

# DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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## About

The Masters in Communication provides a totally online program whose goals are to prepare its recipients for further graduate study toward a Ph.D. or to enhance career or financial opportunities. The program's general focus is interpersonal communication, with faculty being nationally recognized for their scholarship and teaching. Communication Studies is the modern heir to one of the world's oldest disciplines, connecting thought and language and advancing careers regardless of field.

### Chair

Terry M. Thibodeaux (thib@shsu.edu)

## Mission

The mission of the Department of Communication Studies is to provide students with understanding and competency related to human communication as it occurs in a variety of settings and contexts. In the process, faculty are devoted to developing their expertise to the highest level possible and to developing the potential of students to obtain the knowledge and skills they need to live fulfilled and productive lives.

### Contact Information

(936) 294-1497

Suite 410 College of Humanities and Social Sciences Building (CHSS)

**Graduate Director:** Dr. Frances Brandau (SCM\_FEB@SHSU.EDU), 936-294-4668

### Website

Department of Communication Studies (<http://www.shsu.edu/academics/communication-studies>)

## Highlights

- Graduate assistantships are available on a competitive basis.
- Graduates have gone on to Ph.D. programs at elite universities.
- Faculty provide collaboration opportunities for publication.
- Travel support available for graduate students for professional conference attendance/presentations.

## Academic Programs

- Master of Arts in Communication Studies ([catalog.shsu.edu/graduate/college-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/communication-studies-ma](http://catalog.shsu.edu/graduate/college-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/communication-studies-ma))
- Graduate Certificate in Communication Studies ([catalog.shsu.edu/graduate/college-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/communication-studies-certificate](http://catalog.shsu.edu/graduate/college-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/communication-studies-certificate))

### COMS 5331. Comm Studies Methods & Resrch. 3 Hours.

Students examine graduate level research methods, including quantitative and qualitative approaches. Topics may include data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Students develop individual research proposals.

### COMS 5332. Statistical Methods For Comm. 3 Hours.

Students focus on various statistical techniques used in communication research. Topics may include univariate and bivariate techniques, hypothesis testing for single and multiple samples, as well as methods used to investigate relationships between two or more variables such as ANOVA, ANCOVA, and multiple regression analysis. Lectures, assigned readings, and projects are used to describe and illustrate advanced literature on the logic, interpretation, and assumptions of each statistical model. Students participate in research activities using statistical techniques.

### COMS 5333. Qualitative Comm Research. 3 Hours.

Students in this course examine qualitative communication research methods and designs. The focus of this course is on the identification and creation of communication research problems, the development of designs, data collection, and analysis procedures to address those problems.

**Prerequisite:** Graduate standing.

### COMS 5335. Advanced Communication Theory. 3 Hours.

Students survey and evaluate communication theory from varied empirical and critical perspectives. Students scrutinize the process of theory building in order to evaluate existing theories.

### COMS 5350. Computer Mediated Comm. 3 Hours.

Students examine how computers mediate communication in various contexts, such as interpersonal relationships, privacy, cyberbullying, social support, and family dynamics. Students study and conduct empirical research on the topic. Prerequisite: None.

### COMS 5360. Adv Interpersonal Communicatn. 3 Hours.

Students explore methodological and theoretical issues in relational communication with special attention to building ongoing research projects in support of theory.

**COMS 5361. Dark Side of Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students explore some of the darker aspects of communication, such as how negative behaviors can impact both the perpetrator and the victim of such behaviors. Topics may include bullying, criticism, complaints, verbal aggression, and revenge.

**COMS 5362. Advanced Intercultural Comm. 3 Hours.**

Students explore current theories and research in the area of intercultural communication, mainly from an interpersonal perspective. Topics may include self-disclosure, interpersonal trust, mate selection, love, interracial relationships, and arranged marriage.

**COMS 5363. Interpersonal Conflict. 3 Hours.**

Students examine the complexities of conflict in order to help understand the forces that make conflict challenging and in order to develop a repertoire of skills for thinking about and managing conflict more effectively in a variety of close relationship contexts.

**Prerequisite:** Graduate standing.

**COMS 5364. Contemporary Family Comm. 3 Hours.**

Students engage in historical, theoretical, and social research related to families. Students learn how families in the United States are adapting to the current social, economic, and political environments. Students use a comparative approach to family communication, emphasizing diversity, focusing on how social inequity shapes family experiences, and understanding how personal family experiences fit into the larger social, cultural, and historical context.

**Prerequisite:** Graduate standing.

**COMS 5370. Health Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students investigate health communication topics that relate to and influence the family and other relationships. Topics may include perspectives and theories in public health, adolescent alcohol and drug abuse, parent-child-physician communication, telemedicine, and rural health concerns.

**COMS 5371. Sex & Gender In Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students study sex and gender differences and similarities in communication behavior. Students examine the sex and gender scholarship and assess its implications for understanding communication in interpersonal and family relationships.

**COMS 5375. Grad Readings in Communication. 1-3 Hours.**

Students study topics that are not covered elsewhere in the graduate curriculum.

**COMS 5380. Advanced Family Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students examine methodological and theoretical issues in family communication.

**COMS 5381. Intergenerational Family Comm. 3 Hours.**

Students assess theory and research on family communication as it occurs between members of different generations. Students also examine how the communication between family members of the same generation differs from the communication between family members of another generation.

**COMS 5382. Dark Side of Family Comm. 3 Hours.**

Students explore the role communication plays in a variety of family problems. Topics may include jealousy, domestic abuse, negligent parenting, and conflict escalation.

**COMS 5390. Seminar In Interpersonal Comm. 3 Hours.**

Students study advanced topics in interpersonal communication theory and research. Topics rotate from semester to semester. Students may repeat for credit when topics change.

**COMS 5391. Seminar In Family Communicatn. 3 Hours.**

Students study advanced topics in family communication theory and research. Topics rotate from semester to semester. Students may repeat for credit when topics change.

**COMS 5395. Social Support and Well-Being. 3 Hours.**

Students explore theories and research related to the communication of social support and its role in physical, psychological, and social outcomes. Students conduct empirical research on social support and well-being.

**COMS 5396. Risk Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students examine theories and research related to the communication of health, environmental, and technological risks. Students conduct empirical research on risk communication.

**COMS 5397. Persuasion & Social Influence. 3 Hours.**

Students analyze theories and research related to persuasion and social influence. Topics may include attitudinal and behavioral change. Students conduct empirical research on persuasion/social influence.

**COMS 5398. Sexual and Affectionate Comm. 3 Hours.**

Students learn theories and scholarship on sexual and affectionate communication. The role of sexual interaction, sexual communication, and affectionate communication in a variety of relationships (e.g., marital and premarital; long-term and short-term; familial relationships) are investigated. Possible topics to be covered include hookups, "friends with benefits" relationships, courtship evolution, affection in romantic/family relationships, and the physical benefits of affection.

**Prerequisite:** Graduate standing.

## Faculty

Director/Chair: **Terry Thibodeaux**

**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

**Frances Elizabeth Brandau, PHD** (scm\_feb@shsu.edu), *Professor of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies*, PHD, LSU & A&M College; MA, Univ of Southern Mississippi; BS, Univ of Southern Mississippi

**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 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), *Assistant 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