

# Graduate Program Handbook

Department of Communication Studies

University of North Texas



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# Welcome to the Department of Communication Studies

## Vision & Mission

### Vision Statement

We cultivate communication scholarship and practice from diverse perspectives to foster creative, self-reflexive, and engaged leaders in their personal, professional, and civic lives.

### 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 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 an inclusive and 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 with no distinction in coursework or general expectations within the program itself. If a student can demonstrate mastery of or complete two years of a foreign language (the foreign language requirement may have been completed as part of an undergraduate degree), this student may elect to earn either a Master of Arts or a Master of Science. If a student cannot demonstrate foreign language competency, they will pursue a Master of Science.

## 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.

**Iftekhhar Ahmed (Associate 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 (Principal 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

Intersectional feminist criticism; Communication activism pedagogy and civic engagement; Gendered violence and resistance; Carceral narratives & the prison-industrial complex; Narratives of death & dying.

**Mark Hlavacik (Assistant Professor)**

Ph.D., Penn State University

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

**Brian Lain (Associate Professor)**

**Director of Debate**

Ph.D., University of Iowa

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

**Joseph McGlynn (Assistant Professor)**

Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin

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

**Megan Morrissey (Associate 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 (Senior Lecturer)**

Ph.D., Louisiana State University

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, digital 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 and persuasive messaging
- Computer-mediated communication
- Critical /cultural studies of communication, cultural values, ideologies, and politics with an aim toward cultivating civic engagement and engendering social justice
- Investigations into rhetorical support for and against public policies and practices
- Intercultural communication
- Narrative studies

## Areas of Emphasis

### Communication, Culture, and Public Discourse

The emphasis on communication, culture, and public discourse is based on the foundational assumption that communication is influential in the formation and growth of every culture. Combining rhetorical studies with contemporary critical/cultural approaches, we understand rhetoric as a dynamic process that involves social change or resistance, where material conditions and power relationships influence the ways that we think about the communicative influence of class, gender, and ethnicity in often precarious situations.

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), we seek to comprehend and meaningfully contribute to the development of public culture, civic engagement, and social justice. To that end, UNT's emphasis in communication, culture, and public discourse offers theoretical and applied education, through historical/critical and qualitative rhetorical research, designed to explore the power of communication in co-creating our understanding of the worlds in which we live. We combine traditional rhetorical foundations and education with a contemporary focus, offering diverse methodological training to produce socially relevant critical work and innovative theory development

## **Graduates with an emphasis in Communication, Culture, and Public Discourse should:**

- Know how to conduct various types of critical research and how to write scholarship in conversation with relevant research in the field of rhetorical studies.
- Be able to explain how symbolic influence operates culturally and how historical, political, and social ideas and events develop and emerge through communication practices.
- Develop critiques aimed at fostering a more equitable and democratic public sphere as a way to promote social justice.

Students in this area 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 communication, culture, and public discourse often supplement their curriculum with courses from other areas of emphases to acquire a broad-based knowledge of communication studies aimed at critiquing and creating responsible public messages.

## **Interpersonal, Digital, & Organizational Communication**

Interpersonal, Digital, Organizational Communication (IDO) examines the impact of communication theory in multiple interpersonal and organizational contexts. Students emphasizing in IDO explore how human communication influences and is influenced by societal, group, and individual levels. The goal of the IDO 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 IDO 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
- Networking and Team Environments (Virtual Groups)
- Organizational Communication
- Pedagogy and Communication

## **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. Coursework blends theory and practice, with an emphasis on research and presentation of scholarship in a variety of forms and venues.

## 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 pursue 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 at least **one course from each of the three areas** of the department (Communication, Culture, & Public Discourse; Interpersonal, Digital, & Organizational Communication; and Performance Studies).
2. Each student is expected to enroll in at least one **Methods** course and one **Theory** course while completing their graduate program (See Appendix I).
3. 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.

## Provisional Admissions

In some cases, students are admitted into the graduate program provisionally. Provisions might include a required minimum GPA during a student's first 9 hours of enrollment, specified courses to take during a student's first semester of coursework, and/or the requirement that a student enroll in a "bridging" research/writing course during their first semester. Provisions will be outlined in the Toulouse Graduate School's acceptance letter.

If the Graduate Standards Committee determines that an incoming student would benefit from the support of a "bridging" research writing course, a provisionally admitted student may be required to enroll in an independent graduate-level section of guided research that meets in conjunction with the undergraduate section of COMM "3010 – Communication Perspectives." Any student enrolled in this course will be assigned a graduate faculty mentor who will oversee their guided research project, assign research and writing projects throughout the semester, meet independently with the student to augment information from ongoing COMM 3010 instruction, and evaluate the student's completed work. Students assigned to this provisional admission course need to earn at least a B in this course during their first enrolled semester before being admitted fully into the graduate program.

## Exit Options (Overview)

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:

- 1. Comprehensive Exams + Problem in Lieu of Thesis**  
**36 hours:** 33 hours of coursework, 3 hours of **COMM 5930** (Problem in Lieu of Thesis), and written and oral comprehensive examinations.
- 2. Comprehensive Exams + Internship**  
**36 hours:** 33 hours of coursework, 3 hours of **COMM 5481** (Graduate Internship in Communication Studies), and written and oral comprehensive examinations.
- 3. Thesis Option**  
**36 hours:** 30 hours of coursework, 6 hours of **COMM 5950** (master's thesis hours), and an oral thesis defense.

Students wishing to complete a thesis 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).

**\*Only one of these exit options (PIL, Internship, or Thesis) can be counted toward a student's 36 hours of coursework.**

## Transfer Hours, Courses Outside of Dept., Special Problems & Practica

### 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 at UNT, [Texas Woman's University](#), or [Texas A&M University-Commerce](#). Any coursework selected outside of the UNT Department of Communication Studies should be chosen in close consultation with your 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 combined).**

## Requests for Special Problems or Practica

**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 will coordinate with a member of the graduate faculty to establish the parameters specific to their practicum. In consultation with that 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 Plan, Major Professor, and Advisory Committee

### Selecting a Major Professor

Each student is expected to select a major professor from the faculty in the student's primary area of emphasis prior to or soon after the completion of nine (9) hours of graduate study (assuming full-time enrollment, a student 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 their major professor 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.

#### **The Major Professor is responsible primarily for:**

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

Students will secure approval for their major professor selection by completing and filing a ["Request for Major Professor" form](#) (see sample request form in Appendix II). This form is also available on the department website. Students should secure permission from their major professor before making such designation on their 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 about how to proceed with this change.

### 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 of coursework, graduate students are expected to select their major professor, acquire the major professor's consent to serve, and file the appropriate degree plan paperwork with the department.

#### **Requirements for the Degree Plan**

- **Graduate students are responsible for seeing that a degree plan is filed soon after completion of their first 9 hours of study** (students cannot register for their third full semester unless they have a major professor secured and degree plan filed; degree plan completion must occur by the mid-point of the student's second full semester).
- Students can obtain a [blank degree plan form](#) from the department website. The original form should be signed by the major professor and the Department chair before being forwarded to the Toulouse Graduate School (staff in the Communication office will forward this to Toulouse after placing a copy in the student's permanent file). 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 major professor must approve any amendments to student degree plans and help ensure that all program requirements are met.
- **Changes in degree plans:** In the semester when a student will graduate, if the student's degree plan needs to be amended (e.g., due to changes in courses taken and/or offered), the major professor will notify 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 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of coursework (assuming fulltime enrollment). 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 advisory committee conducts the prospectus and final thesis defenses and makes recommendations regarding 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.

## Comprehensive Exams Track

In coordination with the comprehensive exams track, students may complete one of two exit options in coordination with their major professor: a Problem in lieu of thesis project (COMM 5930) or a Graduate Internship in Communication (COMM 5481).

### Problem in Lieu of Thesis (PIL)

In preparing for writing a PIL, a student will work in close consultation with their major professor to ensure the feasibility of the proposed study and determine the student's preparedness to undertake such a project. Generally, a PIL should result in a high-quality final project that might be suitable for publication in a journal in the field (or closely related field). Other projects could fit this exit option and should be negotiated in concert with the student's major professor.

A student enrolling in COMM 5930 (Problem in Lieu of Thesis) should do so under the section number of their major professor (the Director of Graduate Studies will enroll the student). 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. Notably, if this exit option has not been completed prior to graduation, a student cannot participate in our departmental graduation ceremony.

## 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 will be enrolled in COMM 5481 under the section number of their major professor (the Director of Graduate Studies will enroll the student). 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.). Notably, if this exit option has not been completed prior to graduation, a student cannot participate in our departmental graduation ceremony.

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 and depending on student's enrollment schedule, internship hours *may* be initiated and/or completed during a summer session 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**

For students completing either the problem in lieu of thesis or graduate internship, this track is completed by successfully passing a set of comprehensive exams. The comprehensive examination is a test of students' 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, methods, 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 timeline outlined below is selected to allow students adequate time to complete the comprehensive examination process (including any rewrites and the oral examination) in time to file necessary paperwork with the Toulouse Graduate School (TGS) by the exam completion notification deadline. Students should not expect their graduate advisory committee to rush the comprehensive examination process because of poor planning — *In other words, follow the timelines we've offered and you should be right on track toward graduating on time.*

### **Basic Exam Structure**

Below is the basic structure of the exam. Detail of each steps are provided in the subsequent sections.

1. A graduate student pursuing the comprehensive examination option should meet with their major professor early in their graduate career to determine 2 additional members from the department's graduate faculty to form their advisory committee.
2. A student needs to schedule a meeting to take place with their advisory committee by the end of the 5th week of the semester prior to taking exams.
3. Students will respond to 4 questions in their exams.
4. Major Professor and two Advisory Committee members will each provide one question covering the content of a course taken by the semester prior to taking exams.
5. In addition, students will answer one general knowledge question.
6. Upon successful completion of the written component of the comprehensive examination, the student must successfully complete an oral examination with their Advisory Committee.
7. After the student successfully completes the oral portion of the comprehensive examination, the Major Professor obtains a signature from the Department Chair and then submits the form to the Toulouse Graduate School.

### **General Knowledge Question**



The general knowledge question should address one area of study (Communication, Culture & Public Discourse; Interpersonal, Digital, & Organizational Communication; or Performance Studies). General knowledge questions will be collaboratively written by the graduate faculty of the particular area of study most relevant to the student's coursework and career goals (Communication, Culture & Public Discourse; Interpersonal, Digital, & Organizational Communication; or Performance Studies) and should allow the student an opportunity to apply a particular area of theory to a topic relevant to the student's interest in the field of Communication Studies (some students may choose to apply this area of theory to some aspect of their internship or PIL project, if this fits their coursework timeline). The area of the general knowledge question will align with the area of the student's Major Professor.

### **Graduate Advisory Committee & Preparation**

A graduate student pursuing the comprehensive examination option should meet with their major professor early in their graduate career to determine which additional 2 members from the department's graduate faculty would best comprise the student's committee. This decision should take into account the student's professional goals in pursuing a master's degree in Communication Studies as well as the capacity of individual graduate faculty. During the Comprehensive Exam Preparation Meeting (conducted during the semester prior to when the student takes their exams), the committee should ensure that there will be no significant overlap of theoretical material between questions (e.g., if a student is assigned to discuss a particular theory in one of their exam questions, this should not be the same theory that they feature in the General Knowledge question).

### **Exam Preparation Meeting**

A student who is coordinating their comprehensive exams needs to schedule a meeting to take place with their advisory committee by the end of the 5th week of the semester prior to taking exams (this meeting would take place during the student's 3rd long semester, assuming a full-time schedule of coursework). The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that each member of the committee and the student is coordinated in their efforts for developing exam questions most relevant to each student's particular program of study, goals for pursuing a master's degree in Communication Studies, and overarching mastery of the field. The committee should also ensure there is not a large degree of overlap in how the student approaches their four questions.

At this meeting, the student should be able to articulate why they are pursuing a master's degree in Communication Studies and how they envision each member of their advisory committee contributing to their comprehensive mastery of the field through the exam process. While students will not necessarily be given their exact exam questions during this meeting, the entire committee and individual student should leave this meeting with a very clear understanding of what areas of academic scholarship should inform the student's exam preparation.

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 student assumes responsibility for scheduling the oral examination in coordination with their major professor and advisory committee prior to the Graduate School deadline.

A student shall not be allowed to change their graduate advisory committee or the courses they have selected to take exams over after their pre-comprehensive exam meeting (completed by the 5th week of the semester prior to the student's exams). In exceptional circumstances (e.g., failure of a course over which a student is expecting to complete a comprehensive exam; unexpected faculty resignation or development leave), a graduate student may appeal this rule. That appeal should be made to the Graduate Standards Committee, who will determine how best to proceed.

## **Procedures for the Written Comprehensive Examinations**

The written portion of the comprehensive examination will last for eight (8) hours. Generally, the student writes two (2) hours for each of the three members of the graduate advisory committee (based on prior course materials with each advisory committee member) in addition to two (2) hours for the general knowledge question. Comprehensive exams will be administered in/by the university Testing Center. Arrangements for testing will be coordinated by the student, graduate advisor, and Testing Center Coordinator. The only exceptions to this will be made in the instance of extenuating circumstances discussed prior to the scheduled exam and agreed upon by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Student.

Written exams will take place during the week prior to the first class-day of the long semester of a student's graduation. Each student will sit for two questions (4 hours total) for on two different days of the exam. Students, in consultation of their Advisory Committee, will select which two questions they will complete during Day One and Day Two of written exams. During each of the two exam days, there will be a break between the two questions (typically 1-2 hours), and a break between the two exam days (typically 1-2 days). Actual gaps may fluctuate based on the Testing Center's availability.

Specific days and times for writing are coordinated with the Director of Graduate Studies and administrative staff who will organize the proctoring of exams and are scheduled during the week prior to the beginning of fall and spring semesters. The scheduled dates and times for written exams will be announced at least one month prior to the scheduled exam period. Students who need schedule accommodations based on outside work, childcare, or military commitments should communicate these needs to the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible in semester prior to their exam session.

If relevant, graduate students are entitled to accessibility accommodations when outlined by the Office of Disability Access (e.g., extended writing times, assistive technology). Students who need accessibility accommodations should communicate these needs to the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible in semester prior to their exam session.

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.

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.

If a student successfully completes all portions of the written examination, they may schedule the oral portion of the examination in consultation with their major professor. 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, two weeks will be needed to coordinate the process. Therefore, students will address re-writes three weeks after completion of their prior writing phase. The student's graduate advisory committee will decide what they will address in the question/s for which a student is asked to re-write.

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.

## **Procedures for the Oral Comprehensive Examinations**

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.

Prepare a "Notification of Comprehensive Exams Oral Defense" to be sent to the Department of Communication Studies faculty (see sample in Appendix VI). Members of the Communication Studies faculty may participate in the oral defense. Comprehensive exam defenses are not open to individuals not attending or teaching at the University of North Texas.

On the day of the oral examination, the student should bring a copy of their answers to the written comprehensive examination for reference purposes. Students can secure a copy of their answers by requesting them from their major professor or Director of Graduate Studies.

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.

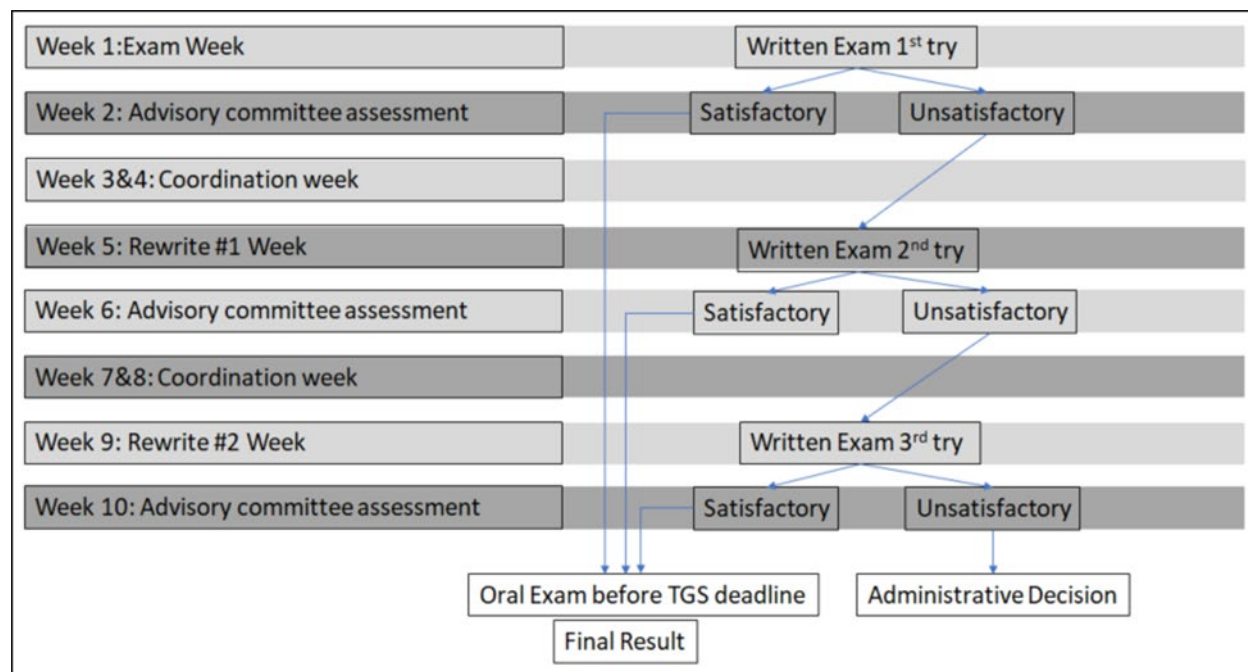
After the student completes the oral portion of the comprehensive examination successfully, the major professor assumes responsibility for transmitting the results of the comprehensive

examination to the Graduate School on the form provided by the Graduate School.

If the advisory committee determines a student's overall performance to be unsatisfactory, the advisory committee shall determine the subsequent course of action (ranging from dismissal from the graduate program to taking additional coursework in deficient area(s) or other agreed-upon preparatory work and re-taking unsatisfactory exam portions during the subsequent comprehensive exam period). The advisory committee will consult with the Graduate Standards committee about the next steps and then communicate their decision to the student.

## Exam Flowchart

The figure below summarizes the timeline of written and oral exam activities.



**No Food or Gifts, Please:** We strive to create a community that is generous, collaborative, and supportive. We strive to create a challenging and fulfilling oral exam experience. Please don't bring refreshments to your defense—We want to keep the focus on you and the strength of your academic performance. And, while you may be grateful to your committee members, gifts/cards should not be given until after students have graduated (this is NOT an expectation at all).

## 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.

**IMPORTANT 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 long 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 (COMM 5950) 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. 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.**

2. 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.
3. 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).
4. 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
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 full thesis without approval of the major professor.*

1. 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. Members of the Communication Studies faculty and graduate student body may participate in the examination. Thesis defenses are not open to individuals not currently affiliated with UNT.
2. It is the *responsibility of the student* to see that the final thesis defense is scheduled prior to the filing deadline set by the Toulouse Graduate School each semester (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.
3. In consultation with the major professor and graduate advisory committee members, the student selects a date and time for the thesis defense (allowing 2 hours for the defense). The student should contact the department administrative assistant to reserve a conference room for the meeting.
4. Prepare reading copies of the thesis for distribution to advisory committee.
5. Prepare an abstract of the thesis. In their abstract, the student summarizes the study and their findings and should not exceed 150 words.
6. At least **one week** prior to the final thesis defense, prepare a “Notification of Thesis Defense” to be sent to the Department of Communication Studies (see sample in Appendix V), including faculty and graduate students.
7. At least **one week** prior to the final thesis defense, copies of the abstract and full thesis must be distributed to:
  - The Major Professor
  - The advisory committee members
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).

**No Food or Gifts, Please:** We strive to create a community that is generous, collaborative, and supportive. We strive to create a challenging and fulfilling oral exam experience. Please don’t bring refreshments to your defense—We want to keep the focus on you and the strength of your academic performance. And, while you may be grateful to your committee members, gifts/cards should not be given until after students have graduated (this is NOT an expectation at all).

## Submitting the Thesis

1. In consultation with their major professor, the student incorporates changes

specified by their advisory committee. The final copy is then prepared and submitted through the Toulouse Graduate School's Vireo program. 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 to ensure complete and accurate revisions. 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.

## Additional Notes on Thesis Procedure

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. While 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 actively employed (e.g., during summer terms or while on research 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.

1. Obtain a copy of the [Preparation and Filing of Dissertations and Theses](#) 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 frustration and time.
2. Students should consult with their major professor about which style manual to use for their thesis (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago); use the most recent version of that guide.
3. 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.
4. 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 that can count toward a student's degree plan may not exceed six (6), regardless of the number of enrollments in COMM 5950.
5. 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. If this exit option has not been completed prior to graduation, a student cannot participate in our departmental graduation ceremony.



## Academic Policies – Maintaining Good Standing in the Program

### Time Limits for Degree Completion

All requirements for the master's degree, including transfer hours, must be completed within six (6) 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 2019-2020 Graduate Catalog](#), an Incomplete is “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. Grades of I assigned to a graduate course at the end of the Fall 2017 semester and later will default to F unless the instructor has designated a different automatic grade.”

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.

### UNT Graduate School Probation/Suspension Standards

According to the [UNT 2019-2020 Graduate Catalog](#):

“A student who fails to achieve the required cumulative average of 3.0 GPA (B average) on all courses carrying graduate credit in a term/semester will be placed on academic probation for the subsequent term/semester. If the student achieves a 3.0 semester GPA in the subsequent term/semester, but the cumulative GPA is still below 3.0, the student will remain on academic probation. The student will be removed from probation when the 3.0 cumulative GPA is achieved. A student who is on probation cannot apply for graduation and cannot graduate.”

“A student who is placed on academic probation who does not receive either a semester or a cumulative 3.0 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 re-enroll for further graduate courses. Graduate work completed elsewhere during a period of graduate suspension at UNT may not be counted for graduate credit at UNT. After the one-year period of suspension, students must reapply for admission to graduate school (see “[Read mission of Graduate Students](#)” in the Admission section of this catalog); students may then enroll in graduate courses under probation with the same probation conditions as previously described. Students who are then suspended a second time without having returned to good academic standing by achieving a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better will be dismissed from the

university.”

Any grade that falls below C cannot count as course credit toward a student’s master’s degree in Communication Studies, but the grade will count in calculating the student’s GPA. “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 [below C], or by completing other UNT courses with grades high enough to bring the overall UNT GPA up to 3.0. Low grades made in graduate courses at UNT may not be duplicated at other institutions.”

As of Fall 2018, a student may duplicate only two graduate courses in which they received a grade of C or lower for grade replacement. A single course may only be repeated once for grade replacement. Importantly, due to the availability and rotation of courses in the department, most courses will not be offered twice within the two years of a full-time degree plan timeline. In addition, students may only duplicate two courses total in completing their master’s degree.

# Graduate Pathway Program

## Description of Graduate Pathway Program

The Department of Communication Studies offers a graduate Pathway program for high-achieving undergraduate students majoring in Communication Studies. This Pathway program offers the opportunity for strong and highly motivated undergraduate students to advance their careers by pursuing the bachelor's and master's degrees in a parallel and coordinated program. This program enables students to accelerate the timeline for earning their bachelor's and master's degrees.

Students accepted into the Pathway program can enroll in up to 12 hours of graduate-level coursework to count toward their bachelor's degree in Communication Studies. As a pathway toward the master's degree, students in the Pathway program will first earn their bachelor's degree and then also count these same graduate courses toward their master's degree in Communication Studies.

## Eligibility

Students are eligible for acceptance into the program upon completion of 75 undergraduate hours, including COMM 3010 and enrollment in a theory course in Communication Studies.

- Minimum GPA – 3.5 in Major / 3.5 Overall
- Completed COMM 3010 with grade of A or B
- Completed Undergraduate Theory Course in Communication Studies (COMM 4020, COMM 4040, COMM 4060, COMM 4540, or Theories of Persuasion) with grade of A or B

## Application Procedure

Undergraduate students interested in applying for the Pathway program should apply for the Pathway program after taking COMM 3010 (having earned an A or B) and while taking an undergraduate theory course in Communication Studies. Acceptance into the Pathway program will be contingent upon completing the theory course with a grade of at least an A or B.

**Application to the Pathway program should include submitting the following items to the Communication Studies' Director of Graduate Studies:**

- Letter of Application (address your purpose in pursuing graduate study in the Department of Communication Studies, including your professional plans, career goals, and areas of research interest)
- Resume or Curriculum Vita
- 2 Letters of Recommendation from full faculty/professors in the Department of Communication Studies
- Scholarly writing sample from a junior or senior level undergraduate course that demonstrates your proficiency at conducting, reporting, and citing scholarly research
- UNT Degree Audit/Transcript

## **Transition from Pathway Program into Master's Program**

During the final semester of a student's Pathway program as an undergraduate, the Pathway student should officially apply to the Toulouse Graduate School through the Apply Texas portal. Assuming successful completion of all Pathway courses (with a grade of A or B), applicants will be admitted into the master's program upon completion of their undergraduate degree. All graduate courses taken as part of the Pathway program will count toward the student's master's degree.

Pathway students will be expected to select a major professor and complete a degree plan during their first full semester in the master's program. Typically, Pathway students will pursue a non-thesis option once admitted into the master's program.

Once admitted into the master's program, Pathway students can apply to serve as a Teaching Assistant if they wish. No student can serve as a TA until they have completed their undergraduate degree.

## **A Welcoming Environment to Foster Learning & Growth**

Our department endeavors to provide a space wherein all students will feel supported, challenged, and inspired. While graduate education is not "easy" and will often push students beyond their typical comfort zones with regard to learning new concepts and managing multiple deadlines and projects simultaneously, we are committed to ethical pedagogical practices. Importantly, our graduate students are protected under a variety of policies and laws that our faculty actively promote and abide by.

## **Learning Differences and Accommodations**

As a department, we are committed to working with you to best accommodate each student's learning needs. For most classes, you'll find a range of different types of assignments and assessments that offer a variety of opportunities to demonstrate your competencies in learning. If you have a type of learning difference that can be reasonably accommodated, we encourage you to register with UNT's Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to help ensure that we are able to offer the most fitting accommodations possible. If a disability is verified by the ODA, their office will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. Students are encouraged to discuss their learning needs with the Director of Graduate Studies to help ensure that we are providing all available support to you in your efforts to earn your degree.

For additional information, see the ODA in **Sage Hall Suite 167** or on their website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

## Non-discriminatory Learning Environment

Specifically, in concert with UNT's Office of Equal Opportunity, the Department of Communication Studies will not "unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, political affiliation, disability, marital status, ancestry, genetic information, citizenship, or veteran status in its application and admission process, educational programs and activities, university facilities, or employment policies." Notably, "the University also prohibits and takes actions to prevent retaliation against individuals who report or file a charge of discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence; participate in an investigation, or oppose any form of discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence."

Any student who feels like they have experienced discrimination, harassment, or any other forms of mistreatment in our program should report such experiences to the Director of Graduate Studies and/or Department Chair. In addition, students are encouraged to seek support from offices on campus uniquely suited to different harms by contacting UNT's [Division of Institutional Equity & Diversity](#).

## Title IX Support for Victims of Violence

As a department, we are committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance.

UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at **SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu** or by calling the **Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648**. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to UNT's Title IX Coordinator at **oeo@unt.edu** or at **(940) 565 2759**.

## **Appendix I: List of Method & Theory Courses**

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### **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)
- Special Topic Seminars in Communication, Culture, and Public Discourse

**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

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### 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 this professor 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**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Master's degree to be earned: MA or MS (circle one) Major: Communication Studies

Major Professor: \_\_\_\_\_

Any deficiencies in undergraduate prerequisites: NONE

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

The number of UNT off-campus residence courses which may be applied to 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.

Course Prefix and No.	Semester Completed	Course Prefix and No.	Semester Completed
COMM 5085	Fall 2020	COMM 5320	Fall 2021
COMM 5738	Fall 2020	COMM 5481	Fall 2021
COMM 5060	Fall 2020	COMM 5300	Fall 2021
COMM 5878	Spring 2021	COMM 5100	Spring 2022
COMM 5700	Spring 2021	COMM 5599	Spring 2022
COMM 5599	Spring 2021	COMM 5400	Spring 2022

Admission to candidacy is recommended:

Total Semester hours required: 36

\_\_\_\_\_  
Major Professor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**To Be Completed by Provost**

**This student is admitted to candidacy:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Provost



**Appendix IV:  
Thesis Prospectus Invitation/Sample [sent only to department faculty]**

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**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. Iftexhar Ahmed, Dr. Karen Anderson-Lain, Dr. Mark Hlavacik, Dr. Brian Lain, Dr. Joseph McGlynn, 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 [sent to entire department list  
including faculty & graduate students]**

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**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. Iftekhar Ahmed, Dr. Karen Anderson-Lain, Dr. Mark Hlavacik, Dr. Brian Lain, Dr. Joseph McGlynn, 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 [sent only to department  
faculty]**

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**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. Joseph McGlynn, 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

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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.

#### 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 a copy 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.

### Comprehensive Examination Procedures

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

\_\_\_\_\_ By the end of your 5<sup>th</sup> week of the semester preceding your final long semester, set up an exam committee meeting between your major professor and other advisory committee members. During this meeting, in consultation with your committee, you should determine how best to prepare for your exam questions in line with the aims of the program and your individual degree goals. Coordinate & agree to 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 during the week before the long semester begins).
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Director of Graduate Studies will inform you where you will write your exams in a space proctored by UNT staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that any prior grades of incomplete (“I”) will be removed from your transcript by the time of the official filing deadline announced by the Toulouse graduate school (typically midway through your final long semester).

### **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. **You cannot take into the exam space** phones or other electronic devices (unless part of an ODA 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 in coordination with the UNT testing services, saving your work often.

### **At the beginning of your final semester of graduate school:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ File for graduation by the [deadline established by the Toulouse Graduate School](#) (at the beginning of your last semester of coursework)

### **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 administrative office staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Distribute invitation to the oral defense to the Department’s faculty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Participate in oral examination (feel free to bring copies of your answers and any notes you’d like to have on hand)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Celebrate accordingly

## Thesis Procedures

- \_\_\_\_\_ Secure permission from your major professor to write a thesis.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain a copy of the thesis and dissertation preparation guide from the Toulouse graduate school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain an appropriate style manual (MLA, APA, or Chicago).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask to be enrolled in COMM 5950 (3 hours) each semester after beginning your prospectus
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write prospectus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ After securing permission from major professor, distribute prospectus to advisory committee, schedule prospectus meeting with advisory committee, and reserve room with the department's administrative assistant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 in consultation with major professor, if necessary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write thesis in on-going consultation with your major professor and advisory committee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ File for graduation by the [deadline established by the Toulouse Graduate School](#) (at the beginning of your last semester of coursework)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that any prior grades of incomplete ("I") will be removed from your transcript by the time of the official filing deadline announced by the Toulouse graduate school (typically midway through your final long semester).
- \_\_\_\_\_ When major professor advises, prepare reading copy of thesis for defense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write thesis abstract (150 words)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule thesis defense and reserve room with the department's administrative assistant.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Distribute reading copy of the thesis and abstract 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:** All submissions of thesis materials to Toulouse take place digitally through Vireo.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make corrections required by the thesis reader for the Graduate School.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Celebrate accordingly