

Communication Studies, BA

The communication studies major helps students understand how communication shapes relationships, communities, and public life, and prepares them to use communication strategically in a wide range of professional settings. The program combines the breadth of the liberal arts with career-focused learning, giving students the tools to analyze the world around them and the skills to make an impact in it.

The department focuses on three thematic areas:

- **Interpersonal Communication and Relationships.** Courses in this area focus on how communication shapes personal, professional, and organizational relationships. Students explore the role of communication in collaboration, leadership, conflict management, and the development of healthy and resilient relationships.
- **Media, History, and Production.** Courses in this area examine the industries, technologies, and creative practices that shape media culture. Students analyze media systems and production processes while developing practical and critical skills for working in and studying media.
- **Rhetoric, Culture, and Engagement.** Courses in this area emphasize communication as a force in civic life, cultural expression, and social change. Students study persuasion, argumentation, civic dialogue, and public culture to understand how messages shape public values and collective action.

Alongside the foundational skills learned from the three thematic areas, students develop practical abilities in conflict resolution, public speaking, media analysis, message design, collaboration, and research. The major is intentionally flexible: students may explore the field broadly or align their coursework with career-focused pathways that prepare them for roles in business and leadership, media and creative industries, advocacy, relationship and community work, and communication-intensive professions across sectors.

The program emphasizes hands-on experiences such as internships, applied projects, leadership opportunities, and community engagement. Graduates of communication studies enter fields where strong analytical and people-centered communication skills are essential and adaptable—making the major a highly versatile foundation for both immediate employment and advanced study.

Learning Outcomes

Graduating communication studies majors will be able to:

- explain the significance of the communicative process across personal, familial, organizational, civic, and mediated contexts;
- demonstrate effective written, oral, and/or digital communication skills;
- plan, evaluate, and conduct basic communication research using qualitative, quantitative, and critical-cultural methods;
- think critically about the role of communication in the production, maintenance, and transformation of culture;

- apply and reflect upon the skills and theories of communication in communities, professional settings, and a global context; and
- develop the ability to discuss controversial issues of public importance in a way that demonstrates intercultural competence and personal and social responsibility to a dynamic and globalizing world.