

Communication Studies (COMS) Major/Minor

Annual Assessment Report AY24-25

Report due date: Tuesday, November 7, 2025

- 1. Name(s) of all program(s) and degree type(s) assessed** (Major, Minor, Graduate, or Non-Degree)

Undergraduate Major
Communication Studies (COMS)

**Because there are only 7 declared COMS minors, we did not assess the COMS minor separate from the COMS major, AY 2024/2025.*

- 2. Names and contact information of the faculty coordinating the assessment of each program and report**

Submitted by Dr. Allison Thorson, Chair, Department of Communication Studies

Please send feedback to athorson@usfca.edu

- 3. Mission Statement**

No changes since the last report.

The Department of Communication Studies is a community of scholars whose mission is to empower students to achieve their personal and professional goals through becoming clear, effective, and ethical communicators. Communication Studies graduates will be educated in understanding, critiquing, and producing arguments and texts with the goal of fostering a sense of civic responsibility and a shared commitment to social justice.

- 4. Your PLOs**

No changes since the last report.

1. Students will articulate and define major theories and concepts used in the study of communication.
2. Students will design a research project that engages scholarly literature to address significant and appropriate questions/issues.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to select and analyze text(s), collect and analyze data, and answer research questions and test hypotheses.
4. Students will craft effective messages by identifying and addressing social context(s)/specific audiences.
5. Students will be able to identify how communication produces, reinforces, and critiques social inequalities and power relations.

5. Current Curricular Map.

Five updates were made to the major and minor using a short form on Curriculog.

- The course COMS 280 was added to the curriculum map. (effective Fall 2025).
- The course COMS 290 was added to the curriculum map. (effective Fall 2025)
- The course COMS 291/UXUI 291 was added to the curriculum map. (effective Fall 2025)
- We resubmitted the course COMS 333 to Curriculog to ensure that it showed up on student's degree evaluations and the university catalog. This course was already on our curriculum map but updates were made to reflect that it did not meet PLO2. (effective Fall 2025)

6. Year-by-year list of PLOs assessed since your last APR and those to be assessed before your next APR

Pre - AY 2013/2014

- discussed various ways we might assess the COMS major

AY 2013/2014 – APR year

- developed COMS PLOs (PLO 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 4.1) and a tentative comprehensive Student Learning Assessment plan
- investigated e-portfolio platforms; explored create e-portfolios options, capstone course
- determined data should be collected in the Communication Studies Internship course

AY 2014/2015

- developed a Learning Assessment & Skills Translation Assignment that became a required part of our internship course. The data from this assignment - which required students to submit portions of papers/assignments from previous COMS courses they completed – were

intended to later be used to assess our PLOs as rubrics were developed one-by-one.

AY 2015/2016

- revised our mission statement
- revised our program goals
- revised and reduced the number of COMS PLOs to 5 (from 8): PLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- over the course of 6 semesters, we collected and analyzed student data online as a required part of our internship course “Learning Assessment & Skills Translation Assignment”
- determined whether students reported that a particular PLO was achieved in the courses that the COMS department identified as fulfilling that PLO
- developed the PLO1 rubric and tested the rubric using work products uploaded by students to the Learning Assessment & Skills Translation Assignment from COMS 496
- once the PLO1 rubric was developed and tested, we finalized this assessment using direct student work products that were pulled from courses that were identified by professors as meeting PLO1.
- based on our findings, we developed and refined our survey tool to collect direct student data in COMS 496 based on our new PLOs
- based on our findings, we finalized and started developing initial rubrics for PLO 2, 3, and 5.

AY 2016/2017

- developed the PLO5 rubric and tested the rubric using work products uploaded by students to the Learning Assessment & Skills Translation Assignment from COMS 496

AY2017 – 2018

- once the PLO5 rubric was developed and tested, we finalized this assessment using direct student work products that were pulled from courses that were identified by professors as meeting PLO5.
- developed the PLO2 rubric and tested the rubric using work products uploaded by students to the Learning Assessment & Skills Translation Assignment from COMS 496

AY 2018 – 2019

- once the PLO2 rubric was developed and tested, we finalized this assessment using direct student work products that were pulled from courses that were identified by professors as meeting PLO2.

AY 2019 – 2020

- developed the PLO3 rubric and tested the rubric using work products uploaded by students to the Learning Assessment & Skills Translation Assignment from COMS 496
- once the PLO3 rubric was developed and tested, we finalized this assessment using direct student work products that were pulled from courses that were identified by professors as meeting PLO3.

AY 2020-2021

- developed the PLO4 rubric and tested the rubric using work products uploaded by students to the Learning Assessment & Skills Translation Assignment from COMS 496
- once the PLO4 rubric was developed and tested, we finalized this assessment using direct student work products that were pulled from courses that were identified by professors as meeting PLO4.
- as of 2020-2021 rubrics were developed for each of our COMS PLOs (1-5).

AY 2021 – 2022 – APR year

- missing PLO1 rubric was found/developed
- collected work products to assess PLO 1
- rated PLO1 work products from 31 randomly selected students in COMS 202, 203, 204, 253, and 254

AY 2022 – 2023

- assessed PLO1 with PLO1 rubric and data from 4 courses: COMS 335 - Social Movements and Rhetoric; COMS 344 - Environmental Communication; COMS 352 - Health Communication; COMS 368 - Communication & Aging

AY 2023 – 2024

- we determined which PLO 4 is correct (discrepancy found during 2022-2023 assessment cycle)
- we updated all rubrics so they use the same scale 0-5 or 1-5 (discrepancy found during 2022-2023 assessment cycle)
- we looked over the rubric for PLO3, as two options are provided (discrepancy found during 2022-2023 assessment cycle)
- we assessed PLO5 with PLO5 rubric and data from 4 courses: COMS 335 - Social Movements and Rhetoric; COMS 344 - Environmental Communication; COMS 352 - Health Communication; COMS 368 - Communication & Aging

AY 2024 – 2025

- assessed PLO2 with PLO2 rubric and data from 4 courses: COMS 302 - Dark Side of Family/Interpersonal Communication; COMS 306 - Family Communication; COMS 333 - Political Communication; COMS 365 - PLO2 - Geographies of Communication
- we identified COMS courses that have not yet been reviewed
- we ensured that COMS 333 is on the curriculum map and listed on student's degree evaluations
- We added COMS 280 and COMS 290 and COMS 291 to the curriculum map

(forthcoming) AY 2025 – 2026

- we will focus on either PLO 3 or PLO 4.
- will assess courses that have not yet been reviewed

- we will update the curriculum map and departmental materials to reflect newly adopted course numbers
 - COMS 253 → COMS 303
 - COMS 254 → COMS 304
 - COMS 300 → COMS 340
 - COMS 302 → COMS 342
 - COMS 304 → COMS 344
 - COMS 306 → COMS 346
- we will update the curriculum map and departmental materials to reflect newly proposed courses
 - COMS 495, Communication Studies Internship (asynchronous, online)
- we will update the curriculum map and departmental materials to reflect the new version of COMS 202

7. Assessment Methodology for academic year 2024-2025.

- A)** Random numbers were generated (2, 5, 8, 10, & 16) to identify 5 unique and direct student work samples from 4 different courses (20 direct student work samples in total) to assess COMS PLO2 (PLO5: Students will design a research project that engages scholarly literature to address significant and appropriate questions/issues.)
- COMS 302 - Dark Side of Family/Interpersonal Communication - direct student work samples from students 2, 5, 8, 10, & 16
 - COMS 306 - Family Communication - direct student work samples from students 2, 5, 8, 10, & 16
 - COMS 333 - Political Communication - direct student work samples from students 2, 5, 8, 10, & 16
 - COMS 365 - PLO2 - Geographies of Communication - direct student work samples from students 2, 5, 8, 10, & 16
- B)** Convenience sampling was used to determine which courses and coursework to assess. Specifically, we asked COMS Assessment committee members to look for assignments / test questions / papers from recently taught sections of their courses to assess PLO2. In the end, 15 direct student examples from 3 courses that had been identified as meeting this PLO at the mastery or developing level were assessed. The reason this sample was decreased from 20 to 15 is because the professor of COMS 333 (Political Communication) determined that this class did not meet PLO #2. The curriculum map was updated to reflect this change.
- C)** Exemplars from 15 students (over 15% of COMS majors) were analyzed. Note: As of census date, Fall 2024, there were 99 Communication Studies Majors.

DESCRIPTIONS OF WORK PRODUCTS/ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS/ESSAY QUESTIONS:

COMS 302 - Dark Side of Family/Interpersonal Communication - direct student work samples from students 2, 5, 8, 10, & 16

Students wrote a final paper that required them to compose a well-written, comprehensive, review of research studies published on a particular communication topic of their choice. Based on their synthesis of these studies, students made an argument for a new study that would test and/or explore a set of research questions/hypotheses that they proposed at the end of their literature review. Next, students developed a methods and data analysis section to detail the procedures they would need to employ to answer their research questions or test their hypotheses.

COMS 306 - Family Communication - direct student work samples from students 2, 5, 8, 10, & 16

Students wrote a final paper / case study that required them to interview two individuals from two different generations of one family. Each person was interviewed separately. After conducting each interview and transcribing it, students analyzed their data and applied theory to understand how communication was used within families to manage private information, reduce uncertainty, accommodate one another, or mark a turning point (i.e. it was required that the paper was based in theory).

COMS 333 - Political Communication

After looking at PLO #2, the professor determined that this class did not meet PLO #2. The curriculum map was updated to reflect this change.

COMS 365 - PLO2 - Geographies of Communication - direct student work samples from students 2, 5, 8, 10, & 16

Students wrote a final paper in which they were required to address the following prompt: "Introduce your setting and methods by selecting specific features that are central for your analysis. State what kind of sources you used in your research and what methods you used. For your sources please provide a detailed literature review (contact me if you want more info on how to write a lit review). You want to link your thesis with issues in the literature on the geography of communication explored in class. Here you may wish to highlight how your thesis is an extension or a contradiction of current understandings in the literature."

D) To assess these direct student work samples, we used the PLO2.

COMS Program Learning #2 Rubric

PLO2 Rubric: Students will design a research project that engages scholarly literature to address significant and appropriate questions/issues.

1 Insufficient	2 Introductory	3 Developing	4 Mastery	5 Exceptional
Students do not do these things or do so incorrectly or with excessive errors.	summarizes literature and does not offer a significant/appropriate question/hypothesis about	synthesizes literature but does not offer a significant /appropriate question/hypothesis about communication OR summarizes and identifies gaps/makes critiques AND offers significant/appropriate question/hypothesis	Does all 3: synthesizes literature, identifies existing gaps/makes critiques, which leads to a significant /appropriate question/hypothesis about communication	Students do all three <i>with exceptional skill</i> : Does all 3: synthesizes literature, identifies existing gaps/makes critiques, which leads to a significant /appropriate question/hypothesis about communication

E) No revisions to the rubric were made.

F) Each assessment item was analyzed by the COMS 2024/2025 Assessment Sub-Committee (all of whom are full-time faculty members).

- Dr. Allison Thorson, Chair Department of Communication Studies, Department of Communication Studies Professor, Assessment Committee Chair
- Dr. Brandi Lawless, Department of Communication Studies Professor, Assessment Committee Member
- Dr. Marco Jacquiment, Department of Communication Studies Professor, Assessment Committee Member
- Dr. Evelyn Ho, Department of Communication Studies Professor, Assessment Committee Member

8. Assessment Results for academic year 2023-2024.

Paper/Assignment PLO 2	Dr. Lawless	Dr. Jacquemet	Dr. Ho	Dr. Thorson	Mode	Expectation (per Cur. Map)
COMS 302 - 2	4		3	4	4	4
COMS 302 - 5	4		3	4	4	4
COMS 302 - 8		3	4	4	4	4
COMS 302 - 10	4	4		4	4	4
COMS 302 - 16	4		3	4	4	4
COMS 306 - 2	4		5	5	5	4
COMS 306 - 5	4	3	3		3	4
COMS 306 - 8		4	4	4	4	4
COMS 306 - 10		4	4	4	4	4
COMS 306 - 16	3	2		3	3	4
COMS 365 - 1	3	2		3	3	4
COMS 365 - 2	3	2	3		3	4
COMS 365 - 3	2	1		2	2	4
COMS 365 - 4		3	3	3	3	4
COMS 365 - 5	2	2	2		2	4

KEY:

Dark green, exceeded expectations = 6.6%

Light green, met expectations = 46.7%

Red, just below expectations = 46.7%

a. how well students mastered the outcome at the level they were intended to,

Using the mode for each rating, assessment of student work (direct data) found that student work **met or exceeded the expectations** PLO2 was intended to meet 53.3% of the time. Student work was assessed as just below our expectations 46.7% of the time.

b. any trends noticed over the past few assessment cycles, and

Based on our assessment, COMS majors were able to “**design a research project that engages scholarly literature to address significant and appropriate questions/issues**” (PLO2) in roughly 2 of the 3 courses assessed at the level expected (Mastery). This still was being developed or introduced in the 3rd course but was not mastered by students. This is inconsistent with what we found in our previous reports, where students have generally met the PLO we assessed at the expected level 90-100% of the time.

c. the levels at which students mastered the outcome based on the rubric used.

Results (COMS major):

	Percentage of Students
Met or Exceeded outcome at the level intended	53.3%
- <i>Exceeded outcome at the level intended</i>	6.6%
- <i>Met outcome at the level intended</i>	46.7%
Did not meet outcome at the level intended	46.7%

9. How results were shared with faculty and how your department/program responded to the results. This is where you should lay out any plans for future improvement or assessment of your program indicated by the results

These findings were shared with the full COMS assessment committee and faculty.

These findings indicate that the selected upper-division courses should be retained as upper-division course options for the COMS major. However, they also suggested that the extent to which students meet the expectations of PLO2 in COMS 365 should be changed to the D (developing) level. This assessment serves as direct evidence that the courses we are offering students are – in general - meeting our PLO expectations and providing students a solid understanding of the communication discipline.

One implication of our findings was that - after looking at COMS 333, Political Communication – we determined that COMS 333 does not meet PLO #2. The curriculum map was updated to reflect this change and provided continued insight into our courses/program as a whole.

A second implication of our findings was that - after looking at COMS 365, Geographies of Communication – we determined that COMS 365 meet PLO #2 and the Developing level (not the Mastery level). The curriculum map was updated to reflect this change and provided continued insight into our courses/program as a whole.

The discrepancies that were in our 2023/2024 report were addressed across the department. As such, we

- updated our catalog and curriculum map so all courses are listed in all areas

New findings were identified:

- We determined that COMS 333 does not meet PLO #2.
- We determined that COMS 365 meets PLO #2 at the Developing level.

Next year we intend to look at our curriculum map to assess if changes to the expectations we have outlined for each course should be made (i.e., Introductory, Developing, or Mastery). Reevaluating these metrics, as they relate to our expectations, is an important part of reflecting on our yearly assessment.

In order to further assess the major, data from additional courses that have not yet been assessed should be evaluated to ensure that the content taught across the COMS major meets our expectations.

We will continue to collect data from these and other courses to show evidence of PLO2 being met. The committee will also spend the next year collecting direct data from additional courses to assess additional PLOs.

10. Discussion of any significant feedback from your previous year's report and how your program responded to that feedback

Last year we were told that we are doing great with assessment and to keep up the strong work. We will continue with our approach.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

(Any rubrics used for assessment, relevant tables, charts and figures should be included here)

A. COMS Curriculum Map -- all updates are highlighted in yellow

Course	Course Learning Outcomes	1. Students will articulate and define major theories and concepts used in the study of communication.	2. Students will design a research project that engages scholarly literature to address significant and appropriate questions/issues.	3. Students will demonstrate the ability to select and analyze text(s), collect and analyze data, and answer research questions and test hypotheses	4. Students will craft effective messages by identifying and addressing social context(s)/specific audiences.	5. Students will be able to identify how communication produces, reinforces, and critiques social inequalities and power relations.
COMS	I = Introductory; D = Developing; M = Mastery	I = Introductory; D = Developing; M = Mastery	I = Introductory; D = Developing; M = Mastery	I = Introductory; D = Developing; M = Mastery	I = Introductory; D = Developing; M = Mastery	I = Introductory; D = Developing; M = Mastery
202 Rhetoric & the Public Sphere	To become more conscious of the complexities of language as symbolic action. To understand rhetoric as both a pragmatic tool for achieving the needs of particular communities and a key force shaping those very communities. To become skilled at using rhetorical theories and concepts to interpret, analyze, and explain contemporary problems in the public sphere. To become more critical, reflexive, and savvy consumers of all kinds of public discourse. To become familiar with foundational texts and issues, thus preparing students for subsequent studies in rhetoric					

	and communication. To apply the knowledge and skills gleaned through reading, writing, and discussion to situations beyond the classroom.					
203 Communication & Everyday Life	Analyze the taken for granted nature of everyday communication and discuss how theories of communication allow us to understand everyday life. Analyze communication as a situated practice in everyday interactions. Discuss the role of communication and perception in the creation of self; how communication changes over time in relationships; and how conflict is managed in everyday interactions. Demonstrate knowledge of the different modalities of communication used in everyday interactions, including verbal and nonverbal codes. Analyze the complexities of beginning, building, and ending relationships, including friendships, romantic relationships, and family relationships.	I	I			
204 Communication & Culture	Indicate an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural/linguistic diversity. Define and apply knowledge of culture and communication theories and	I		I		D

	methods. Analyze contemporary socio-cultural problems. Demonstrate and communicate social responsibility. And, hopefully, become an agent for social change.					
252 Critical & Rhetorical Methods	Perform close critical readings of rhetorical texts; Articulate the relationship between text and context; Define key theoretical concepts used for rhetorical criticism; Apply those concepts to critically analyze rhetorical discourse; Write cogent and elegant essays incorporating properly cited research.	D	I	D	D	
253 Quantitative Research Methods	1. Understand the philosophical assumptions that inform the observation and measurement of communication processes and behavior. 2. Explain the rationale for selecting social scientific methods to study communication, the questions that can, and cannot be answered using these methods, and the strengths and weaknesses of these methods. 3. Understand major theories, research questions/hypotheses, and variables that are important to the social scientific study of communication processes and behavior. 4. Understand the processes and techniques by which researchers move in a planned, systematic process from the conceptual to the operational level in the study of	I	D	D		

	<p>communication behavior. 5. Know experimental research methodology used to investigate communication behavior. 6. Understand ways to analyze quantitative (numerical) data gathering using observation and measurement methods.</p>					
254 Qualitative Research Methods	<p>1. Understand and analyze scholarly qualitative research 2. Articulate the difference between post-positivist, interpretivist, and critical research. 3. Demonstrate knowledge of rationales for selecting qualitative research methods to study communication, the types of questions that can be answered using these methods, and the strengths and limitations of these methods 4. Explain ethical implications at each stage of research 5. Apply the concepts above to specific communication issues and questions 6. Perform qualitative research methods presented in class at an introductory level 7. Plan and execute an investigation of a communication question choosing the appropriate research method to use based on at least one of the methods introduced in class demonstrating a greater</p>	I	M	M	D	

	knowledge of that method. 8. Write an APA style final report.					
COMS 280 Communication Workshop (1 unit)	Practice specific communication skills in real world or experiential scenarios				I	
COMS 290 The Communication Lab (2 units)	Practice specific communication skills in real world or experiential scenarios				I	

<p>COMS 291 / UXUI 291 AI Prompt Engineering (2 units)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop clear, precise prompts to achieve desired outcomes from AI models. 2. Identify and apply techniques for refining and optimizing prompts. 3. Understand and address ethical considerations, including bias in AI outputs. 4. Implement privacy practices to protect personal data when interacting with AI. 5. Recognize the limitations and ethical challenges posed by AI-generated content. 				I	
<p>300 Relational Communication</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the importance of relational messages and how the dimensions of communication change over the course of close relationships 2. Recognize the influence of context on close relationships 3. Analyze the development and deterioration of friendships and romantic relationships from a variety of relationship models 4. Discuss the importance of perceptions, rituals, and narratives in close relationships 5. Analyze the role of conflict in the development, maintenance, and dissolution of close relationships 6. Discuss the unique challenges of specific relationship types, such as long distance relationships, online relationships, and post-dissolution relationships 7. Apply 	M	M	M		

	your knowledge of communication and relationships to your own personal relationships and to the relationships of others.					
302 Dark Side IP/Family Comm	1. demonstrate an understanding of the “dark side” metaphor and its relationship and importance to interpersonal and family communication research, theory, and practice 2. demonstrate an ability to critique current interpersonal and family communication theories and research, as well as apply them to a holistic understanding of the dark and bright sides of interaction 3. demonstrate an understanding of the complexities associated with dark side topics including secrets, deception, and relational violence, 4. demonstrate an understanding of both negative and positive aspects of communication behaviors that are typically thought of as “dark” 5. identify and refute popular myths regarding dark side topics 6. apply theories of the dark side of interpersonal communication to practical interpersonal situations.	M	M	D		

304 Family Diversity and Communication	1. Demonstrate familiarity with the factors that create diversity in human societies, including, for example, gender, race, class, and ethnicity.; 2. Understand the relationships among diversity, inequality, and justice.; 3. Demonstrate an understanding of the effects of global interdependence on contemporary societies, for example, the role of migration and immigration, economic, political, and cultural globalization on contemporary societies.; 4. Demonstrate familiarity with the historical contributions of traditionally marginalized groups to contemporary ideas, values and culture.	M			D	
306 Family Communication	1. Discuss the changing definitions of family and recognize the social and cultural contexts in which families operate 2. Analyze family communication according to various theoretical perspectives, including systems theory and relational dialectics 3. Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of communication patterns and rituals in family systems 4. Assess how family forms, conflict, and stress have implications for family communication 5. Recognize communication as a process	M	M	M		

	that both affects and reflects family relationships 6. Evaluate the communication patterns in your own families of origin					
314 Intercultural Communication	1. Acquire awareness of cultural/linguistic diversity. We will examine and discuss the communicative issues of cultural diversity throughout the semester. Required readings on the communicative patterns of different cultures will provide you a full exposure to the communicative factors that create diversity. 2. Acquire knowledge of culture and communication theories and methods. During the first weeks of class, you will learn about theories of communication and sociocultural anthropology; then we will focus on acquiring a basic understanding of language in context. In parallel, you will learn how to conduct an ethnographic project, and we will apply this method to analyze an instance of intercultural communication. 3. Apply this knowledge to contemporary social problems. This course makes you reflect on the communicative problems arising from the encounter of people who do not share the same cultural expectations. In	M	M			M

	<p>particular, since this course explores the role communication plays in restricting access to resources, you will become aware of communicative forms of social inequalities and marginalization. 4. Understand and communication social responsibility. In this course we will explore the importance of ethical and social issues for intercultural communicators. You will be able to evaluate intercultural issues as they arise in public debates, and to discuss the relevance of these issues with other in society. 5. Hopefully, become an agent for social change. Finally, this course seeks to become an open forum for discussion of the role communication studies students have in a critical evaluation of our world and in producing a model for change. You will be encouraged to acquire the communicative skills necessary for establishing and developing relationships with people culturally different from you.</p>					
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315 Asian American Culture & Comm	<p>Articulate current definitions and controversies over Asian American identity. Some issues include the difference between Asian and Asian American and the use of Asian American (or other similar terms) as an umbrella term. - Define what it means to say that Asian American is a socially constructed category. Articulate how identities are constructed in a convergence of different experiential categories such as race, ethnicity, class, and gender. - Demonstrate knowledge of the research and major theories relevant to the study of specific cultural ways of speaking associated with particular Asian Americans and the non-communicative effects of those ways of speaking. - Apply knowledge of Asian American Communication research to contemporary and local situations.</p>	D		M	D	D
320 PR Principles & Practices	<p>Critically reflect upon the roles and functions of public relations in today's society, its historical evolution, current trends, and future directions. Identify and explain concepts and theories used in the public relations profession. Articulate central ethical and legal codes that guide the public relations profession. Understand and apply the strategic planning</p>	I			I	

	<p>process of public relations to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Analyze and critically appraise public relations campaigns using principles and theories covered in class. Identify and describe components of public relations writing. Work effectively in a small group to meet objectives and goals.</p>					
322 PR Law & Ethics	<p>1.) gain a basic understanding of the U.S. legal system; 2.) gain a working knowledge of laws that deal with the gathering and dissemination of information through mass media including Copyright Law, Trademark Law, Privacy Laws, Defamation Law as well as knowledge regarding First Amendment Law and Commercial Speech; 3.) experience working within a small group of peers to research and analyze legal, organizational and ethical information in order to create presentations and practical organizational materials that deal with how an organization communicates and guides behavior of its employees to reach its target audiences in the commercial marketplace; 4.) be able to identify ethical standards in the profession of public relations and be more familiar with possible ethical situations that could and do arise; 5.) enhance your</p>	D			D	

	presentational skills through class assignments and group presentations.					
323 Public Relations Writing	Accurately employ AP style in writing; Apply proof-reading and editing skills to create grammatically sound, error-free prose; Write coherent, concise, and persuasive texts in the following genres: press releases, magazines articles, print news articles, professional email, and social media; Master public relations writing skills including storytelling, message structure, and framing.				D	
324 PR & Advertising Research	Demonstrate an understanding of qualitative and quantitative research methods used in public relations and advertising practices. Apply appropriate research methods to produce relevant results given the specific industry research questions and contexts. Develop research instruments and collect data following ethical procedures. Analyze and interpret qualitative and quantitative research data. Apply			D		

	research findings to address real-world industry issues and problems in public relations and advertising practices. Effectively communicate research results to the intended audience. Work effectively in a small group to meet goals and objectives.					
325 Social Media Strategies	Demonstrate understanding of ethical and legal issues related to social media use; Establish and manage online personal and professional reputations, as well as relationships between an organization and its various stakeholders. Demonstrate the ability to provide analytical insights from social media metrics. Provide insights on and demonstrate experience with current and emerging social media tools and platforms. Reflect upon the roles social media play in organizations and society. Demonstrate the ability to develop systematic, evidence-based social media campaigns. Work effectively in a small group to meet goals and objectives.			D	D	
326 PR Campaigns	Apply the essential principles of public relations into campaign development, including research, strategic planning, implementation, evaluation, and stewardship. Understand and apply appropriate applied research to inform campaign's strategic planning. Identify and develop goals and objectives for			D	D	

	a real-world public relations campaign. Develop a public relations campaign plan that builds upon research evidence, as well as knowledge of public relations principles and theories. Demonstrate competence in public relations and strategic communication writing in the development of campaign materials during implementation. Demonstrate ability to communicate with and provide valuable service for an actual community partner client on public relations and strategic communication. Work effectively in a simulated “mini public relations agency” team setting					
333 Political Communication	1. Define key terms in the study of political communication.; 2. Conduct a critical analysis of campaign communication in its various forms.; 3. Understand and explain the significance of a rhetorical approach to political communication.; 4. Identify and explain impediments to civic engagement.	D		D	M	M
335 Social Movements and Rhetoric	- Explain key rhetorical concepts and show how they relate to social movements - Identify and analyze how messages are crafted for particular audiences - Evaluate the ethical implications of various rhetorical strategies used in social movements - Apply and extend what is	D				M

	learned in the classroom by working with a community partner -Critically analyze social movement rhetoric in action— drawing both on academic research and on field experience working with a community partner - Articulate the relationship between scholarly knowledge and community action - Assess your role as an activist working for social justice.					
336 Law, Justice, and Culture	1. Demonstrate an understanding of what it means to read the law from a rhetorical perspective rather than a legal, sociological, historical or philosophical perspective 2. Critically read a law case by paying attention to what the law says, how it says it, and to whom it relays its message 3. Demonstrate an understanding of how various thinkers in the rhetorical tradition define the relationship between rhetoric and legal practices 4. Apply rhetorical, legal, and political theory to specific legal practices or cases.	D				M
337 Rhet of Sex, Gender, & Sexuality	1. Demonstrate an understanding of how sex, gender, and sexuality are socially constructed, linguistic categories of experience. 2. Examine everyday objects and discourses to discern their	D				M

	implications for how we understand, constitute, and critique sex, gender, and sexuality. 3. Explain how a rhetorical viewpoint can help us understand social issues surrounding sex, gender, and sexuality. 4. Perform a critical analysis of a discourse using theory from Gender and Sexualities Studies.					
344 Environmental Communication	1. Identify ways in which public discourses socially construct relationships between nature and humans; 2. Demonstrate understanding of critical and cultural approaches to environmental communication; 3. Identify and implement communication skills relevant to disseminating environmental information in organizational, political, and/or educational contexts; 4. Critical evaluate environmental advocacy, deliberation, and public relations messages; 5. Apply environmental communication concepts and skills to real-world contexts.	D		D		D

350 Nonverbal Communication	<p>This is an introductory course in nonverbal communication. Throughout this course we will focus on the question: What is the nature and role of nonverbal communication in our everyday interactions? To answer this question, you will engage with a variety of materials designed to enhance both your analytic and experiential knowledge about nonverbal communication. Analytic knowledge stems from your understanding of theoretical and empirical readings. Experiential knowledge will require you to apply what you have learned to your own communication experiences, observational activities, and a research project. Course concepts will be mastered through readings, class discussions, lectures, assignments, and application of concepts through activities.</p>	M	M	M		
352 Health Communication	<p>Demonstrate a broad understanding of the variety of current health communication scholarship through class discussions and exams; Develop skills to assess and create public health campaigns via participation in the beginning stages of the creation of an actual health campaign aimed at a college population; Create an original research project starting with a literature review that leads</p>	M	M	M		

	to the development of research questions and collection/analysis of data through semi-structured interviews. This written paper will examine lay health beliefs; Examine how communication in health contexts can work for social justice and change and develop your own recommendations for how communication can reduce health disparities.					
356 Organizational Communication	This course is designed to help show the complexities of the nonverbal communication system. We will examine the types of cues that are included as part of nonverbal communication and explore the nature of these cues. We will also concentrate on the ways in which nonverbal cues enable communicators to fulfill a range of functions in our interactions with others. These include our attempts to understand others and express our own identities, create and define our relationships, deceive others or detect deception, and the use of nonverbal cues to coordinate our conversations in a variety of contexts.	M				M
358 Persuasion & Social Influence	1. Demonstrate a foundational understanding of the theory and principles of persuasion and social influence addressed. 2. Articulate the major and most frequently used scales and	D	I	I		

	methods employed in persuasion research. 3. Perform the investigation process of an empirically-based persuasion study. 4. Publicly present persuasion and social influence theory and principles.					
360 Language & Social Interaction	Investigate the many components of the study of language and discourse; Examine different methodologies used in the study of language and social interaction including discourse analysis, conversation analysis and ethnography of communication; Make connections between theory, research and everyday experiences in an effort to become more critically aware of the everyday world around us; Access and understand how to read primary documents; Conduct original research through data collection, analysis and writing.	M	M			
362 Communication & Education	This course is designed to highlight how communication plays a role in a variety of educational contexts. Whether you are interested in education from a student's perspective, trainer's perspective, or teacher's perspective, the course offers insights into the sociopolitical development of our education system(s), various philosophical approaches to the art and labor of education, as	M			D	M

	<p>well as lenses through which to understand diversity, learning styles, and educational participation. In this course, I encourage you to consider education as a democratic practice and reflect upon what that means for you as a student and as a potential educator. I will push you to think of educational spaces as those in which communication is a tool for the co-creation of meaning. This class will help you apply a variety of communication strategies to your specific educational interests and needs.</p>					
<p>364 Comm for Justice & Soc Change</p>	<p>(1) Understand and describe the role of communication in judicial and political settings around the world. (2) Assess the interdisciplinary literature on law, human rights, and conflict management which emphasizes methods and theories in communication studies. (3) Analyze communicative practices in institutional settings, focusing on the nature and sources of social inequality, repression, victimization, and human and civic rights violations. (4) Employ social science knowledge to explore questions of political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental justice, with an appreciation and respect for human diversity. (6) Articulate a</p>	M		D		M

	critical perspective for evaluating the administration of social justice, including its political and economic foundations. (7) Use tools of legal analysis and argumentation to address judicial and human rights controversies, such as the response to terrorism, female genital mutilation, humanitarian intervention, and the impact of U.S. foreign policy around the world. (8) Understand and promote social responsibility. (9) Communicate social science knowledge by learning how to evaluate research findings, policy decisions, and the structural communicative characteristics of the regulation of justice and the global structures in which it operates					
365 Geographies of Communication	1) Students will develop a basic understanding of how communication affects one's physical environment. 2) Students will acquire knowledge of geography of communication theories and methods. Students will be exposed to theoretical materials ranging from communicative network analysis to contemporary debates over deterritorialization and surveillance. 3) Students will apply this knowledge to contemporary social problems. This course seeks to make student reflect on the role	M	Changed to D (per 2024/2025 assessment)	M	M	M

	communicative environments play in the construction of social inequality. In particular, the class will explore the role communication plays in restricting access to resources, such as the digital divide.					
366 Ethnography of Communication	Identify basic theories of ethnographic research and its impact on methodology. (And learn why that comic --> is both funny and problematic) - Design an ethnographic research project: participate and observe in a particular organization in order to study culture through communication. - Engage in participant fieldwork that is meaningful to the organization and the community being served by that organization. - Analyze and interpret the communicative phenomena used to run, develop, and maintain the organization. - Write an interpretive ethnography in which you present observed patterns of communication. - Present these insights back to community partners as a demonstration of feminist ethnographic work. - Use the service-learning experience as a site to illustrate ethnographic issues such as interpretation, reflexivity, power and presentation. These will be processed through field notes,	D		M		D

	interviews, memo-writing/reflection and presented in two different types of ethnographies: interpretive and either critical or experimental. - Practice and reflect on the communicative skills necessary for establishing and developing relationships with people from this organization and for working together with them to improve the world.					
368 Communication & Aging	Communication and Aging examines the construction of what it means to age, the communication processes inherent in this phenomenon, the impact of aging on human relationship / communication, and communication in contexts involving and impacting older adults. By the end of the semester, students should exit the course with a familiarity with the central theories of aging and approaches to studying intergenerational communication, knowledge of societal attitudes about age groups and intergenerational communication, an enhanced understanding of cultural variations in aging and attitudes toward intergenerational communication, recognition of	M		D		D

	the role of media and technology in intergenerational relations, an increased appreciation of health and health care issues, and an awareness of your own attitudes and/or biases relevant to the context of communication and aging.					
369 Comm and Health Disparities	<p>Articulate the socio-cultural determinants of health and current research findings on the relationship of these determinants of health and health disparities.</p> <p>Analyze health disparities from post-positivist, interpretive, and critical perspectives and be able to state the different approaches, goals, and methods</p> <p>Synthesize research and the CEL-experience/knowledge in papers regarding using communication to improve a health disparity.</p> <p>Conduct community-based participatory work that leads to the creation and assessment of a mini-public health campaign (or other project) that promotes health.</p>	M			D	D

372 Comm, Disability & Soc Just	a. Demonstrate an understanding of disability as a social construct, b. Articulate the nature of the attitudes and prejudices toward persons with disabilities, c. Express theoretical and research knowledge concerning the factors contributing to the (in)effectiveness of interactive strategies for interacting with persons with disabilities, d. Apply theory and research of communication, and social justice, in addressing disability and social inequity. e. Articulate what you learned or gleaned from the service learning “text” through the interaction with persons with disabilities experience, and its relationship between classroom text content (research/theory).	D	I	I	I	I
375 International Conflict and Alliance Building	1) analyze and apply theories about intercultural and international conflicts, 2) create your own working definitions about key concepts/processes in intercultural conflict, 3) articulate an understanding of how intercultural conflicts arise, how they continue and change, and what might transform the frequency or intensity of existing conflicts, 4) apply what you learn to case studies of international/cultural conflicts	M	D			M

398 Directed Study	Depends on the Project					
490 Special Topics	Depends on the Project					
496 Communication Studies Internship	- Draft, edit, and finalize a resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile geared toward a particular career path. - Find and apply for internships/jobs using online databases. - Conduct a mock interview and receive feedback. - Research career paths and a specific job via multiple sources and produce written reports of your findings. - Reflect on the process of job searching, self-presentation, and the application of your education and present your reflections. - Complete 120 hours of internship work.				M	

B. COMS PLO Rubrics – all updates are highlighted in yellow

PLO 1 Rubric: Students will articulate and define major theories and concepts used in the study of communication.

1 Insufficient	2 Introductory	3 Developing	4 Mastery	5 Exceptional
Students do not do these things or	Does 1 out of 3: Identifies (lists) a major theory or	Does 2 out of 3: Identifies (lists) a major theory or	Does all 3: Identifies (lists) a major theory or	Students do all three <i>with exceptional skill:</i>

<p>do so incorrectly or with excessive errors.</p>	<p>concept used in the study of communication. <i>(What?)</i></p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains (defines) a major theory or concept used in the study of communication. <i>(How & Why?)</i></p> <p>AND</p> <p>Applies a major theory or concept used in the study of communication to a specific task - either using it as a guide to answer a RQ/H or putting it into practice.</p>	<p>concept used in the study of communication. <i>(What?)</i></p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains (defines) a major theory or concept used in the study of communication. <i>(How & Why?)</i></p> <p>AND</p> <p>Applies a major theory or concept used in the study of communication to a specific task - either using it as a guide to answer a RQ/H or putting it into practice.</p>	<p>concept used in the study of communication. <i>(What?)</i></p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explains (defines) a major theory or concept used in the study of communication. <i>(How & Why?)</i></p> <p>AND</p> <p>Applies a major theory or concept used in the study of communication to a specific task - either using it as a guide to answer a RQ/H or putting it into practice.</p>	<p>Does all 3:</p> <p>Identifies (lists) a major theory or concept used in the study of communication.</p> <p>Explains (defines) a major theory or concept used in the study of communication.</p> <p>Applies a major theory or concept used in the study of communication to a specific task - either using it as a guide to answer a RQ/H or putting it into practice.</p>
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	(What now?)	(What now?)	(What now?)	
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PLO2 Rubric: Students will design a research project that engages scholarly literature to address significant and appropriate questions/issues.

1 Insufficient	2 Introductory	3 Developing	4 Mastery	5 Exceptional
Students do not do these things or do so incorrectly or with excessive errors.	summarizes literature and does not offer a significant/appropriate question/hypothesis about	synthesizes literature but does not offer a significant /appropriate question/hypothesis about communication OR summarizes and identifies gaps/makes critiques AND offers significant/appropriate question/	Does all 3: synthesizes literature, identifies existing gaps/makes critiques, which leads to a significant /appropriate question/hypothesis about communication	Students do all three <i>with exceptional skill</i> : Does all 3: synthesizes literature, identifies existing gaps/makes critiques, which leads to a significant /appropriate question/hypothesis about communication

		hypothesis		
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PLO3: Students will demonstrate the ability to select and analyze text(s), collect and analyze data, and answer research questions and/or test hypotheses.

1 Insufficient	2 Introductory	3 Developing	4 Mastery	5 Exceptional
Students do not do these things or do so incorrectly or with excessive errors.	Students do one or the other: Selecting Text(s)/ Collecting Data OR Analyzing Text(s)/Data	Students do both: Selecting Text(s)/ Collecting Data AND Analyzing Texts/Data	Students do all three: Selecting Text(s)/ Collecting Data AND Analyzing Texts/Data AND Offering Research Insight	Students do all three <i>with exceptional skill</i> : Selecting Text(s)/ Collecting Data AND Analyzing Texts/Data AND Offering Research Insight

PLO 4: Students will craft effective messages by identifying and addressing social context(s)/specific audiences.

1 Insufficient	2 Introductory	3 Developing	4 Mastery	5 Exceptional
<p>Students do not do these things or do so incorrectly or with excessive errors.</p>	<p>Students do the following: Identify social context for their messages (but do not assess the social context for their messages)</p>	<p>Students do both: Identify social context for their messages AND Assess social context for their messages</p>	<p>Students do the following with some nuance: Identify social context for their messages AND Assess social context for their messages AND Craft effective messages for specific audiences</p>	<p>Students the following <i>with exceptional skill</i>: Identify social context for their messages AND Assess social context for their messages AND Craft effective messages for specific audiences</p>

PLO 5 Rubric: Students will be able to identify how communication produces, reinforces, and critiques social inequalities and power relations.

1 Insufficient	2 Introductory	3 Developing	4 Mastery	5 Exceptional
<p>Students do not do these things or do so incorrectly or with excessive errors.</p>	<p>Does 1 out of 3: Identifies a specific social inequality or power relation(s). <i>(What?)</i> OR Explain the context of how these social inequalities or power relations manifest. <i>(How & Why?)</i> OR Offers solutions/ alternatives or critiques of social inequalities and power relations. <i>(What now?)</i></p>	<p>Does 2 out of 3: Identifies a specific social inequality or power relation(s). <i>(What?)</i> AND / OR Explain the context of how these social inequalities or power relations manifest. <i>(How & Why?)</i> AND / OR Offers solutions/ alternatives or critiques of social inequalities and power relations. <i>(What now?)</i> hypothesis</p>	<p>Does all 3: Identifies a specific social inequality or power relation(s). <i>(What?)</i> AND Explain the context of how these social inequalities or power relations manifest. <i>(How & Why?)</i> AND Offers solutions/ alternatives or critiques of social inequalities and power relations. <i>(What now?)</i></p>	<p>Students do all three <i>with exceptional skill:</i></p> <p>Does all 3: Identifies a specific social inequality or power relation(s). <i>(What?)</i> AND Explain the context of how these social inequalities or power relations manifest. <i>(How & Why?)</i> AND Offers solutions/ alternatives or critiques of social inequalities and power relations. <i>(What now?)</i></p>