams. Once you have passed the written portion of your exams, proceed to the following steps.
- _____ Schedule time for your oral exam with your committee (block out 2-hour window for this).
- _____ Schedule room for oral examination in consultation with main office staff.
- _____ Distribute invitation to the oral defense to the Department's faculty.
- _____ Participate in oral examination.