

Communication

Purpose and Philosophy

The Department of Communication offers a Master of Arts degree in communication.

Recognizing the increasingly vital role of communication in modern society, the department is committed to a diverse but integrated study of communication, preparing graduates for human interaction by improving people skills and task productivity. It also prepares students for further graduate work, personal growth and various career opportunities. Students going from this program into doctoral work have a 97 percent acceptance rate into their first choice of Ph.D. programs. Career opportunities include leadership roles in ministry, administration, sales, corporate communication, consulting and training, intercultural relations and human resource development/training.

The department is housed in the Sherrod Building of the Don H. Morris Center, which contains excellent classroom and research facilities. State-of-the-art technology is utilized in classroom instruction. The faculty is nationally recognized for its research, books, articles, papers, teaching, consulting and coaching.

Admission Requirements

To be considered for admission, the following must be submitted:

1. A completed Application for Admission to the ACU Graduate School and non-refundable application fee.
2. An officially reported Graduate Record Examination (GRE) within the upper 50th percentile.
3. An official transcript(s) of all previous college work (official means an original with the seal which comes directly from the issuing institution to ACU).

The transcript must indicate a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

Admissions are made on the assumptions that applicants will have the bachelor's degree by the time of matriculation, and if not, the Graduate School admission is void.

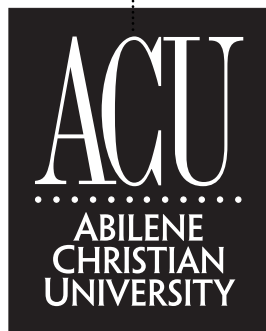
4. Two (2) letters of recommendation.
5. An essay describing your purpose for pursuing graduate education.
6. For students whose first language is not English, an officially reported Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of at least 550.

Departmental Requirements

The communication degree requires a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution. Applicants normally must have completed at least 18 hours in communication including 3 hours in communication theory. Consideration is given to hours earned in related areas such as management and sociology.

Scholarships, Graduate Assistantships and Financial Aid

Graduate assistantships and scholarships are available to highly-qualified students. Assistantships typically include compensation for part-time work and a partial tuition remission. Applications for assistantships and scholarships are available from the Graduate School and should be submitted by March 1. Assistantship awards will be made beginning May 1.



Financial assistance is available to students through scholarships, assistantships, loans, and part-time employment. For further information on financial aid, contact:

Student Financial Services
ACU Box 28228
Abilene, Texas 79699-8228
800-888-0228 or 325-674-2643

Communication

36-HOUR THESIS OR 36-HOUR NON-THESIS PROGRAM

The M.A. in human communication has two options: a 36-hour option including a 6-hour academic thesis or a 36-hour non-thesis option. Both options include 6 hours of research tools. An oral defense of the thesis/thesis project and related course work is required with the thesis option while the non-thesis option requires an oral comprehensive examination. Students may retake the applicable exam only once if they fail on the first attempt.

• Core courses

COMS 636 Seminar in Communication Theory
COMS 620 Communication Research Methods
COMS 687 Principles of Rhetorical Criticism

• Emphasis areas (27 hours including thesis, 33 hours for non-thesis)

COMS 642 Seminar in Communication (varied topics).
Consult with an advisor for other electives.

Recommended courses for organizational communication:

COMS 508 Corporate and Legal Advocacy
COMS 510 Non-Profit Fund Raising
COMS 521 Leadership and Communication
COMS 530 Conflict Management
COMS 583 Communication in
Multi-National Organizations
COMS 585 Organizational Communication
COMS 586 Human Resource Training
and Development
COMS 607 Conflict in the Workplace
COMS 642 Seminar in Communication: Interviewing
COMS 685 Seminar in Organizational
Communication Research
COMS 686 Communication Consulting and Assessment

Recommended courses for interpersonal-intercultural communication:

COMS 530 Conflict Management
COMS 536 Nonverbal Communication
COMS 545 Intercultural Communication
COMS 550 Gender Communication
COMS 576 Family Communication
COMS 583 Communication in
Multi-National Organizations

COMS 630 Advanced Conflict Management
COMS 641 Theories of Interpersonal Communication
COMS 675 Seminar: Persuasion and Social Change
COMS 683 Cultural Case Studies

Recommended courses for persuasion and public advocacy:

COMS 508 Corporate and Legal Advocacy
COMS 515 Political Communication
COMS 521 Leadership and Communication
COMS 575 Persuasion and Attitude Change
COMS 591 Rhetorical Theory
COMS 675 Seminar: Persuasion and Social Change

Recommended courses for conflict mediation (15-hour graduate certificate)

Certificate core, 9 hours
COMS 630 Advanced Conflict Management
PSYC 605 Negotiation: Principles and Practices
PSYC 606 Mediation: Principles and Practices
Certificate electives, 6 hours
BIBM 645 Managing Conflict in Churches
EDUC 640 Special Topics: Managing Conflict in Schools
COMS 607 Conflict in the Workplace
COMS 600 Guided Study: Conflict Practicum

• Comprehensive examination or thesis defense

Faculty

Joseph James Cardot III, Ed.D., professor, chair; B.A., Harding University, 1976; M.A., Western Kentucky University, 1980; Ed.D., Texas Tech University, 1990. Specialties: persuasion, organizational communication, nonverbal communication. Cardot continues to develop communication assessment techniques as well as plan a Center for Mediation.

Carley H. Dodd, Ph.D., professor; B.A., Abilene Christian University, 1970; M.A., ACU, 1971; Ph.D., University of Oklahoma, 1974. Specialties: intercultural communication, youth and family, interpersonal communication. Dodd is engaged in an ongoing series of research studies on adolescent and family relations in communication.

Paul N. Lakey, Ph.D., professor, scholar-in-residence; B.A., Oklahoma Christian University, 1970; M.A., Abilene Christian University, 1980; M.A., ACU, 1985; Ph.D., University of Oklahoma, 1988. Specialties: organizational communication, intercultural communication, leadership, consulting, training. Lakey is examining European cross cultural leadership and religious conflict.

Cynthia S. Roper, Ph.D., assistant professor, director of the basic course; B.S., Oklahoma Christian University, 1975; M.A., Abilene Christian University, 1986; Ph.D., University of Oklahoma, 1996. Specialties: political communication, intercultural communication, interpersonal communication, communication theory. Roper is investigating and comparing the content and effects of televised political advertising in the United States and Italy.

Lynette Sharp Penya, Ph.D., assistant professor; B.A., Abilene Christian University, 1991; M.A., University of Illinois, 1993; Ph.D., University of Kansas, 1996. Specialties: legal communication and persuasion

John Tyson, Ph.D., assistant professor, vice president for development; B.A., Abilene Christian University, 1981; M.A., ACU, 1982; Ph.D., University of Texas, 1990. Specialties: rhetoric, fund raising. Tyson directs fund raising for the university and teaches the basic communication course.

Dwayne VanRheenen, Ph.D., professor, provost; B.A., Harding University, 1966; M.A., University of Missouri, 1967; Ph.D., University of Missouri, 1975. Specialties: organizational communication, decision-making in groups. VanRheenen is the chief academic officer of ACU.

Courses of Instruction

- COMS 508 Corporate and Legal Advocacy** (3-0-3). The theory and practice of communication strategies in corporate and legal advocacy processes.
- COMS 510 Non-profit Fundraising** (3-0-3). The study of revenue sources for non-profit institutions, constituencies, proposals, and methodologies for fund raising.
- COMS 515 Political Communication** (3-0-3), on demand. Develops knowledge of theory, practice, analysis and research that will help students become better consumers of political messages as well as prepare students who intend to work in politics. Graduate students will design and conduct research on the current campaign and analyze the results. Focus is on rhetorical construction rather than the political process. Prerequisite: advanced standing.
- COMS 521 Leadership and Communication** (3-0-3), spring. The study of leadership emerging from communication skills, personal traits, group and historical situations. Special focus on small group and organizational leadership.
- COMS 530 Conflict Management** (3-0-3). Develops conflict management knowledge and skill competencies through an interaction of theory, practice, and analysis. Among the instructional methods to be used are lectures, case studies, small groups, and conflict instruments.
- COMS 536 Non-verbal Communication** (3-0-3). Theory and practice of non-verbal communication in relation to behaviors in numerous contexts and human interactions.
- COMS 543 Business and Professional Communication** (3-0-3), fall, spring, summer. A course designed to apply communication theory to the solving of business or professional interpersonal problems. Stresses systems theory adapted to organizational structure, interviewing and conference techniques, as well as public speaking in professional settings. Prerequisite: COMS 111.
- COMS 545 Intercultural Communication** (3-0-3). Stresses understanding of cultures and ways of communicating with individuals and groups from cultures around the world as well as diverse cultures within the United States.
- COMS 550 Gender Communication** (3-0-3), spring. Explores the role of gender in communication processes. Communication differences between men and women in contexts of family, school and work organizations; the influence of media in gender stereotypes. Graduate students will design and conduct research to examine various questions/hypotheses. Prerequisite: advanced standing.
- COMS 575 Persuasion** (3-0-3), fall. Includes theories and principles of communication useful in a number of contexts where individual or group change is important.
- COMS 576 Family Communication** (3-0-3). An in-depth analysis of communication theory and research applied to the family.
- COMS 583 Communication in Multi-National Organizations** (3-0-3). Designed to introduce students to intercultural communication theories applied to information needs and human resource management in multi-national organizations.
- COMS 585 Organizational Communication** (3-0-3). The theory and function of communication within business, government, hospitals, schools, industrial firms and other organizations, with emphasis on concepts and principles for effective management.
- COMS 586 Human Resource Training and Development** (3-0-3), fall, spring. The theory and skills involved in doing human resource training in organizations. Provides knowledge, skills and experience in developing, presenting and evaluating training programs. (Same as HRM 486.)
- COMS 591 Rhetorical Theory** (3-0-3), spring, odd years. Speakers and speeches of the ancient world, with historical background. Emphasis on rhetorical theories developed in Greek and Roman public address, as well as recent approaches to rhetorical situations. Will substitute for ENGL 329/529.
- COMS 607 Conflict in the Workplace** (3-0-3), fall, summer. Designed to prepare professionals for conflict mediation. Provides opportunities to develop skills in identifying the signs and root causes of friction, anger, violence and conflict in the work environment. Analysis of case studies provides the framework for understanding organizational alternative dispute resolution systems. Prerequisite: COMS 630. Same as PSYC 607.
- COMS 620 Communication Research Methods** (3-0-3). Emphasis on the scientific method, survey research, laboratory research, sampling procedures, questionnaire construction, and interviewing techniques. (Same as JMC 620.)
- COMS 630 Advanced Conflict Management** (3-0-3), spring. Designed to prepare professionals for the field of conflict mediation. Provides advanced opportunities to analyze case studies, critique basic assumptions of conflict theories and role-play appropriate behavior in conflict scenarios. Prerequisite: COMS 330/530.
- COMS 636 Seminar in Communication Theory** (3-0-3). An introduction to the major concepts of communication theory and research in the areas of verbal and nonverbal interaction, meaning, information, persuasion, interpersonal, group and organizational communication.
- COMS 641 Theories of Interpersonal Communication** (3-0-3). Explores theory and variables from the body of scientific literature dealing with interpersonal communication.
- COMS 642 Seminar in Communication** (3-0-3). In-depth study of various problems and concepts in communication. Course may be repeated with different content for a total of nine hours. Topics have included: Interviewing, Small Group Communication and Organizational Leadership.
- COMS 675 Seminar: Persuasion and Social Change** (3-0-3). Study of processes, theories and strategies by which group, organizational and cultural persuasion occurs by emphasizing diffusion of innovation strategies.
- COMS 683 Cultural Case Studies** (3-0-3). Analysis of several intercultural encounters between U.S. citizens and foreign residents in the latter's cultural setting. Application of principles of cross-cultural involvement.
- COMS 685 Seminar in Organizational Communication Research** (3-0-3). An extensive look at current research that seeks to explain, interpret and analyze communication within public and private organizations.
- COMS 686 Communication Consulting and Assessment** (3-0-3). A study of methods used in assessing communication behavior in organizations, preparing intervention techniques, and evaluating communication effectiveness.
- COMS 687 Principles of Rhetorical Criticism** (3-0-3). A study of the development of perspectives and standards for critical evaluation of rhetorical events. Critical evaluation of symbolic behavior in single rhetorical events and campaigns combining several symbolic events.
- COMS 698 Research Project Thesis Equivalent** (0-0-6). To be presented with departmental approval, in lieu of the traditional thesis. May consist of 3 or 6 hours credit.
- COMS 699 Thesis for the Master's Degree** (0-0-6).
- PSYC 605 Negotiation: Principles and Practice** (3-0-3), fall. Comprehensive study of the conceptual and interpersonal skills required to engage in effective negotiation. Topics include analyzing the negotiation context, preparing a negotiation plan, conducting negotiation sessions, resolving impasses, and documenting agreements. Emphasis on development and analytical and interpersonal negotiation skills.
- PSYC 606 Mediation: Principle and Practice** (3-0-3), spring. Comprehensive study of the conceptual and interpersonal skills required to serve as a mediator. Topics include analyzing background information, preparing a mediation plan, conducting mediation sessions and caucuses, resolving impasses, and documenting agreements. Emphasis on strategic approach to assisting parties by creating opportunity for agreement.
- BIBM 645 Managing Conflict in Churches** (3-0-3), spring. The course will offer an examination of the causes, arenas, and dynamics of conflict in churches with an introduction to five major approaches to interviewing in conflicted situations. A variety of instructional methods, including lectures, case studies, role plays, media, expert resource persons, and personal style instruments will be employed.

For More Information

Materials for application to the Master of Arts programs in communication may be obtained from:

Jennifer Walker
Graduate Admissions
200 Zellner Hall
ACU Box 29000
Abilene, Texas 79699-9000
800-395-4723 or 325-674-2650
Fax: 325-674-2130
Email: gradinfo@acu.edu
Web: www.acu.edu/grad

Advisor for graduate communication:

Dr. Paul Lakey
Abilene Christian University
ACU Box 28156
Abilene, Texas 79699-8156
325-674-2292
Fax: 325-676-6966
Email: lakeyp@acu.edu