

# MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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Communication Studies is an academic discipline that concerns human communication—both verbal and nonverbal. It deals with a variety of issues related to these processes, including the sharing of meaning, the encoding and decoding of messages, and the development of relationships using communication in a variety of contexts. Our department has a strong focus on interpersonal communication across a variety of contexts.

The online graduate program in Communication Studies focuses on advanced topics in the field, including:

- interpersonal conflict
- intercultural communication
- health communication
- computer mediated communication
- risk communication
- persuasion and social influence

These areas of study exemplify common topics in communication research. The Department of Communication Studies offers a useful and innovative offering of courses in its online master's degree.

This program is designed for working professionals wishing to advance their careers. It is also an attractive option for aspiring graduate students who wish to pursue a doctoral degree in Communication Studies. For those who aspire to a PhD in other fields, a Master of Arts emphasizing Interpersonal Communication could be a useful stepping stone.

**Additional information:** Reference the Program Landing Page (<https://www.shsu.edu/programs/graduate/communication-studies/>) for additional information, such as cost, delivery format, contact information, or to schedule a visit.

Applications to the online Communication Studies Master's Program are reviewed on a rolling basis, with **priority application deadlines** of: March 1st for the fall semester; October 1st for the spring semester. **We will accept and continue to review applications until all program slots are filled.**

Students seeking admission to the graduate program in Communication Studies must submit the following documents to the Office of Graduate Admissions (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-admissions/prospective-students.html>):

1. Graduate Application (<http://www.shsu.edu/admissions/apply-texas.html>): The Graduate Application is an institutional application required by SHSU. Students must provide biographical and educational information and information relevant to determining State of Texas residency.
2. Application fee (<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-studies/application-fee.html>): An application fee is required for all applications to graduate programs at SHSU.
3. Transcripts documenting all prior degrees.\*
4. Two letters of recommendation that discuss the applicant's suitability for graduate study. Letters should be from professional sources.
5. A letter of interest that summarizes the applicant's educational and professional goals, how a Communication Studies degree or certificate will help the applicant obtain his/her professional goals, and how the applicant's personal and professional experiences have prepared him/her for our graduate program.
6. An undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher is expected. Applicants who do not possess a graduate degree and have an undergraduate GPA below 3.0 must submit additional information as evidence of their academic and professional potential. Additional information may include, but is not limited to: GRE scores, a narrative that provides an explanation for the applicant's low GPA and why the GPA is not indicative of the applicant's academic and professional potential, etc.
7. A resumé.

\*Applicants may submit unofficial transcripts for review by the admissions committee. However, under university policy, admission decisions are contingent upon receipt of official transcripts.

Applicants must submit all application materials directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-admissions/transition.html>) by the university deadlines of August 1 for Fall, December 1 for Spring, and May 15 for Summer. A holistic review of each applicant's file will then be completed, with admission to the MA in Communication Studies program awarded on a competitive basis.

**Note:** Incomplete applications are held in the Graduate Admissions until they are complete. If you have any questions about your admission file, please contact the Office of Graduate Admissions (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-admissions/prospective-students.html>).

Students enrolled in the Master's Program in Communication Studies must complete 36 hours of coursework. (Please note that there is, currently, no thesis option available in the program.)

Of these hours, at least 30 must be completed within the Department of Communication Studies at Sam Houston State University.

All graduate students are required to take a written comprehensive examination over all coursework taken for the MA degree. Students must be enrolled in the University the semester or summer session in which the comprehensive exam is administered.

The four required courses for the M.A. program may not be offered every academic year. These courses are COMS 5331 Comm Studies Methods & Resrch, COMS 5332 Statistical Methods For Comm, COMS 5335 Advanced Communication Theory, and COMS 5360 Adv Interpersonal Communicatn. It is important, therefore, that when students notice any one of these courses being offered in a given semester, they should register to take the course during that semester. Otherwise, the student may not be able to graduate on time, even if he or she takes a full load every semester because he or she is lacking a core course. Students should contact the Graduate Director for academic advisement.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Master of Arts in Communication Studies</b>		
<b>Required courses</b>		
COMS 5331	Comm Studies Methods & Resrch	3
COMS 5332	Statistical Methods For Comm	3
COMS 5360	Adv Interpersonal Communicatn	3
COMS 5335	Advanced Communication Theory	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
Select an additional 24 hours of COMS graduate elective courses from the following:		24
COMS 5333	Qualitative Comm Research	
COMS 5350	Computer Mediated Comm	
COMS 5361	Dark Side of Communication	
COMS 5362	Advanced Intercultural Comm	
COMS 5363	Interpersonal Conflict	
COMS 5364	Contemporary Family Comm	
COMS 5370	Advanced Health Communication	
COMS 5371	Sex & Gender In Communication	
COMS 5375	Grad Readings in Communication	
COMS 5380	Advanced Family Communication	
COMS 5381	Intergenerational Family Comm	
COMS 5382	Dark Side of Family Comm	
COMS 5390	Seminar In Interpersonal Comm	
COMS 5391	Seminar In Family Communicatn	
COMS 5395	Social Support and Well-Being	
COMS 5396	Advanced Risk Communication	
COMS 5397	Persuasion & Social Influence	
COMS 5398	Sexual and Affectionate Comm	
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>36</b>

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) marketable skills initiative is part of the state's **60x30TX plan** and was designed to help students articulate their skills to employers. Marketable skills are those skills valued by employers and/or graduate programs that can be applied in a variety of work or education settings and may include interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas.

The MA in Communication Studies is designed to provide graduates with the following marketable skills:

- Professional oral and written communication.
- Effective Presentation skills.
- Research and analytical skills.
- Evaluation of sources and information validity.
- Data synthesis.
- Critical thinking and the ability to compare and contrast information.
- Multi-cultural and diversity competencies.
- Conflict management and resolution.
- Interpersonal communication.
- Listening skills.
- Leadership and teamwork.
- Problem solving.
- Ethical communication