

Communication, Media, and Persuasion

Faculty

Chair and Professor: James DiSanza

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Program Description	Type	Degree
Master of Arts in Communication (http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/artsandletters/communicationmediaandpersuasion/macommunication/)	Degree	M.A.
Accelerated BA/MA in Communication (http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/artsandletters/communicationmediaandpersuasion/bama/)	Degree	BA/MA

Mission Statement

For more than fifty years, ISU's Master of Arts in Communication program has been preparing graduates to be active citizens in public life who critically engage with the world, whether as creative, strategic professionals or as researchers pursuing academic careers in teaching and scholarship. The program continues this mission in the 21st century by using contemporary methods and best practices in communication.

The graduate program offers a flexible integration of knowledge, skills, and research:

- by *Flexible*, we mean students are afforded an opportunity to customize a curriculum tailored to their interests among the spheres of public and mediated communication;
- by *Knowledge*, we mean that students acquire a thorough understanding of the practices and theories of communication as well as perspective and methods;
- by *Skills*, we mean students learn to strategically craft verbal, written, and visual messages for businesses and nonprofit organizations, political campaigns, and/or media industries; and
- and by *Research*, we mean students utilize the methods and theories of communication to create new, relevant scholarship that critically explores the ethical, mediated, and persuasive aspects of communication.

Goals

1. Graduates will develop an understanding of communication research methodology and roles of research in academia.
2. Graduates finishing their master's degree will find professional employment in public or private sectors of business, service, or education.
3. Graduates will further their graduate careers by pursuing a doctorate in communication.

Objectives

1. Graduates will pass oral defense.
2. Graduates will submit to and/or present at a professional conference.
3. Graduates will find employment in education, public service, or business.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Understand practices, theories, perspectives and methods of the communication discipline.
- Strategically craft verbal, written, and visual messages for organizations, political campaigns, and/or media industries.
- Create new, relevant scholarship that critically explores the ethical, mediated, and persuasive aspects of communication.

Why study Communication at ISU?

The Department of Communication, Media, and Persuasion offers a diverse selection of study options. We offer concentrations in Corporate Communication (Leadership, Advertising, Public Relations); Multiplatform Journalism; Visual Media (Photo, Video, Design); and Rhetoric & Media Affairs. Our graduate faculty are not only dedicated teachers, they are also national and international scholars who present their research in books, journals, exhibitions, and conferences. With the size of our program, faculty are able to work closely with graduate students, providing them with exceptional guidance and experience.

Admission Requirements

To be admitted to classified status, students must apply to and meet all criteria for admission to the Graduate School. In addition, students need to meet the following criteria:

- Application for Admission to the Graduate School at Idaho State University
- Application fee
- A letter of application/interest and professional goals
- Official transcript(s), both undergraduate and graduate
- Minimum grade point average of 3.0 (conditional admission with 2.5-2.9 GPA)
- International students must submit official English TOEFL scores: 80 or above with a score of 20 on each section (graduate assistants who teach courses must score 23 or above on the speaking section) on the iBT
- International students may also submit the IELTS with a performance score of 6.5 or better

Requirements

All programs of study will be expected to reflect the following departmental standards:

- A minimum of 30 MA program credits
- At least 15 credits must be from 6600-level course work
- At least 18 credits must be from course work in Communication, Media, and Persuasion

Required Coursework:

CMP 6601 Communication & Media Studies: 3 semester hours. (Fall)

A graduate-level introduction to the theoretical, methodological, and professional approaches to the communication discipline, with an emphasis on identifying individual programs of study tailored to student interests.

All Graduate Teaching Assistants are required to take the following:

CMP 5587 Rhetorical Theory: 3 semester hours. (Fall)

Course provides students with the foundations of rhetoric by examining principle rhetorical theories from Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, Modern,

and Contemporary eras. Specific evaluated graduate-level activities and/or performances are identified in the course syllabus.

All Graduate Students must take one of the following two courses:

CMP 5509 Communication Inquiry: 3 semester hours. (Spring)

Introduces tools and strategies communication professionals use to answer questions and solve problems through systematic investigation. The course will focus on developing an understanding of applied communication research, including design, sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Specific, evaluated graduate-level activities and/or performances are identified in the course syllabus.

OR

CMP 5588 Rhetorical Criticism: 3 semester hours. (Spring)

Study and application of various theories and methods of rhetorical criticism including Aristotelian and Burkeian principles. Specific, evaluated graduate-level activities and/or performances are identified in the course syllabus

All Graduate Students:

CMP 6630 Seminar in Communication: 3 semester hours (9 hours minimum). (Fall/Spring)

In-depth study and analysis of selected topics related to the communication field. See instructor for specific topics. Repeatable if covering different topics.

• **Media**

- o Media & Culture
- o Social Movements
- o Communication Revolution

• **Criticism & Theory**

- o Visual Culture Methods
- o Human Symbol Usage
- o Metaphor & Thought

• **Strategic Communication**

- o Crisis Communication
- o Creative Team Leadership
- o Metaphor & Thought

CMP 6650 Thesis: 1-6 semester hours.

Thesis. 1-6 credits. Repeatable. Graded S/U.

OR

CMP 6660 Graduate Degree Paper: 1-3 semester hours.

Graduate Degree Paper. 1-3 credits. Repeatable. Graded S/U.

CMP 6691 Independent Study: 1-3 semester hours (AS NEEDED).

Under the supervision of departmental graduate faculty, students will engage in self-directed reading, exploration, and study focused on topics relevant to the communication discipline and to the students' planned academic program. May be repeated for up to 6 credits. PREREQ: Permission of instructor and department.

Choose either *thesis* or *graduate degree paper* option:

Thesis Option

- Students choosing the Thesis option must take a minimum of 24 course credits plus a minimum of 6 Thesis (CMP 6650) credits.

Elements of a Thesis Paper

The thesis is an in-depth independent research project that examines a topic of interest of the graduate student. All theses (and Degree Papers) should be written in accordance to the APA (American Psychological Association) publication manual (current edition), as designated by the Graduate School.

You should begin thinking about your thesis topic early on in your graduate studies. Ideally, this should happen by the end of your first year of study. It will be your responsibility to find a graduate faculty member with command of the subject area and who is willing to serve as your thesis advisor. Additionally, you will need to form your thesis committee, which will include your thesis advisor, an additional departmental graduate faculty member, and an "outside" member known as a Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) from an academic department other than CMP.

Your thesis can take different approaches, such as qualitative, quantitative, or rhetorical criticism. A traditional thesis will typically consist of an introduction section with problem statement, research question(s) or hypothesis; literature review; theory section; methods section; analysis and discussion sections; followed by a conclusion. Typical thesis length will be 50 to 75 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, excluding references and notes. Any project involving human subjects will need to comply with Human Subjects in Research protocols. All graduate student investigators will need to complete online CAYUSE-IRB training prior to beginning the project. Training is available through the office of Research Outreach & Compliance website: <https://www.isu.edu/research/research-support/research-outreach-and-compliance/human-subjects/>. (<https://www.isu.edu/research/research-outreach-and-compliance/human-subjects/>).

Non-Thesis Option

- Students choosing the Graduate Degree Paper option must take a minimum of 27 course credits plus a minimum of three (3) credits of Graduate Degree Paper (CMP 6660).

Types and Elements of a Non-Thesis Degree Paper

There is no single model for an acceptable CMP 6660 project. Students will produce work that is in keeping with their unique educational interests and goals. However, degree paper projects will typically fall into one of three types:

- **Analysis Paper:** The most common type of degree paper is a traditional analysis paper. In such a paper, an artifact of some kind is selected (or possibly a data set is generated). The artifact is analyzed through the lens of some relevant theoretical perspective(s). The analysis results in unique observations, conclusions, and implications.
- **Theory Extension/Application Paper:** Some degree papers focus on theory extension or application more than on applying theory as a tool for analysis. In such work, an established theoretical perspective is identified and reviewed. Then, the paper makes a supported argument for how the theory could be usefully amended, extended, refined, etc. Sometimes, the paper offers a detailed explanation for how the theoretical perspective provides a framework for a unique application to a particular context.
- **Creative Product + Paper:** Some MA in Communication students may produce professional and/or artistic work as part of their graduate experience. Such work can constitute a creative product reflecting student learning, knowledge, and skill. Students may create and present the work and, in a well-developed and supported paper, argue its unique contribution and demonstrate insight into the work by analyzing it through some relevant theoretical perspective(s).

Since each degree paper project will be unique, it is difficult to specify an expected paper length. However, most final degree papers include approximately 20 to 30 pages of text (double-spaced, 12-point font, not including references

or appendix material). Some are substantially longer. Creative product papers typically will be somewhat briefer (10 to 20 pages) since the student-produced work itself constitutes a significant portion of the project.

Regardless of length and type, all CMP 6660 work is expected to include the following elements:

- Data/artifact/creative work as source for analysis/exploration/application.
- Clear justification (theoretical and/or practical) for the analysis/exploration/application.
- Review of relevant literature demonstrating broad and substantive theoretical and/or historical and/or practical knowledge related to the subject.
- Clear explanation of and justification for a framework to guide the analysis/exploration/application.
- Original results that contribute in some way, not simply summary or report of results from others.

Thesis/Degree Paper Defense

There will be an oral defense of your thesis/degree paper, which will be scheduled within the department. Work closely with your thesis/degree paper advisor on this important aspect of your program. Ensure your final Program of Study is completed, signed, and submitted to the Graduate School in the semester *prior* to the semester you plan to defend and graduate. **Your oral defense must take place at least three (3) weeks prior to the end of the semester you plan to graduate.** This is your responsibility, so stay on top of your deadlines!

The oral defense and presentation is open to the public and graduate faculty. Only graduate faculty may attend the examination portion of your defense. Final copies of your thesis/degree paper should be submitted to your committee, including your GFR, **at least two (2) weeks prior to your defense date.** Only upon passing your oral exam and after final approval and acceptance by your thesis/degree paper committee (including edits and rewrites) may you submit your finalized thesis/degree paper. To ensure proper thesis/degree paper clearance with the Graduate School, follow all guidelines provided at: <https://www.isu.edu/graduate/current-students/graduation-information/>. (<https://www.isu.edu/graduate/current-students/graduation-information/>)