

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Faculty: Conners, Chair; Allen, Beerman, Merrill, Mutua-Mambo, and Roberts.

The communication studies discipline is in rhetoric, a time-honored art central since Classical times to a liberal arts education. Historically built on performed oral rhetoric and the rhetorical criticism of public address, the discipline has turned in more of a social science direction in the latter 20th century and developed a considerable body of theory and research in interpersonal, small-group, intercultural, organizational, and political communication. In addition, the discipline has applied both rhetorical and social science perspectives to the growing number of converging media. Thus, communication studies is a field that today is truly interdisciplinary, sitting at the juncture of the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences.

In addition, communication studies serves as a foundation to the pursuit of many careers ranging from work in media and public relations to that within political, healthcare, or business contexts. Through an internship, cognate coursework, and co-curricular activities, a major may further explore these career opportunities. The major has the following goals:

1. To introduce students to the theoretical underpinnings and extant research in the three major areas of the communication studies discipline (rhetoric, mass communication, human communication).
2. To give students the opportunity—should they desire—to concentrate in one of these three areas.
3. To equip students with the appropriate social science and/or rhetorical research methods and to provide them with opportunities to use them in independent research in the contexts of courses and especially the major's capstone course.
4. To equip students with the basic public, interpersonal, and group oral communication skills and to give them the opportunity to supplement these with either more specialized oral communication skills or written and/or visual communication skills.
5. To equip students with the fundamental background necessary for a wide range of communication careers and provide them with curricular and co-curricular opportunities to build on this background.

These goals are reflected in the following requirements.

- Communication Studies Major (<https://catalog.rmc.edu/programs/communication-studies/communication-studies-major/>)
- Communication Studies Minor (<https://catalog.rmc.edu/programs/communication-studies/communication-studies-minor/>)

COMM 201 - Introduction to Communication Studies (3 Hours)

A survey of the topics, themes, and theories of the core areas of communication studies: human communication, mass communication, and rhetoric. For each area, selected topics serve as examples of the academic discipline's work, showing the discipline's scope and research. Offered every semester. C21: CL,SS.

Curriculum: CL,SS

COMM 210 - Public Speaking (3 Hours)

This course provides guidance and practice in the fundamentals of public speaking in a variety of contexts, with the objective to help each student become a more effective and confident oral communicator. Students develop clearly expressed, organized ideas, and deliver them in an effective manner. While speech theory is included in the course, emphasis is on the practical application of public speaking. Offered every semester. C21: OC

COMM 215 - Interpersonal and Small Group Communication (3 Hours)

Human beings are wired to seek belonging and connection with others. This course analyzes the various types and styles of communication in interpersonal and small group contexts, focusing on theories of interpersonal and small group communication as well as practical application. Throughout the semester, students will collaborate in small teams and explore such topics as the importance of both verbal and nonverbal communication, team member roles and styles of leadership, how culture affects our interactions in various contexts, and best practices in group decision-making and conflict resolution. Offered every semester. C21:OC.

COMM 222 - Speechwriting (3 Hours)

Instruction and practice in personal, business, and especially political contexts with special attention to audience, organization, genre, and style. Frequent exercises. Practice writing individually and in teams for the imagined delivery by others.

COMM 225 - Media Writing (3 Hours)

This writing class considers different methods used in news writing and strategic communication writing (public relations and advertising). Students will develop practical skills in media writing and an understanding of writing for different media audiences and purposes. Offered alternate years.

COMM 230 - Podcasting (3 Hours)

This introductory course delves into the world of podcasting. We'll explore the history, various formats, and cultural impact of podcasts while developing critical listening skills. You'll gain hands-on experience in pre-production, production, and post-production stages of creating a podcast, all culminating in the development of your own pilot episode.

Prerequisite(s): COMM Majors only

COMM 235 - Interviewing (3 Hours)

This course offers comprehensive coverage of interview theory and practice. The course will focus on a wide variety of interview types with the goal of the development of practical interview skills through roleplaying and practice.

COMM 240 - Debate Participation (1 Hour)

Participation in the college's Franklin Debating Society, including regular practices and performances at on-campus events and off-campus events/competitions. Through these activities, students learn the skills of public speaking, audience adaptation, argumentation, and research. Offered every semester. (must take three sections to fulfill the OC requirement). C21:OC.

Prerequisite(s): Permission of instructor

Curriculum: OC

COMM 300 - Topics in Communication Studies Research (3 Hours)

Students may select a field research project or a library research topic in a specialized area of communication studies research. Projects are student-designed in consultation with a faculty member. A proposal (including a literature review and plan of research) must be submitted by the end of the second week of the term in which the research is to be conducted. A final research paper will be presented in seminar. Students are encouraged to submit their papers to the Eastern Communication Association or Southern States Communication Association, both of which have long-standing interests in presentations of undergraduate research. Intended for communication studies majors or minors who have already completed considerable coursework. C21:EL.

Prerequisite(s): junior or senior status and approval of the department chair

Curriculum: EL

COMM 301 - Human Comm Theory & Method (3 Hours)

This course introduces students to human communication theories and qualitative communication research. Theories address communication in interpersonal, group, organizational, and intercultural contexts. Students will learn what is involved in conducting, interpreting, and reporting qualitative communication research. The course explores the relationship among communication theory, research methodology, and practical applications. C21:CC,EL.

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 185 and one of COMM 201, COMM 210, or COMM 215 or permission of instructor

Curriculum: CC,EL

COMM 303 - Communication Law and Ethics (3 Hours)

This class will examine what a journalist/professional communicator has a right to do (or not) in communication law. We will also discuss how we decide what is right for media and communicators to do. A range of First Amendment topics will be discussed as they apply to freedom of speech or freedom of the press. Students will learn to analyze potential ethical issues and learn processes to make the best decisions possible when considering various stakeholders. Offered alternate years. Cross-list: COMM 303. C21:OC.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 305 - Health Communication (3 Hours)

This course examines the theories and scholarship of health communication. An examination of the health-care process, regarding physical, mental, and social health issues, will be explored as it relates to several contexts including interpersonal, family, cultural, mass-mediated, public and organizational perspectives. Using scholarly journals and texts, popular culture, lectures, in-class exercises and discussions, this class will introduce research that explores communication theories regarding health, the dissemination of health information, and practical application. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 306 - Presidential Rhetoric (3 Hours)

A survey of presidential communication from Theodore Roosevelt to the present. The emphasis will be on how speeches use rhetorical means to achieve political or policy goals. Attention will be paid to the rhetorical profile of each presidency and to how presidential communication and the presidency have changed since Theodore Roosevelt's days.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 308 - American Campaigns and Elections (3 Hours)

A study of contemporary American political campaigns and elections. The election cycle will be examined from three different perspectives: the political campaign/politician, the mass media, and the voter. Statewide and federal elections will be analyzed in real-time during election years. Offered alternate years. Cross-list: PSCI 308.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 309 - American Public Address (3 Hours)

A rhetorical examination of public address used in an array of major social issues, including historical and contemporary time periods in the United States. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 311 - Rhetorical Theory & Methods (3 Hours)

This course introduces students to rhetorical theories and rhetorical criticism research. Students will learn the process of rhetorical criticism, including text selection, analysis of text and context, and significance of analysis. The course explores the relationship among communication theory, research methodology, and practical applications. C21:CC,EL.

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 185 and one of COMM 201, COMM 210, or COMM 215 or permission of instructor

Curriculum: CC,EL

COMM 312 - Communication in Organizations (3 Hours)

Work-life balance is a current buzzword for good reason. The average adult will spend 12 out of a 40-year career span in the workplace. This course seeks to interrogate communicative behavior and issues in contemporary organizations. Students will discuss the guiding theories in the organizational communication field, focusing on communication patterns and practices. Topics covered include socialization processes, organizations as culture, power, the dark side of work relationships, emotion at work, and diversity processes in the 21st century organization. Offered alternate years. Cross list: BUSN 312. C21:OC.

Prerequisite(s): BUSN 313 or BUSN 343 or COMM 215

COMM 313 - Rhetoric of Place and Space (3 Hours)

Communication happens in everyday spaces and places. Therefore, the ways we think about, organize, produce, and participate in space and place matter for nature, culture, and society. With a focus on the Mid-Atlantic region, this class uses a rhetorical lens to better understand how public memory is mobilized in, by, and with space and place to shape environments. We will study various public and private urban, suburban, rural, and digital spaces and places including monuments, memorials, museums, parks, colleges, and more. Oral, visual, textual, and other creative assignments will culminate in a semester-long digital humanities project. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 314 - Visual Rhetorics (3 Hours)

Visual images permeate our culture, so much that we say "a picture is worth a thousand words." Often, society takes for granted the power of visuals while also accepting images at face value. Beginning with the position that images do argue and influence public life, this course asks students to be critical consumers of images and enables them to analyze visual messages that stand alone or appear alongside verbal messages. The course explores topics of ideology, ethics, argument, persuasion, and manipulation through common visual forms such as photography, bodies, memorials or monuments, memes, and data displays. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 315 - Rhetoric of the Body (3 Hours)

We each have one body, but that same body is treated differently by different people in different situations. How you see your body in the mirror may not be the same way your doctor sees it during a checkup. How you see yourself may not be how society sees you. The discourse surrounding bodies changes our perception of ourselves and the people around us. This course explores how bodies come to matter through rhetoric, by focusing on gender, sex, race, and size. Counts as application course for the GSWS major or minor. Offered alternate years. C21:OC.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 320 - Argumentation (3 Hours)

Argumentation gets a bad rap. In popular culture, an argument is often understood as a fight where the winner is the one who shouts loudest. This course invites students to rethink the uses of argumentation as critical equipment for democratic deliberation that is essential for individuals and communities to cooperatively address shared matters of concern. Students will be introduced to foundational principles of argumentation, practice constructing arguments in multiple modalities, and engage emerging controversies in argumentation studies. The course emphasizes the critical evaluation of evidence, attention to bias, and practical applications of argumentation. Offered alternate years. C21:OC.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 321 - Mass Communication Theory & Methods (3 Hours)

This course introduces students to mass communication theories and quantitative communication research. Theories address media processes, audiences, and effects. Students will learn what is involved in conducting, interpreting, and reporting quantitative communication research. The course explores the relationship among communication theory, research methodology, and practical applications. C21:CC,EL.

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 185 and one of COMM 201, COMM 210, or COMM 215 or permission of instructor

Curriculum: CC,EL

COMM 330 - Communicating in Relationships (3 Hours)

This course examines, analyzes, and applies theories and concepts of interpersonal communication within and about relationships that impact our personal and professional lives. It is organized around three general topic areas: (1) developing relationships, (2) maintaining satisfying relationships, and (3) coping with relational challenges over time. Students will develop their ability to identify and critically analyze the influences on and outcomes of communicative behaviors on personal relationships, groups, and society through self-analysis, case studies, practical application, and critiques of cultural practices. Offered alternate years. C21:OC.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 331 - Communication & Conflict Management (3 Hours)

The inevitability of conflict is indisputable. This course explores how to recognize and handle it. Students will examine theory and scholarship related to the causes of conflict, the various ways we resolve it, and consequences of ineffective management of conflict in interpersonal, intercultural, organizational, and international contexts. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 332 - Intercultural Communication (3 Hours)

Changing demographics, increased migration, frequent travel, the social media explosion, and a globalized world makes understanding how to interact with individuals from other cultures paramount. Throughout the semester, students will examine theory and research in intercultural communication, tracing the history of human interaction and cross-cultural difference. Students will undertake a close and critical examination of the socio-cultural, economic, technological, and political factors locally and globally that have given rise to today's intercultural connections and misconceptions. Offered alternate years. C21:NW.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 334 - Leadership Communication (3 Hours)

The course begins with a survey of contemporary leadership theories, from both the industrial and post-industrial perspectives. For the duration of the course students are situated into consulting teams and are tasked with solving a local client's real-world challenge. Students and teams receive practical feedback and instruction on employing effective post-industrial leadership strategy. Offered annually. C21:OC.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 361 - Gender Issues in Communication (3 Hours)

After surveying the conceptual foundations of gender, we explore gender differences in verbal and nonverbal communication. We consider communication differences within contexts such as family, friendship, intimate relationship, and workplace. Finally, we consider how mass media (such as TV, film, and advertising) affects societal and personal definitions of gender. Throughout the course, the relationships among gender, power, and communication are stressed. Offered alternate years. Cross-list: GSWS 361.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 362 - Media & Diversity (3 Hours)

We will examine issues of diversity and the mass media from a variety of perspectives, including audience, actors/producers, and reporters/content creators. We will discuss diversity with respect to the mass media of news, entertainment, and advertising. Diversity will be considered in the context of a variety of categories: race, sexual orientation, economic class, disability, gender, and age. The construction of such media representations, as well as their implications, will be explored. Offered alternate years. C21:DI, OC.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

Curriculum: DI

COMM 363 - Public Relations (3 Hours)

Students will develop an understanding of the principles and practices of public relations as applied in corporations, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies. Students will develop skills essential for written, spoken, and media-based public relations tactics, and will develop projects addressing strategies appropriate for different publics. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 364 - Broadcasting (3 Hours)

A comprehensive introduction to the multi-faceted field of broadcasting designed to provide students with a critical understanding of the evolutionary underpinnings of today's broadcast media as well as the ability to foresee and an appreciation of the potential for future development in the 21st century. The historical development of broadcast media and the associated theories that have molded their current form will be explored and provide the basis for understanding the influence broadcast media wield today and the shapes media will assume in the future. Offered alternate years. C21:OC.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 365 - New Media (3 Hours)

Virtually every aspect of our lives—education, healthcare, sports, business, politics, personal relationships, and social movements—has been changed by the influence of digital media. This course offers a historical introduction to the "cyber" world and the technologies and social influences that made it possible. Designed to provide students with both a critical perspective and new media skills. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to freshmen

COMM 380 - Special Topics (3 Hours)

A consideration of various topics in communication studies.

COMM 381 - Special Topics (3 Hours)

A consideration of various topics in communication studies.

COMM 382 - Special Topics (3 Hours)

A consideration of various topics in communication studies.

COMM 383 - Special Topics (3 Hours)

A consideration of various topics in communication studies.

COMM 384 - Special Topics (3 Hours)

A consideration of various topics in communication studies.

COMM 450 - Internship in Communication Studies (3 Hours)

Intensive experience as a communication professional in an appropriate business setting. Possible placements include public relations, marketing, customer relations, fundraising, government offices, and broadcasting. Application required; see Bassett Internship Program. C21:EL. A special fee (\$200) is charged for this course.

Prerequisite(s): junior or senior status, GPA of 2.25, and approval of the chair

Curriculum: EL

COMM 451 - Internship in Comm Studies (3 Hours)

Intensive experience as a communication professional in an appropriate business setting. Possible placements include public relations, marketing, customer relations, fundraising, government offices, and broadcasting. Application required; see Bassett Internship Program. A special fee (\$200) is charged for this course.

Prerequisite(s): junior or senior status, GPA of 2.25, and approval of the chair

COMM 455 - Directed Field Study (3 Hours)

A Field Study is an experiential learning course combining elements of workplace experience, observation, and research. Students are expected to work closely with a faculty field study supervisor to develop learning objectives and a plan of study appropriate to the discipline. Assignments may include a reflective journal, activity reports, and one or more directed research papers appropriate to the discipline. Workplace experience requirements should be similar to those of internships. Students should not receive compensation from workplace experience if they are receiving three-hour course credit.

COMM 457 - Internship in Communications (Paid) (3 Hours)

Intensive experience as a communication professional in an appropriate business setting. Possible placements include public relations, marketing, customer relations, fundraising, government offices, and broadcasting. Application required; see Bassett Internship Program. C21:EL.

Prerequisite(s): junior or senior status, GPA of 2.25, and approval of the chair

Curriculum: EL

COMM 490 - Seminar in Communication Studies (3 Hours)

A capstone seminar focused on a theme transcending the human communication, mass communication, and rhetoric areas of the discipline. Students study the theme through relevant communication studies work, illustrating breadth of the discipline. Students develop their own research project on the theme, beginning with design, executing a method, and presenting completed work through multiple communication modes, such as visual, oral, and written communication. All prerequisite courses must be completed with C- or higher before enrollment in COMM 490. C21:CS,EL.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 301, COMM 311 and COMM 321

Curriculum: CS,EL

COMM 495 - Communication Discipline (3 Hours)

A culminating experience in communication studies, this course reviews the history, research concerns, theories, and methods of the discipline. It also reviews extant research findings in areas of the discipline such as interpersonal, intercultural, political, health, and mass communication. C21:CS.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 301 and COMM 302 (or PSCI 301, PSYC 201, or SOCI 300) for students matriculating before June 2020; COMM 301, COMM 311 and COMM 321

Curriculum: CS