

COMMUNICATION, PHD

The Doctor of Philosophy in Communication program is focused on preparing students for advanced research in the field of communication. The PhD program offers the terminal degree in the field that is suited for a career in academia or in other sectors. The faculty are committed to developing our graduate students' research excellence as well as their teaching skills. PhD students regularly present at conferences, publish research in top journals, win awards for their outstanding teaching, and secure employment both within and outside of academia. Students in the PhD program can study in the areas of Rhetoric and Culture (<https://uwm.edu/communication/research/rhetoric-culture/>), Relating and Organizing (<https://uwm.edu/communication/research/relating-organizing/>), and Technology and Media (<https://uwm.edu/communication/research/technology-media/>).

Related Certificate

- Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (<https://catalog.uwm.edu/community-engagement-professions/education/administrative-leadership/teaching-learning-higher-education-graduate-certificate/>)

Admission Requirements

Application Deadlines

Application deadlines vary by program, please review the application deadline chart (<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/program-deadlines/>) for specific programs. Other important dates and deadlines can be found by using the One Stop calendars (<https://uwm.edu/onestop/dates-and-deadlines/>).

Admission

An applicant must meet Graduate School requirements (<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/admission/>), hold a master's degree in communication or a related field, and meet these departmental requirements to be considered for admission to the program in regular status:

- Have a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.33 (B+) in course work for the master's degree.
- Submit a reason statement describing your qualifications and reasons for applying to this program, as well as the fit between your interests and department offerings.
- Submit your curriculum vitae outlining relevant qualifications, employment, and scholarly and professional activity.
- Submit letters of recommendation from at least three (3) communication professionals attesting to the student's capability to perform satisfactorily at the doctoral level (academic references preferred).
- Submit a writing sample that demonstrates the applicant's analytical and critical thinking skills.

Applicants lacking the requisite GPA, and those without the Master of Arts/Science in Communication (or an equivalent degree) may be considered for admission on probation, and may be required to complete preparatory coursework.

Reapplication/Readmission

Students who receive the MA in Communication from UWM must reapply to be considered for admission to the PhD program.

Credits and Courses

To fulfill the credit requirement for the PhD in Communication, a student must complete at least 54 credits beyond the master's degree, of which at least 48 credits must be in courses numbered 700 or above. Thirty-six (36) credits must be taken from the Communication Department. Students may complete 6 credit hours in courses below 700 offered outside the Department of Communication. Courses taken toward a master's degree will not apply to the doctoral program of studies. The 54 credits must be distributed as follows:

Code	Title	Credits
Select a minimum of 6 credits from communication research tools in courses numbered 900 or above ¹		3
COMMUN 900	Philosophy and Practice of Communication	3
Select a minimum of 18 credits reflecting the student designing a thematic program of study combining theory and praxis in the study of communication processes		18
Select a minimum of 24 additional elective credits		24
COMMUN 990	Research and Thesis ²	6
Total Credits		54

¹ Students will determine additional research-tool credits in consultation with their advisor, so as to demonstrate methodological competence in their chosen area of study.

² No more than 6 credits of COMMUN 990 may be applied toward the 54-credit requirement.

Additional Requirements

Major Professor as Advisor

Initially, unless a student specifically requests a particular faculty member, all doctoral students are assigned an "interim" advisor. After the completion of 12 credits, a student is required to designate a faculty member with specialized interests compatible with those of the student to act as the major professor. The major professor is expected to assist the student in planning the remainder of the program of studies, chair the student's preliminary examination committee, supervise the completion of the PhD dissertation, and conduct the dissertation defense meeting. All students should consult the departmental handbook for additional details on departmental policies and procedures.

Comprehensive Preliminary Examination

A student must pass all components of a comprehensive preliminary examination to be advanced to candidacy for the doctoral degree. The examining committee is responsible for setting an examination schedule agreeable to all parties subject to the constraints that:

1. examinations must include at least 18 hours of questioning, and
2. must be completed in no longer than two (2) calendar weeks.

Each member of the examining committee must read and pass the student on all examination questions the faculty member contributes. The student must receive a passing evaluation from all members of the committee on the written portion of the examination in order to attempt an oral defense of the examination. An affirmative vote constitutes the committee's decision to advance the student to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

Students who fail the doctoral preliminary examination may not proceed to the dissertation. The exam may be retaken only once. The preliminary examination must be successfully completed within five years of initial enrollment.

Dissertation

The candidate, under the supervision of the major professor and in collaboration with a dissertation committee, must write a dissertation that demonstrates the ability to formulate a research topic and pursue an independent and original investigation of the chosen topic. The practices for the dissertation will conform to the guidelines established by the UWM Graduate School. The dissertation committee shall be composed of the major professor and four additional graduate faculty members (at least three of whom must be from the Communication Department's graduate faculty). The dissertation committee is responsible for assessing the dissertation project, which involves approving the dissertation prospectus proposal, reviewing working drafts of research in progress, and, finally, evaluating the candidate's ability to defend decisions made during the course of research. After submission of a reading copy of the dissertation to the faculty dissertation committee, the candidate and the major professor will schedule a committee meeting for the purpose of undertaking an oral defense of the dissertation work by the candidate. At the conclusion of the candidate's oral remarks, the dissertation committee will vote on passing the candidate's dissertation work. A majority of the committee must vote to approve the dissertation and recommend granting of the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Residence

The student must meet minimum Graduate School residence requirements (<https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/students/academic-policies-and-procedures/doctoral-resources/doctoral-requirements/>) of one continuous academic year of full-time graduate studies at UWM. This can be satisfied by completing at least 8 graduate credits in each of two consecutive semesters, or 6 or more graduate credits in each of three consecutive semesters, exclusive of summer sessions. Residence credit cannot be earned at the master's level.

Time Limit

All components of the PhD program must be completed within 10 years of matriculation.

Communication PhD Learning Outcomes

Students graduating from the PhD Program in Communication will be able to:

- Explain the significance of their coursework and research in communication for developing individual and social responsibility, civic knowledge and engagement (both local and global), ethical reasoning, and action.
 - Embody professional expectations for ethics, collegiality, service, and engagement with the communication discipline by attending and presenting at academic conferences, conducting research, writing grant proposals, and performing other professional activity.
- Summarize, synthesize, and critique relevant literature to develop critical understandings of the history, theory, concepts, and debates in at least two major areas of communication research.
 - Develop and complete an original, large-scale research project that pursues a significant research question in the field of communication.
 - Justify the rationale that produced their project's research questions, methodological choices, and conclusions.
 - Ethically conduct high-quality research in communication, including methods, analysis, and writing.
 - Develop and use professional oral and written communication skills suitable for professional conference presentation, academic publication (print or digital), applications for grants, awards, and fellowships, and other forms of professional discourse.