

UMSL Communication

Why UMSL?

There are many fine institutions in the metropolitan St. Louis area where students can earn a degree in communication, but the program offered by the Department of Communication at University of Missouri–St. Louis is superior in a variety of ways, including: (1) national ranking; (2) curriculum; and (3) faculty. First, an article in the *Journal of Communication* recently identified the faculty of the Department of Communication at University of Missouri–St. Louis as ranking fifth in the nation for scholarly productivity among all universities offering communication degrees (including MA and PhD). Because nearly all of the faculty members actively engage in research, students benefit from having first-hand knowledge that is not currently available at other institutions. Second, no other program in the area offers a mainstream, quantitative, behavioral science approach to the study of communication. All major divisions are addressed, helping to ensure that students can talk competently with graduates of other programs regardless of emphasis. Finally, faculty members are genuinely interested in helping students achieve their potential. Many have received awards or been recognized for innovation and excellence in teaching. Consequently, student evaluations of the courses taught by communication faculty tend to be very positive. Why study communication at University of Missouri–St. Louis? The choice of what university to attend is made for a variety of reasons, but a top-ranked research faculty, excellent curriculum and highly rated award-winning teachers certainly represent the best.

Career Outlook

The BA in Communication focuses on mainstream communication theory and research which prepares students for successful careers in any number of industries as well as providing a strong foundation for those interested in pursuing graduate study. Past graduates can be found working in organizations using the knowledge from the curriculum to succeed in organizational leadership, public relations, training and development, human resources, marketing, consumer behavior, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, as well as a variety of mass communication outlets. Students who pursued an MA and/or PhD after graduation have attended some of the most prestigious institutions in the discipline and now are employed by major corporations or teaching at colleges, universities and other educational outlets.

Undergraduate Studies

The BA in Communication is a strong yet flexible degree program that provides students with a background in communication theory and research. Although all students are required to complete coursework in each of the dominant areas of communication, the program may be tailored to meet personal, professional, or academic goals via the selection of elective coursework in such areas as interpersonal, organizational and mass communication, public relations, research methods and special topics courses. Students may elect to emphasize one or more of these components by selecting elective coursework on the topic. Alternatively, students may seek a more balanced program by completing coursework in several different areas. Students are encouraged to consider their long-term goals and consult with faculty advisers early and often to select an optimal series of elective courses to help achieve those goals.

Faculty

The faculty members who teach and conduct research in the Department of Communication have earned their degrees from some of the most respected institutions in the discipline. Nearly all faculty members actively pursue research agendas, involve students in their research and share their findings in the classes they teach. Although faculty members will typically publish their research in academic journals, students often learn the results before the study is published or presented at national, international, or regional conferences. Indeed, the department was recently ranked 5th nationally in terms of research productivity in academic publications. This orientation promotes a climate of constant and shared learning in the classroom. While research and publication interests vary, all of the faculty members are committed to presenting knowledge of communication research. Importantly, they are also among the highest ranked teachers at this institution in terms of student evaluations, with average student ratings of “excellent.” Additionally, faculty members emphasize the integration of technology in ways that enhance the learning experience. Many faculty teach courses using “smart classrooms” and those who teach online courses have years of experience in the development and implementation of effective teaching in an electronic format. Finally, faculty who teach specialized courses such as public relations have professional experience in the area, offering students a unique opportunity to integrate the research and theory behind the day-to-day practices of major PR firms. Faculty members are dedicated to providing the best possible environment for learning.

Minors and Certificates

The department offers a minor in Communication, a Certificate in Public Relations and supports a number of certificate programs including Disaster and Risk Management and Secondary Education. For more information on these additional certificate programs, see Certificate Programs and Interdisciplinary Studies in the University of Missouri–St. Louis Bulletin: Undergraduate, Graduate and Professional Catalog.

General Education Requirements

Majors must satisfy the university and college general education requirements. The college’s foreign language may be taken in any language, including American Sign Language. Communication courses may not be taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.

After fulfilling the general education and specific major degree requirements, students are to take the remaining 62 hours required to complete the BA degree in communication from courses that the respective department has evaluated as being of university-level quality from one or more of the following areas or their university-quality equivalents at other institutions: anthropology/archeology, art (appreciation, history, studio), biology, chemistry, communication, criminology and criminal justice, economics, English, foreign languages/literature, history, mathematics/computer science, music (appreciation, history, performance), philosophy, physics, political science, psychology, social work, sociology, business, education, engineering and interdisciplinary. Eighteen hours must be taken in residence in the Department of Communication.

Course Offerings

- COMM 1030, Interpersonal Communication I
- COMM 1040, Introduction to Public Speaking
- COMM 1050, Introduction to Mass Communication

COMM 1135, Communication Theory
COMM 1150, Introduction to Public Relations
COMM 1193, Practicum in Applied Communication
COMM 2230, Small Group Communication
COMM 2231, Communication in the Organization
COMM 2232, Effective Communication in the Organization: Tool for Leadership
COMM 2240, Persuasive Communication
COMM 2243, Communication in American Politics
COMM 2250, Strategic Communication
COMM 3130, Advanced Interpersonal Communication
COMM 3150, Crisis, Disaster and Risk Communication
COMM 3330, Research Methods in Communication I
COMM 3331, Research Methods in Communication II
COMM 3332, Intercultural Communication
COMM 3336, Communication in Advertising
COMM 3337, Male/Female Communication
COMM 3342, Modern Rhetoric and Public Address
COMM 3350, Physiological Measurement in Communication
COMM 3352, Mass Media in Society
COMM 3358, Communication in Public Relations I
COMM 3359, Communication in Public Relations II
COMM 3360, Health Communication in Mass Mediated Contexts
COMM 3361, Health Communication in Interpersonal and Organizational Contexts
COMM 3395, Special Topics in Communication
COMM 3400, Language and Behavior
COMM 3410, Nonverbal Communication
COMM 3500, Dysfunctional Communication
COMM 3510, Communication and Conflict
COMM 3520, Communication Problems in Children
COMM 3600, Communication and Families
COMM 3610, Communication and Relationships
COMM 3700, Computer Mediated Communication
COMM 3800, Trends in Mass Communication
COMM 4035, Integrated Approaches to Public Relations, Advertising and Promotion
COMM 4100, Communication Campaigns
COMM 4199, Applied Public Relations
COMM 4390, Directed Readings
COMM 4391, Supervised Research
COMM 4393, Internship in Applied Communication

Degree Requirements

Bachelor of Arts in Communication

Majors must complete a minimum of 36 credit hours in communication courses, at least 18 of which must be completed at University of Missouri–St. Louis. At least 12 credit hours of communication courses numbered 3000 and above. Students must earn a C or better in all communication courses applied to the degree and complete the following courses:

- COMM 1030, Interpersonal Communication
- COMM 1050, Introduction to Mass Communication
- COMM 2231, Communication in the Organization
- COMM 3330, Research Methods in Communication I
- COMM 3332, Intercultural Communication

In addition to these courses, students must complete a 3-credit hour practicum (COMM 1193) or internship (COMM 4393).

Minor in Communication

Students with majors other than communication may earn a minor in communication by completing the 15-hour core requirements for the major. Credit hours in special topics such as Comm 3395 may be substituted with the consent of the department chairperson. At least 9 of the 15 hours must be taken at UMSL and students must earn a C or better in all communication courses applied to the minor. A minimum GPA of 2.5 is required for the minor.

Certificate in Public Relations

The Certificate in Public Relations integrates essential professional skills with contemporary communication theory and research to provide a grounded sequence of courses based on the recommendations of the Public Relations Society of America and the National Communication Association.

To earn a certificate, students must complete the required courses:

- COMM 1150, Introduction to Public Relations
- COMM 3358, Communication in Public Relations
- COMM 3360, Health Communication in Mass Media Contexts OR
- COMM 3150, Crisis, Disaster and Risk
- COMM 4035, Integrated Approaches to Public Relations, Advertising and Promotion
- COMM 4100, Communication Campaigns
- COMM 4199, Applied Public Relations OR COMM 4393, Internship in Applied Communication

In addition to these courses, students earning a certificate must complete at least 6 credit hours of electives, selected from the following courses: COMM 1050, COMM 1135, COMM 2231, COMM 2232, COMM 2240, COMM 3330 and COMM 3395.