

2022 Assessment Report
Department of Communication Studies
Degree Types: Major & Minor (Aggregate Report)
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COMS Major and Minor Mission Statement: 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.

**No changes since last report*

COMS Major Program 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 identify and assess the social context for their messages and craft effective messages for specific audiences.
5. Students will be able to identify how communication produces, reinforces, and critiques social inequalities and power relations.

**Because there are only 9 declared COMS minors, our understanding is that we do not need to submit a full assessment report.*

***No changes since last report*

Curriculum Map (see attached)

Since the last report no changes were made to our curriculum map.

Assessment Schedule

AY 2020-2021: Report of PLO 3, collection of work products for PLO 4

Fall 2021: Development of PLO 4 rubric, inter-coder reliability testing, full department assessment of PLO 4

AY 2021-2022: Collection of work products for PLO 1

Spring 2022: Assessment of lower-level classes for PLO 1

AY 2022-2023: Assessment of Upper Division classes for PLO 1

General Assessment Timeline for each AY:

Fall Semester:

- Department Assessment Report Due (usually October 1st)
- Develop rubric for current year's PLO
- Developing codebook for current year's PLO assessment (rules and examples)
- Pull student work products to assess current year's PLO

Spring Semester:

- Train all faculty on rubric
- Rating of work products
- Reliability check

Methodology used (Major):

We have a two-part process for assessment. The first involves work products identified by students that we use to develop and test our rubric. As part of our COMS 496: Communication Studies Internship course, students complete a "Learning Assessment and Skills Translation" assignment where they explain what each of our PLOs mean to them and upload a work product from a class that they think demonstrates how they meet each PLO. We find this is a great way to get students aware of the learning outcomes for our major and have them reflect on the coursework they have completed. They also then work on translating the material into skills they could talk about on a resume or in a job interview. For the first part of the assessment of each PLO, we use the materials that students have uploaded. These are used to help us practice with the rubric we have developed and do an initial test of our interrater reliability. For the second part of the assessment of each PLO, we randomly select 10% of students in each class that professors have identified as meeting a specific PLO (via our curriculum map). Professors then pull the work products of the randomly selected students that they think are the best ways to assess the PLO for that particular class. Our PA then redacts any identifying information. The COMS Assessment Committee then trains all of the other faculty on the use of the rubric.

The PLO 1 rubric was developed and practice rating occurred in Fall 2021. Then training of all faculty and rating occurred in Spring 2022.

We had 142 students enrolled in the Spring 2021 in courses that met PLO 1 (including COMS 202, 203, 204, and 253) and 146 students in Fall 2021 (COMS 202, 203, 204, 253, and 254) for a total of 288 students. We rated work products from 31 randomly selected students, representing 10.7% of the students enrolled (as recommended we aim to rate at least 10%). Each work product was rated three times (by three different faculty members). Mode was calculated for each work product. Where mode was unavailable, mean was used.

We would like to point out a few things about our assessment plan. All COMS faculty rotate on to the COMS Assessment Committee and serve for two years (with the Department Chair serving as Chair of the COMS Assessment Committee and serving for the duration of their term as Chair). This past year (2021-2022), the COMS Assessment Committee was made up of Marilyn DeLaure, Fay Chen, and Marco Jacquemet, with Brandi Lawless chairing the committee. For this coming year (2022-2023), the COMS

Assessment Committee is made up of Fay Chen, Sarah Burgess, and Allison Thorson, with Brandi Lawless chairing the committee. Also, all of the faculty serve as faculty raters. We had 100% faculty involvement this past year, which we think is impressive.

Methodology used (Minor):

This is an aggregate report of the COMS major and the minor.

Results

The rubric we developed allows us to indicate what level of achievement was met and to map whether this is the appropriate level of achievement for that particular course (e.g., our foundation course, COMS 202 is supposed to meet PLO 1 at the Introductory level, while one of our methods courses, COMS 252 is supposed to meet PLO 1 at the Developing level). The results for PLO 1 are below:

Introductory Level (COMS 202, 203, 204, 253, & 254):

- 1 student = 0
- 6 students = 1
- 5 students = 2
- 9 students = 3
- 9 students = 4
- 1 students = 5

All of the work products rated as 1 (and most of those rated 2) were collected from our foundational classes. These results indicate that all of the students in COMS 202, 203, and 204 are meeting expectations for the learning outcomes. Most students in the methods classes (second-set of required courses in the major) are surpassing expectations for PLO 1 by moving beyond the introductory level.

Developing Level (COMS 252):

This class was not taught during the assessment period (Spring 2021-Fall 2021).

Mastery Level (None):

Courses listed at the Mastery level on our curriculum map will be assessed this year as part of the second half of our assessment of PLO 1 (300-level classes)

Closing the Loop: Faculty in Reflection

Results of the assessment were shared with the COMS faculty in September. Faculty reflected on the fact that most students in the methods classes are moving beyond the introductory level. We are happy to see students achieving higher results, indicative of the strength of our courses. We will continue to use best practices and hope that students exceed expectations in the future.

Beginning in Fall 2022, we will assess the second half of our courses (upper division) for COMS PLO 1.

Suggestions from Previous Report(s):

Last year's assessment report suggested that we review our curriculum map for PLO 4, and ask whether COMS 496 meets the learning outcome. We may also consider splitting PLO 4 into two separate learning outcomes. These questions will be addressed as part of our APR, happening this year.