COMMUNICATION STUDIES, BA

Courses in this discipline offer the knowledge and skills that are essential to becoming a leader in a complex world. Students learn to analyze, evaluate, and critique human communication practices in a variety of contexts. They also develop the intellectual resources needed to articulate their own ideas and to communicate them effectively with others.

Co-Curricular Student Activities

The department supports a diversified program of co-curricular student activities in competitive speaking and individual events, argument, and debate and in peer consulting through the Speaking Studio. Members of the Alabama Forensic Council participate in regional and national intercollegiate competitions. Students in the Alabama Debate Society participate in high school debate outreach as well as exhibitions. Students in the Public Speaking Program may compete for the Oscar Newton Outstanding Speaker Prize, as well as for the coveted Holle Award for Excellence in Public Speaking. Majors who meet the requirements for membership in Lambda Pi Eta are invited to join the honor society and to participate in its service activities.

Accelerated Masters Program (AMP) in Communication Studies

Open to eligible communication studies majors, students admitted into this program are able to earn both the BA and MA in communication studies at The University of Alabama in five years. For the highly motivated and academically gifted student, this program offers several distinct advantages:

- Faster, more economical plan of study than earning the two degrees separately
- Richer undergraduate degree experience, fewer unrelated core courses, and more courses in the communication studies major
- Stronger mentoring relationship with the communication studies faculty
- Greater opportunity to develop understanding of the field in preparation for advanced graduate study

Students may apply for admission into this program, after completing 91 semester hours with a 3.3 GPA or better, through the Graduate School admission process. Admission to the Graduate School will be granted if the student has (a) met all the admission criteria for the graduate program, (b) completed three-fourths of the hours required for the major and the minor, and (c) been recommended for admission by the department. Upon admission to the Graduate School, the student will be allowed to take graduate-level courses and begin a program of study leading to the Master of Arts in communication studies. Once enrolled in AMP, communication studies students may count up to 10 hours of credit dually (toward both degrees).

Core Curriculum and General Education Requirements

A total of 120 hours is required for graduation, 33 hours of which must be in upper-division courses (at the 300- or 400-level). The College requires that 12 of these upper-division hours be outside of the major (COM). This College requirement may be met with upper-division courses in the minor.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code and Title</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Freshman Composition (FC)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>EN 101 English Composition (or by exam or equivalent)</td>
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<td>EN 102 English Composition (or by exam or equivalent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM 100 Rhetoric And Society</td>
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<td>COM 122 Critical Decision Making</td>
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<td>or COM 122 Crit Decisn Making Honors</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM 123 Public Speaking</td>
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<td>or COM 123 Honors Public Speaking</td>
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<td>COM 210 Oral Interpretn Literatr</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM 101 Principles Human Communication</td>
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<td>COM 220 Interpersonal Communication</td>
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<td><strong>Pre-major Requirements</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>COM 101 Principles Human Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Language (FL) or Computer Science (CS)</td>
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<td><strong>W-designated Courses in the Major</strong></td>
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<td>Select a minimum of six hours of the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM 300 Human Communication Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM 310 Rhetorical Criticism</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM 342 Rhetoric Social Protest</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM 380 Influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM 413 Communication &amp; Diversity</td>
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<td>COM 415 African American Rhetoric</td>
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<td>COM 450 Adv Organization Communication</td>
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<td>COM 463 Relational Communication</td>
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<td>Credit Hours Subtotal:</td>
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Total Hours 56-58
Communication Studies Major

Overall, a total of 33 hours are required in upper-division courses (at the 300-400 level), including a minimum of 21 hours in the major (COM) and 12 hours outside the major, which may be fulfilled by courses in the minor. No more than 45 hours in Communication Studies (COM) may be counted toward the total number of hours required for graduation (120).

To major in Communication Studies, a minimum of 36 hours of courses in Communication Studies is required. The program of instruction should be planned in consultation with a faculty advisor and must include COM 499 Capstone Seminar, for a total of 21 hours in requirements and a minimum of 15 hours in elective COM courses:

**Footnotes**
1. These courses are cross-listed as meeting core requirements as well as the major.
2. Select a minimum of six hours of Writing courses (W), at least three hours of which must be in the major (COM) as COM 300 Human Communication Research or COM 310 Rhetorical Criticism.

### Code and Title

**Theoretical Foundations (3 hours)**
- Select at least one of the following:
  - COM 100 Rhetoric and Society
  - COM 101 Principles Human Communication

**Oral Performance Skills (6 hours)**
- Select at least one of the following Oral Performance courses:
  - COM 104 Forensics (this course may be repeated for up to 6 hours credit)
  - COM 121 Crit Decisn Making Honors
  - COM 122 Critical Decision Making
  - COM 123 Public Speaking
  - COM 124 Honors Public Speaking

May also select an Advanced Oral Performance course from the following:
- COM 210 Oral Interpretation
- COM 323 Advanced Public Speaking
- COM 348 Argumentation

**Methods and Analysis W Course (3 hours)**
- Select at least one of the following W courses, after completion of designated prerequisite:
  - COM 300 Human Communication Research
  - COM 310 Rhetorical Criticism

**Writing Skills in Communication Studies (3 hours)**
- Select an additional W-designated COM course to complete Gen Ed requirement:
  - COM 342 Rhetoric Social Protest
  - COM 380 Influence
  - COM 413 Communication & Diversity
  - COM 415 African American Rhetoric
  - COM 450 Adv Organization Communication
  - COM 463 Relational Communication

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<td>COM 348</td>
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<td>COM 425</td>
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<td>COM 467</td>
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<td>COM 480</td>
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**Capstone Experience (3 hours)**
- COM 499 Capstone Seminar

**Total Hours**
18

**Footnotes**
1. NOTE: Although not required, the department strongly recommends that Communication Studies majors take both COM 100 Rhetoric and Society and COM 101 Principles Human Communication.
2. Intended to be taken in the final semester of coursework.
3. May not be taken prior to the completion of a theory foundation/method and analysis course combination, either COM 100/COM 310 or COM 101/COM 300

### Rhetoric and Public Discourse

This emphasis area focuses on argumentation, the effective construction and critical analysis of persuasive public messages, and the role of rhetoric in constructing, sustaining, or changing the political, social, or cultural order. This area also focuses on communication theories and practices evident in public (political, social, cultural) discourse, artifacts, and campaigns. Attention is given to such areas of analysis and practice as public speaking, argumentation and debate, and the role of media in various public contexts. The area is an ideal pre-professional emphasis for students interested in careers in the legal profession, and this emphasis area is one means of helping pre-law students prepare broadly for that career. Recommended minors for students who choose this emphasis area include American Studies, Criminal Justice, English, Gender and Race Studies, History, Journalism and Creative Media, Philosophy, or Political Science.

**Code and Title**

**Hours**
- COM 301 Intro Rhetorical Theory 3
- COM 323 Advanced Public Speaking 3
- COM 342 Rhetoric Social Protest 3
- COM 348 Argumentation 3
- COM 380 Influencce 3
- COM 415 African American Rhetoric 3
- COM 421 Political Communication 3
- COM 422 Communication and the Law 3
- COM 425 Gender & Political Communctn 3
- COM 467 Seminar in Public Address 3
- COM 480 Propaganda 3

### Communication and Culture

This emphasis area explores public communication in a wide variety of contexts and settings. The focus is on the influence of rhetoric and...
visual communication on individuals, communities, and the larger social world. Students interested in careers involving community or social change or human services (e.g., the ministry), or in postgraduate study in communication studies or media studies should consider this emphasis. Recommended minors for students who choose this emphasis area include Anthropology, Advertising, American Studies, Apparel and Textiles, Art History, English/Creative Writing, Gender and Race Studies, International Studies, Journalism and Creative Media, Modern Languages, Public Relations, Religious Studies, or Theatre.

Interpersonal Communication
The focus of this area is on knowledge and skills vital to successful interpersonal communication in personal, family or group, and organizational or professional settings. Emphases include social, cognitive, and cultural influences on personal and professional interaction and such skills as conflict resolution, small group problem solving, effective interviewing, and intercultural communication. It is appropriate for students interested in professional and administrative careers in business, educational or human services, and media organizations. Recommended minors for students who choose this emphasis area include Advertising, Consumer Sciences, Economics, General Business, Human Development and Family Studies, International Studies, Journalism and Creative Media, Management, Psychology, Public Relations, Real Estate, Sociology, Social Welfare or World Business.

Organizational Leadership
This emphasis area focuses on the development of communication skills applicable for leading small groups and organizations and strengthening individual professional communication. These elective courses work to combine the application of communication theory with practical skills for those who aspire for leadership roles in educational, professional, corporate, non-profit, or political careers by providing the opportunity to develop those skills with diverse groups of people and in different contexts.

The mission of the communication studies program is to prepare students to be competent communicators in their personal, civic, and professional roles. Learning outcomes of the program aim to foster their abilities to think critically, to express and to advocate ideas effectively, and to understand and to appreciate the diversity of human communication practices. The major emphasizes the connections between thought, action, and public participation, studying theory and practice in the areas of rhetoric, persuasion, political communication, interpersonal communication, organizational leadership, and culture.

Majoring in communication studies, therefore, prepares students for a variety of professions that value knowledge and skills in human communication. Students who graduate with degrees in communication studies are equipped with both theoretical and practical knowledge of human communication and can enter a new career confident in their ability to communicate ideas with clarity and effectiveness to others, a skill that opens doors in any professional field.

Types of Jobs Accepted
Career opportunities most frequently sought by communication studies majors are in law, education, politics, public relations, management, ministry, sales, training, and development.

Learn more about opportunities in this field at the Career Center

Faculty
Professors
Beth S. Bennett
Margaret U. D'Silva
Robert N. Gaines
Mark D. Nelson

Associate professors
Meredith Bagley
Robin Boylorn
Heather Carmack
Alexa S. Chilcutt
Darrin Griffin
Sara Hartley

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<td>Truth, Ethics, and Deception</td>
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<td>COM 340</td>
<td>Rhetoric &amp; Popular Culture</td>
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<td>Visual Culture &amp; Communication</td>
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<td>COM 462</td>
<td>Theories Of Persuasion</td>
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Mary M. Meares
Joshua R. Pederson

**Assistant professors**
Jennifer Becker
Anneliese Bolland
Adam Sharples Brooks
Sim Butler
Nikita Y. Harris
Peter R. Jensen
Leah LeFebvre
Jessy Ohl
Caroline S. Parsons
Cynthia Peacock
Ben Pyle

**Senior Instructor**
Angela Billings

**Instructor**
Cory Paul Harrison

**Chair**
Margaret U. D’Silva

**Professor emeritus**
Thomas Harris

**Associate professor emeritus**
Frank M. Thompson, Jr.

**Adjunct assistant professors**
Jane S. Baker
Brandon Chicotsky
Dan Mangis