

# DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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Communication Studies is the modern heir to one of the world's oldest disciplines. The connection between thought and language is fundamental. This academic discipline that examines how individuals and groups create, share, and interpret messages across a variety of contexts, and channels. This field covers a wide range of communication, including interpersonal, group, intercultural, family, public speaking, and mediated communication. By studying Communication, students gain a deep understanding of how effective communication influences relationships, shapes culture, impacts public perception, and drives organizational success.

## Mission

The Communication Studies program is committed to equipping students with the interpersonal communication skills essential for success in today's diverse and interconnected world. Our mission is to develop a deep understanding of human communication, enabling students to navigate and influence both personal and professional relationships.

Through a blend of theory, research, and application, students learn to engage thoughtfully in a wide variety of communication contexts. The program emphasizes the development of critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness, enabling graduates to adapt to the rapidly changing world.

We are committed to preparing students for success by developing their skills in speaking, listening, collaboration, and leadership, while also strengthening their ability to navigate and resolve interpersonal communication challenges.

## Highlights

The Department of Communication Studies offers a supportive environment for students to explore the study of communication, with distinguished faculty who are highly invested in each student's academic success. The department fosters a collaborative atmosphere, where faculty work together and engage in interdisciplinary research projects with colleagues from other departments. Both graduate and undergraduate students have opportunities to conduct research with their faculty mentors.

The department's state-of-the-art research laboratory further enhances the research experience. The lab features high-resolution video recording and playback capabilities, a 55-inch monitor, an ultra-low temperature freezer for research sample preservation, and a dedicated support room equipped with multiple computers for monitoring a variety of social science research projects.

## 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, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Human Services, Sociology, Marketing, and General Business.

## Career Opportunities

Communication Studies majors develop a diverse set of marketable skills that are highly sought after in today's job market, such as:

- Effective Interpersonal Communication
- Public Speaking and Presentation Skills
- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving
- Leadership and Teamwork
- Negotiation and Conflict Resolution
- Persuasion and Influence
- Strategic Communication
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Group Communication and Facilitation

These competencies make Communication Studies graduates versatile, adaptable, and highly sought-after in a wide range of professional fields, from business and healthcare to law, education, human relations, public advocacy, corporate communication and training, government relations, and public relations. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively is a key asset in virtually every profession, making Communication Studies a versatile and valuable major.

## 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	Introduction - Communication 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
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>30</b>

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

- Bachelor of Arts, Major in Communication Studies (<http://catalog.shsu.edu/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/ba-communication-studies/>)
- Bachelor of Science, Major in Communication Studies (<http://catalog.shsu.edu/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/bs-communication-studies/>)
- Undergraduate Certificate in Communication for Health and Social Care Professionals (<http://catalog.shsu.edu/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/undergraduate-certificate-communication-for-health-and-social-care-professionals/>)
- Undergraduate Certificate in Communication for Legal and Criminal Justice Professionals (<http://catalog.shsu.edu/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/undergraduate-certificate-communication-for-legal-and-criminal-justice-professionals/>)
- Undergraduate Certificate in Communication for Sport Professionals (<http://catalog.shsu.edu/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/undergraduate-certificate-communication-for-sport-professionals/>)
- Minor in Communication Studies (<http://catalog.shsu.edu/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/communication-studies/minor-communication-studies/>)

## Student Organizations

Students may take advantage of the department's student organization, *CommuniKats*. 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 year at: Scholarships4Kats (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/financial-aid/scholarships/>).

## Honor Society

Lambda Pi Eta (LPH) is the National Communication Association's official honor society at four-year colleges and universities. LPH has more than 500 active chapters at four-year colleges and universities nationwide.

LPH represents what Aristotle described in *Rhetoric* as three ingredients of persuasion: logos (Lambda), meaning logic; pathos (Pi), relating to emotion; and ethos (Eta), defined as character credibility and ethics.

Learn more at <https://www.natcom.org/student-organizations/lambda-pi-eta>

**COMS 1361. Public Speaking. 3 Hours. [TCCN: SPCH 1315]**

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. Introduction - Communication 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. Communication for Business & the Professions. 3 Hours. [TCCN: SPCH 1321]**

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. [TCCN: SPCH 1318]**

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 3330. Communication in Sport. 3 Hours.**

Students analyze the field of sport communication research. Students explore sport issues across various communication contexts. Students apply theory and research-based approaches to effectively communicate sport-related issues. Students also examine ethical considerations and the role of sport in culture.

**COMS 3340. Communication, Culture, and Technology. 3 Hours.**

Students examine how computers mediate communication issues, such as interpersonal relationships, social networking, information literacy, political agendas, and entertainment. Course Equivalents: COMS 2393 .

**COMS 3341. Digital Communication Literacy. 3 Hours.**

Students analyze strategies of self-presentation and impression management and apply theory and research-based approaches to effectively communicate messages through various social media platforms. Students gain practical knowledge in creating communication content for various audiences. Students implement these strategies on their own social media platforms as they learn to become more literate information consumers.

**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, Negotiation, and Resolution. 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 3374. Persuasion. 3 Hours.**

Students assess the principles of attitude and behavior change as they apply to the speaker, political campaigns, and social movements. Course Equivalents: COMS 3382 .

**COMS 3375. Strategic Organizational Communication. 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. Course Equivalents: COMS 3390

**Prerequisite:** Sophomore Standing.

**COMS 3379. Freedom of Speech and Civic Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students examine a broad range of free speech issues, including blasphemy, defamation, popular culture, political speech, privacy, public forums, symbolic speech, threats, and restrictions on free speech. The course is structured to expand the knowledge of the student about freedom of speech and to enable them to be more engaged citizens in their communities. To this end, the course not only covers the areas that the right to free speech encompasses, it also explores instances in which freedom of speech protections do not apply.

**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.

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

Students improve research skills, critical thinking, leadership, individual and group communication skills. This is achieved through lecture and community interaction. Students work together to examine their community for need, investigate how to meet that need through the lens of established organizations, and present their findings. This is a capstone course. Course Equivalents: COMS 2385 .

**COMS 3386. Learning to Listen: A Key Communication Competency. 3 Hours.**

Students examine significance and complexity of the many different types of listening across various social, professional, and interpersonal contexts. Students use theory and research-based approaches to tackle issues surrounding listening as a cognitive process, a social and relational skill, and professional competency. They also examine emerging areas, such as mediated listening in the digital age.

**Prerequisite:** COMS 2386.

**COMS 3391. Interpersonal Health Communication. 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. Course Equivalents: COMS 3372 .

**COMS 3392. Risk Communication. 3 Hours.**

Students illustrate the history of risk communication research. Students examine how to effectively communicate risks across various contexts including interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and mass communication. Students apply theory and research-based approaches to effectively communicate risks including health risks, environmental risks, and technological risks.

**COMS 3393. 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. Course Equivalents: COMS 3373 .

**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. Course Equivalents: COMS 4391

**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.

**COMS 4378. Internship In Communication 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:** COMS 2331 and 6 hours COMS completed.

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

Students examine interpersonal communication within families. Topics may include family conflict, family structure, culture and the family, and family stories.

**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. Seminar In Communication Studies. 3 Hours.**

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

**Prerequisite:** Sophomore standing.

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