

# Department of Communication

## Speech Communication Graduate Handbook

# 2008-2009

Miami University  
Oxford, Ohio

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION—OVERVIEW

The Department of Communication is housed within the College of Arts and Science at Miami University. The department consists of two academic areas at the graduate level (Mass Communication and Speech Communication) and three academic areas at the undergrad level (Mass Communication, Speech Communication, and Strategic Communication). Combined, the department has approximately 20 faculty members and includes 600 undergraduate majors and 25 graduate students.

### Departmental Administrative Structure

#### **Department of Communication** - 162 Bachelor Hall

Chair:	Gary Shulman	
Administrative Assistant:	Sara Christman	529-7472

#### **Speech Communication** - 160 Bachelor Hall

Area Chair:	Larry Nadler	529-7176
Senior Administrative Secretary:	Janet Lowitz	529-7171
Basic Course Director:	Marjorie Keeshan Nadler	529-7175
Forensics Director:	Todd Holm	529-2278
PRSSA Advisor:	Bill Brewer	529-3548
Graduate Director	Lisa McLaughlin	529-3547

#### **Mass Communication** - 140 Williams

Area Chair:	David Sholle	529-3546
Senior Administrative Secretary	Kim Hensley	529-3521
Graduate Director	Lisa McLaughlin	529-3547

## MASTER OF ARTS IN SPEECH COMMUNICATION

### **Program Overview**

Speech Communication is the study of how our sense of social and individual reality is created through human communication processes. The study of speech communication is informed by a number of broad perspectives including social scientific and humanistic theory and methodology. These perspectives are applied to communication processes in numerous contexts, including interpersonal relationships, groups, organizations, and public settings.

Graduate study in Speech Communication at Miami University focuses on preparation for 1) doctoral studies in communication or related fields, 2) teaching at the secondary, college, or university level, and 3) other careers requiring a broad understanding of communication research, theory, and practice such as consulting, training, management, and public relations. The graduate classes are designed to provide students with the possibility of in-depth study in major areas of the field as well as grounding in both the social scientific and humanistic approaches to theory and methodology.

The M.A. in Speech Communication is a two-year program consisting of core courses, emphasis courses, and additional (elective) courses. Students must complete a minimum of eleven courses. See pages 12-14 of this handbook or the Graduate Bulletin for course descriptions. Further, all students are required to complete either a thesis or non-thesis project. At the conclusion of the thesis or project, students are required to pass an oral examination which addresses the thesis or project in such a way as to integrate their course work into the examination.

**Core Courses** – (12 semester hours) These four classes are required.

- COM 615 Historical and Critical Methods of Research in Public Address (3)
- COM 616 Empirical Methods of Research in Communication (3)
- COM 635 Seminar in Communication Theory (3)
- COM 637 Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric (3)

**Emphasis Courses** – (12 semester hours) Take a minimum of four classes from the following list:

- COM 541 Rhetoric of Religion (3)
- COM 619 Organizational Communication Theory and Research (3)
- COM 632 Advocacy in Contemporary America (3)
- COM 633 Persuasion Communication Theory and Research (3)
- COM 634 Interpersonal Communication Theory and Research (3)
- COM 636 Rhetorical Seminar (3)
- COM 638 Small Group Communication Theory and Research (3)
- COM 639 Organizational Communication Diagnosis and Intervention (3)

- COM 650.S Special Topics in Communication\* (3)  
 COM 659 Public Relations Theory and Research (3)

*\*Special topics courses that capitalize on faculty expertise are offered periodically.*

**Additional Courses** – (9 semester hours) Take three additional graduate courses, at least one of which must be in Communication. The remainder of these elective courses may be in other departments/programs. No more than *two* of the three elected courses may be Independent Studies. Communication electives may be chosen from the above list of courses provided that the course has not already been used to fulfill the *Emphasis* requirement. One or more of the following courses may be taken in order to fulfill the elective requirement:

- COM 643 Mass Communication Theory (3)  
 COM 650.M Special Topics in Communication  
 COM 653 Seminar: Issues in Media Management and Economics (3)  
 COM 655 Seminar in Mass Media Law (3)  
 COM 656 Seminar in International and Comparative Mass Communication (3)  
 COM 657 Seminar in Media Criticism (3)  
 COM 681 Mediated Sexualities: GLBT Persons & and the Media (3)  
 COM 682 Feminist Media Theory and Practice (3)

**Diversity Emphasis** – Students who are particularly interested in diversity issues may want to take one or more of the following classes:

- COM 541 Rhetoric of Religion (3)  
 COM 656 Seminar in International & Comparative Mass Communication (3)  
 COM 681 Mediated Sexualities: GLBT Persons & and the Media (3)  
 COM 682 Feminist Media Theory and Practice (3)

**Thesis or non-thesis project** (6 hours minimum)

## **Enrollment Requirements**

Students with an assistantship must enroll in at least 10 credit hours per semester. All Speech Communication graduate students must enroll in at least one Speech Communication class per semester. Students may take as many courses as they like within the confines of registration requirements while on assistantship.

## **Selecting an Advisor**

Upon entering the Speech Communication masters program, you will be assigned a temporary advisor. Students are strongly encouraged to make an appointment with their temporary advisor or the graduate director during their first semester to discuss a plan of study. During the second semester of study, students should select a thesis or

non-thesis advisor who will serve as the chair of their committee and serve as their advisor.

When selecting a chair for one's thesis or non-thesis committee, students should first identify their topic of interest and then identify faculty members with expertise and interest in that area (see faculty biographies at [www.muohio.edu/communication](http://www.muohio.edu/communication)). Students are expected to approach faculty with a thesis/non-thesis topic in mind, present their topic in writing (about one page), and ask if the faculty member would be willing to serve as the chair. Students should work with their chair to develop a thesis/non-thesis proposal and in identifying faculty to serve on the committee. See the timeline on page 10 for guidance on when to begin work on your thesis/non-thesis.

### **Thesis/Non-Thesis Projects**

All students must complete either a thesis or non-thesis project for successful completion of their M.A. degree. Students will choose which to do in consultation with their committee chair and should follow the timeline on page 10. For both, the student will select a committee of at least three eligible faculty members and with one designated as chair. The committee members must meet the guidelines for Master's examining committees and the levels and criteria for graduate faculty standing as outlined in the *Miami Bulletin, Handbook for Graduate Students and Faculty*.

Each student must have a prospectus meeting in order to obtain approval for the thesis or non-thesis project. This proposal must describe the nature of the project and the plan for its completion, and must demonstrate clear connections to the student's course work. The thesis or non-thesis project will involve written components that exhibit the citation and use of research literature in addition to any other components. In each case there will be a final oral examination which addresses the thesis or project and integrates the entire field of study of the student's course work into discussion of the thesis or project. To be eligible for the examination, the student cannot have any incomplete grades. A minimum of six thesis/project hours are required while completing the thesis/non-thesis project.

A thesis differs from a non-thesis project only in structure and form, and not in quality or rigor. In a thesis the student will implement a methodology to further understanding in a particular area. A thesis typically involves original research. A non-thesis project may take one of several forms and does not necessarily implement methodologies common to thesis projects.

### **Thesis**

Typically a thesis project consists of four or five chapters (e.g., literature review, method, results, and discussion). If you choose to do a thesis, you will need to choose a topic, a method to investigate that topic, and collect/analyze materials/data. You should work with your advisor on narrowing your topic and designing your project. All theses are available at King Library for review. Your thesis advisor can recommend specific theses that would serve as good examples.

A thesis must be directed by a Level A graduate faculty member of the Department of Communication who will serve as the chair of the student's committee (see faculty list on page 11).

### **Non-Thesis Project**

A non-thesis project may take one of several forms. Requirements that are common to all non-thesis projects are that they involve a review of literature and the use of analysis and application skills. Examples of non-thesis projects are shown below.

A non-thesis project must be directed by a Level A or Level B graduate faculty member of the Department of Communication who will serve as the chair of the student's committee. The committee must contain at least one Level A graduate faculty member.

#### *Examples of Non-Thesis Projects*

Manual - A student might assemble and integrate a large amount of information on opinion research and write a user-friendly manual for non-experts in non-profit organizations who wish to conduct opinion research.

Performance - Examples of performance included a one man show that a student dramatized various poetry selections on a stage with a live audience. The show was scripted, practiced, performed, and open for audience questions at the end. Examples such as this one are designed to provide more creative avenues for demonstrating mastery of relevant speech communication pedagogy.

Computer-Aided Instruction Program - A student might survey relevant literature and write a computer program that diagnosed students' knowledge of basic communication concepts.

Training Module - A student might review the relevant literature and design and implement a workshop on stress management.

### **Pre-Thesis/Non-Thesis Presentations**

In the fall of their second year, students will present their thesis or non-thesis topics to the faculty and graduate students. This will provide graduate students with the opportunity to gain additional feedback on their topics.

### **Changes to Plan of Study**

If a student wishes to create a program of study different from the standard program (11 classes, 9 of which must be in Communication), he or she must submit an appeal to the Graduate Director outlining the program and the reasoning behind it. Such an appeal must be submitted before the semester that any course work relevant to the appeal is taken. Appeals must be submitted by August 1, for coursework taking place in fall semester; November 1, for coursework taking place in spring semester; and April 1 for coursework taking place during the summer terms.

The criteria used by the speech communication graduate faculty to evaluate petitions include: a) is it in the best interest of the student; b) does it further the program's mission of providing a well-rounded education; c) is their sufficient faculty interest; and d) is it in the best interest of the program and department. Additionally the student's academic and personal record will be reviewed and considered in relation to the above criteria.

### **Research Opportunities**

Students are encouraged to become involved with faculty research projects. Involvement in research enhances classroom learning, creating a higher quality educational experience. Involvement may be in the form of voluntarily helping a faculty member with specific tasks or working on the research as an independent study. Students should set the goal of working on at least one project that will lead to a paper presentation at a national or regional convention. Students should also plan to become members of at least one communication organization such as the National Communication Association. See page 9 for a list of professional organizations and web sites. A student should consult his/her advisor or the graduate director on initiating such involvement.

### **Time Commitment**

Students with an assistantship are expected to devote an average of 20 hours per week to teaching and related responsibilities. Approximately four hours per credit hour per week should be devoted to graduate courses. As stated in the Graduate Handbook, students on assistantships can hold no other employment.

### **Assistantship Responsibilities**

Students with an assistantship may teach one to two sections of COM 135 - Public Expression and Critical Inquiry per semester. Assistantship duties may also be assigned with the forensic team, the Public Relations Student Society of America, Research, or to other departmental classes and/or projects. Each semester, assistants (regardless of the responsibilities) will be reviewed by members of the faculty. If students are not fulfilling the requirements of their assistantship, the department may choose to withdraw or reassign the assistantship.

Prior to their first semester of teaching, all teaching assistants must enroll in COM 698 - Introduction to Communication which is a one week workshop held the week before classes begin in August. Each semester teaching assistants must enroll in COM 697 - Teaching Essentials of Speech Communication that provides ongoing training and support in teaching COM 135.

Students with an assistantship are employees of the university and are expected to meet their responsibilities with the same level of professionalism that is expected of all university employees.

Students with assistantships who enroll in summer classes are eligible to receive a summer scholarship.

## Teaching Resources

The three primary speech communication classrooms have permanent cameras for recording student speeches, computer projection systems, with DVD and VHS players. The Havighurst Room in Bachelor Hall, which is a state of the art computer classroom, is also available.

## Important Resources

There are several resources that all graduate students need to be familiar with and have available to them.

APA Manual - The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.) is the standard used in most communication journals. This can be purchased at any university bookstore. APA style is standard for all writing within the communication discipline and is expected for all written assignments within the Speech Communication program.

Thesis Guide - All graduate students should have a copy of the *Guide for Preparing Theses and Dissertations* prepared by the Graduate School at Miami University. The guidelines are available at [www.muohio.edu/graduate](http://www.muohio.edu/graduate). You may also acquire assistance by calling the Graduate School at 529-3734.

Human Subjects - All students conducting research with human subjects must complete the training course offered by the Office for the Advancement of Research and Scholarship and follow all federal, university, and departmental guidelines for conducting research. Information on guidelines is available at [www.muohio.edu/oars](http://www.muohio.edu/oars) or you can contact the Office for the Advancement of Research and Scholarship at 529-3734.

Travel/Research Funds - Students can apply for Graduate Enrichment Funds to support travel to professional meetings for presentation of single or co-authored papers or to support costly research. Requests are due in September, November, and March. For specific due dates and forms, check with Sara Christman in 162 Bachelor Hall. Additional funds can be obtained from the Graduate School and from the Graduate Student Association.

Student Associations - The Graduate Student Association (GSA) includes all full- and part-time graduate students. GSA promotes social and academic activities that enhance graduate life and insures representation of graduate students on all university committees. For more information contact the Graduate School at 529-3734. The Graduate Student of Color Association is designed to support minority graduate students during their stay at Miami by sponsoring culturally rich activities: academic, social and professional events. For more information contact the Graduate School at 529-3734.

## **Communication Organizations**

Membership in one or more of the communication organizations has several benefits and serves as an entree into the discipline. The Graduate Director or your advisor can assist you in acquiring membership materials for one or more of the following organizations.

- Central States Communication Association [www.csca-net.org](http://www.csca-net.org)
- Eastern Communication Association [www.ecasite.org](http://www.ecasite.org)
- International Communication Association [www.icaheadq.org](http://www.icaheadq.org)
- National Communication Association [www.natcom.org](http://www.natcom.org)
- Rhetorical Society of America <http://rhetoricsociety.org/>
- Southern States Communication Association [www.scca.net/](http://www.scca.net/)
- Western States Communication Association [www.westcomm.org](http://www.westcomm.org)

## TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE MA IN SPEECH COMMUNICATION

This outline is primarily for students with assistantships, although students without assistantships should follow the same general structure. Keep in mind that students must complete a minimum of 11 courses.

### **First Year**

#### **Fall**

- take 3 classes
- take Com 697 (for those teaching COM 135)

#### **Spring**

- take 3 classes
- become involved in faculty research either by volunteering one's time or doing an independent study
- March 1 — choose a general topic of interest for either a thesis or non-thesis project.
- April 1 — choose a faculty member to serve as advisor; in collaboration with the advisor, choose two other faculty members to be on the committee.

#### **Summer**

- take 1-2 classes (one Speech Com, if available, and either an independent study or a class outside of Speech Com)
- take 6-9 thesis/research hours (Com 700.S for thesis, Com 711.S for non-thesis)
- develop a draft of the prospectus

### **Second Year**

#### **Fall**

- take 2-3 classes
- take 0-6 thesis/research hours
- Sept. 1 — meet with your advisor to review progress toward thesis/non-thesis project (what was accomplished during the summer)
- Oct. 1 — have prospectus meeting
- meet with your advisor on a bi-weekly or monthly basis to review progress.

#### **Spring**

- take 1-2 classes
- take 3-6 thesis/research hours
- meet with advisor on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to review progress.
- April 1 — defend thesis
- May 1 — have all final revisions completed and final copy of thesis submitted to Graduate School (non-thesis projects do not go to the library)

<b>SPEECH COMMUNICATION FACULTY</b>
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<b>SPEECH COMMUNICATION COURSES</b>
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**615 Historical and Critical Methods of Research in Public Address** (3) Examination of critical methodologies for evaluating rhetorical artifacts. Methods for evaluating textual accuracy, effectiveness, social significance, reasoning, and style. Practice in rhetorical criticism.

**616 Empirical Methods of Research in Communication** (3) Examination of contemporary research designs in communication with emphasis on the social scientific process of hypothesis derivation and testing.

**619 Organizational Communication Theory and Research** (3) Survey of theoretical and empirical literature dealing with human communication behavior in complex organizations. Emphasis is placed on development of a conceptual framework for analyzing message systems.

**632 Advocacy in Contemporary America** (3) Examination of the role of communication in contemporary persuasion using qualitative perspectives. Topics may include social, political, and religious case studies.

**633 Persuasion Theory and Research** (3) Analysis of persuasion process through examination of relevant theory and empirical research. Devotes attention to experimental speech communication research in persuasion and culminates in a critical appraisal of current research trends.

**634 Interpersonal Communication Theory and Research** (3) In-depth, analytical examination of theories and research regarding interpersonal communication. Emphasizes the role of interpersonal communication in negotiating relational definitions throughout the life cycle of dyadic relationships.

**635 Seminar in Communication Theory** (3) Examination of theories developed in Speech Communication after 1970 and of theories from other disciplines which influenced speech communication theories. Historical development of the field of speech communication is reviewed. Primary sources are reviewed.

**636 Rhetorical Seminar: (Rotating Topics)** (3; may be repeated) Provides advanced, in-depth study of topics within rhetorical theory and criticism. Topics will vary. Prior coursework in rhetoric recommended.

**637 Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric** (3) Survey of forces and ideas shaping rhetorical theory after 1965. May include scholarship of Burke, Foucault, Habermas, and Grassi.

**615 Historical and Critical Methods of Research in Public Address** (3) Examination of critical methodologies for evaluating rhetorical artifacts. Methods for evaluating

textual accuracy, effectiveness, social significance, reasoning, and style. Practice in rhetorical criticism.

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**637 Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric (3)** Survey of forces and ideas shaping rhetorical theory after 1965. May include scholarship of Burke, Foucault, Habermas, and Grassi.

**638 Small Group Communication Theory and Research (3)** Focus on theories, models, and variables related to communication processes in small group settings. Emphasis on empirical research and theoretical analysis of small group communication phenomena.

**639 Organizational Communication: Diagnosis and Intervention** (3) Seminar on theoretical and applied approaches to communication consulting in complex organizations. Emphasis is placed on developing intervention strategies for making organizational communication systems more effective. Prerequisite: COM 619.

**659 Public Relations Theory and Research** (3) Survey of theoretical and research based literature dealing with public relations and central issues in the field. Emphasis is placed on exploring how organizations use communication to negotiate their relationship with key publics and their role in society.

**660 Independent Project** (1-4; maximum 8) 660.M (mass communication), 660.S (speech communication).

**696 Teaching Practicum: Topics** (1-2; maximum 8) Provide training and practical experience in a variety of communication education areas. Specific topics will vary by section and can include a range of topics such as forensics coaching, public relations practicums, and other educational topics. Credit does not count toward the Speech Communication graduate degree.

**697 Teaching Essentials of Speech Communication** (2; maximum 8, repeatable) Provides practical approaches to teaching communication at the college level. Credit does not count toward a graduate degree. Required of all graduate teaching assistants assigned to teach COM 135.

**698 Introduction to Communication** (1) Investigates theoretical foundations and practical techniques for instruction in communication at college level. Credit does not count toward a graduate degree. This course is prerequisite for teaching COM 135 on graduate assistantship.

**700.S Research for Master's Thesis** (1-12; minimum 6; maximum 12)

**711.S Research** (1-12; minimum 6; maximum 12)