

# DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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Communication Studies is the modern heir to one of the world's oldest disciplines. Its connection to thought and language is fundamental, and its primacy in marriage and the family, in obtaining employment, and in advancing a career regardless of one's field are well documented.

## Mission

Communication Studies students learn how to prepare and present informative and persuasive speeches using the latest technologies and learn the skills necessary to effectively engage in interpersonal, small group, and organizational forms of communication in a variety of contexts. They study the nuances of nonverbal communication, the dynamics of communication in the family, the principles of persuasion, the influence and power of culture on communication, as well as lying and other forms of deception, and theories of communication and how to apply them to various contexts in today's rapidly changing world.

## Highlights

The Department of Communication Studies provides a rich climate in which to pursue the study of communication with a highly qualified faculty who take a personal interest in each student's learning. The friendly, cooperative climate among faculty is reflective of the general climate of collaborative learning throughout the department. Faculty participate in collaborative research projects with departmental colleagues and those from other departments, as well as providing opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students. All classrooms are equipped with the latest classroom and presentational technology. A state-of-the-art research laboratory in the department enhances research.

## Suggested Minors

There is no preferred minor for Communication Studies. Students should select a minor that suits their interests and career needs. Common minors include English, Political Science, Spanish, French, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Human Services, and Sociology.

## Career Opportunities

The Department of Communication Studies offers coursework that provides for a wide variety of career choices. Faculty members and students have ongoing research programs in various areas of interpersonal communication, such as, relationship maintenance and repair, health communication, intercultural communication, new communication technologies, affectionate communication and visual persuasion. The program is actively involved in advising students about course sequences available to prepare them for careers in both public and private organizations and agencies.

Communication Studies graduates enter a variety of fields, including teaching at all levels, public advocacy and public relations, governmental relations, the ministry, motivational speaking, education, event planning, website development, and marketing. Many continue their studies in Communication Studies graduate programs and in law schools.

## Curriculum

### Required Courses for Major

Communication Studies offers both the Bachelor of Arts (B. A.) and Bachelor of Science (B. S.) degree options. The B. A. option requires 14 hours of a foreign language plus a Philosophy course, while the B. S. option instead requires 8 hours of natural science plus a math/statistics or computer science course beyond the core curriculum science requirement.

Students choosing to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Communication Studies must complete at least 30 hours of credit in Communication Studies (COMS) courses, including at least 9 hours of advanced courses and 6 hours of elective courses in the program. To satisfy the foreign language requirement, all hours must be taken in the same language.

If students choose the Bachelor of Science degree option they must complete at least 30 hours of credit in Communication Studies courses, including at least 9 hours of advanced courses and 6 hours of elective courses in the program.

All students must take the following courses:

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Required Courses</b>		
COMS 1361	Public Speaking	3
COMS 2331	Intro - Comm Theory & Research	3
COMS 2386	Interpersonal Communication	3

COMS 4381	Communication Theory	3
12 hours Advanced COMS credits		12
6 hours COMS elective credits		6
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Total Hours		30

COMS 2382 does not count toward the 30 hour requirement for majors.

## Academic Programs

- Bachelor of Arts, Major in Communication Studies ([catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2019-2020/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/ba-communication-studies](http://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2019-2020/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/ba-communication-studies))
- Bachelor of Science, Major in Communication Studies ([catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2019-2020/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/bs-communication-studies](http://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2019-2020/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/bs-communication-studies))
- Minor in Communication Studies ([catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2019-2020/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/minor-communication-studies](http://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2019-2020/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/minor-communication-studies))

## Student Organizations

Students may take advantage of the department's student organization, Speakeasies. The department is also home to the Lambda Beta chapter of Lambda Pi Eta, the official honor society of the National Communication Association.

## Internships

The department offers internship opportunities for qualified students through COMS 4378.

## Scholarships

The Department of Communication Studies offers several scholarships. Most scholarship deadlines are in March for the following academic at: Scholarships4Kats (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/financial-aid/scholarships>).

### COMS 1361. Public Speaking. 3 Hours.

Students apply the research, composition, organization, and delivery of informative and persuasive speeches for various purposes and occasions. Topics may include strategies for reducing speaker apprehension and audience analysis.

### COMS 2331. Intro - Comm Theory & Research. 3 Hours.

Students study theories and research in the field of communication with an emphasis on interpersonal and family communication. Students prepare reviews of literature as well as scholarly abstracts.

### COMS 2382. Comm. for Bus. & Professions. 3 Hours.

Students examine communication theories and research with the goal of developing skills in settings such as interviewing, group decision-making, speech preparation, and presentation. Topics may include interpersonal communication, leadership strategies, listening, and non-verbal communication. Not for COMS majors or minors. Non-Minors only. Non-Specializations only.

**Prerequisite:** Non-Majors only.

### COMS 2386. Interpersonal Communication. 3 Hours.

Students examine theory and research in one-to-one communication in relationships. Topics may include perception, listening, conflict management, and the development and maintenance of relationships.

### COMS 2390. Multimedia Communication. 3 Hours.

Applications of technology to the preparation and presentation of speeches and other forms of oral discourse.

**Prerequisite:** 12 COMS hours completed and Sophomore, Junior or Senior Classification.

### COMS 2393. Computer Mediated Communication. 3 Hours.

Students examine how computers mediate communication issues, such as interpersonal relationships, social networking, information literacy, political agendas, and entertainment.

### COMS 3350. Communication and Pop Culture. 3 Hours.

Students identify messages and meanings contained in popular culture, and examine how messages from music, television, films, celebrities, and advertising reflect and create social norms.

### COMS 3360. Interpreting Visual Images. 3 Hours.

Students examine messages found in visual communication and analyze visual messages using theoretical constructs. Topics may include the persuasive impact of those visual messages.

**COMS 3365. Humor in Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students examine how humor functions across a variety of contexts, including interpersonal, organizational, public, and political. In the process, students apply theories and research about humor in communication.

**Prerequisite:** Junior standing or consent of instructor.

**COMS 3370. Intercultural Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students analyze the theory, research, and practice of communicating within and across cultures with an emphasis on application to the student's own intercultural communication. Topics may include a comparison of various cultures, culture shock, racism, and prejudice.

**COMS 3371. Conflict, Negotiatn & Resolutn. 3 Hours.**

Students investigate the complexities of conflict in order to understand forces that make conflict challenging and to develop skills for examining and managing conflict more effectively in a variety of close relationship contexts.

**COMS 3372. Interpersonal Health Comm. 3 Hours.**

Students examine patient and physician communication skills. Topics may include communicating social support for those with serious illnesses, survivorship, identity issues, media influence, and e-health across a wide range of communication contexts.

**Prerequisite:** Junior standing.

**COMS 3373. Environmental Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students learn theory, research and practice with regard to environment and communication from both international and multi-disciplinary perspectives. Students will also learn how to identify environmental issues and use appropriate communication strategies to respond to/solve those issues. The course uses a lecture/discussion format.

**COMS 3382. Persuasion. 3 Hours.**

Students assess the principles of attitude and behavior change as they apply to the speaker, political campaigns, and social movements.

**COMS 3383. Small Group Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students examine the theories and practices of interaction, leadership, and problem-solving in formal and informal small group settings. Activities may include completing a community service project.

**Prerequisite:** COMS 2386.

**COMS 3385. Community Applied Communica. 3 Hours.**

Students improve communication with people from differing backgrounds in community organizations. Students work with such an organization throughout the semester for a minimum of 20 total hours over at least six visits to the service-learning site. A list of organizations is provided in class.

**COMS 3390. Human Comm In Virtual Organztn. 3 Hours.**

Students analyze the impact of human communication technology on organizations of all types, including political, social, religious, and educational institutions. In the process, students may examine how communication technologies shape organizations, channel power, manage crisis, establish leadership, and redefine privacy and freedom of expression.

**Prerequisite:** Sophomore standing and 12 hours COMS completed.

**COMS 4091. Independent Study in Communication Studies. 1-3 Hours.**

Students pursue particular problems or issues beyond the limits of current course offerings. Students may receive Academic Distinction credit for this course. See Academic Distinction Program in this catalog. May be repeated for credit. Senior standing. Variable Credit (1 to 3). Senior standing.

**Prerequisite:** 12 hours COMS completed and approval of the Chair.

**COMS 4365. Nonverbal Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students study systems of nonverbal communication and their effective use. Topics may include body language, vocalic, facial, and spatial communication. Students apply current theory and research in nonverbal communication to their own communication.

**COMS 4366. Deceptive Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students assess lying and other forms of deception in a variety of communication contexts, including interpersonal, public, and legal. Students gain empirical, ethical, and critical understandings of deception including their own deception and that of others.

**Prerequisite:** At least sophomore standing.

**COMS 4378. Internship In Comm Studies. 3 Hours.**

Students apply skills and theories learned in the classroom to on-the-job situations. Internships may occur with public relations and governmental agencies, businesses, and non-profit organizations.

**Prerequisite:** At least junior standing, 12 COMS hours completed, and approval of the Chair.

**COMS 4381. Communication Theory. 3 Hours.**

Students analyze and apply contemporary theories of communication.

**Prerequisite:** 12 hours COMS completed.

**COMS 4385. Professional Comm. Development. 3 Hours.**

Students strengthen communication skills required for professionals working in complex organizations. Students are assigned to work with a community organizational leader throughout the semester who will provide individual assessments and feedback.

**Prerequisite:** Sophomore standing.

**COMS 4386. Family Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students examine interpersonal communication within families. Students pursue original research projects, reviews of literature, and annotated bibliographies.

**Prerequisite:** COMS 2386.

**COMS 4387. Relationship Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students explore communication as it occurs in various types of personal relationships with a special focus on romantic relationships and close friendships. Topics may include long-distance and mediated relationship forms. Students work to enhance the quality of communication and satisfaction within relationships.

**Prerequisite:** Sophomore standing.

**COMS 4392. Sem In Communication Studies. 3 Hours.**

Students explore new and special interest areas of communication scholarship offered on a rotating basis.

**Prerequisite:** Sophomore standing.

## Faculty

Director/Chair: **Terry M Thibodeaux**

**Michael I Arrington, PHD** (mia016@shsu.edu), *Assistant Professor of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, PHD, Univ of South Florida; MA, Univ of South Florida; BA, Univ of Southern Mississippi

**Richard S Bello, PHD** (scm\_rsb@shsu.edu), *Professor of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, PHD, LSU & A&M College; MA, LSU & A&M College; BA, LSU & A&M College

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**Yixin Chen, PHD** (cindychen@shsu.edu), *Assistant Professor of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, PHD, University at Buffalo, Suny; MA, Univ of Texas-El Paso; ME, Huaqiao University; BE, Huaqiao University

**Terry M Thibodeaux, PHD** (scm\_tmt@shsu.edu), *Professor and Chair of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, PHD, Univ of Southern Mississippi; MED, McNeese State University; BA, McNeese State University

**Lisa Joanne Van Raalte, PHD** (lxv024@shsu.edu), *Assistant Professor of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, PHD, Arizona State University; MA, Univ of Hawaii At Manoa; BA, Univ of Hawaii At Manoa

**Melinda Rachelle Weathers, PHD** (mweathers@shsu.edu), *Associate Professor of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, PHD, George Mason University; MA, Univ of Houston-Main; BA, Texas A&M University

**Shuangyue Zhang, PHD** (sxz002@shsu.edu), *Professor of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, PHD, Ohio State Univ; MA, Kent State University; MA, Shandong University; BA, Shandong Normal University

## Interim Faculty

**Carlton G Abernathy, MA** (stdcga11@shsu.edu), *Lecturer of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, MA, Sam Houston State University; MA, Texas State Univ-San Marcos; BA, Sam Houston State University

**Shelby Nicole Alverson, MA** (sna013@shsu.edu), *Lecturer of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, MA, Sam Houston State University; BA, Texas A&M University

**Tamara Sue Arrington, MA** (txa041@shsu.edu), *Lecturer of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, MA, The University of Memphis; BA, Univ of Florida

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**Dena Ruth Horne, MA** (drh022@shsu.edu), *Lecturer of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, MA, Sam Houston State University; BS, Sam Houston State University

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