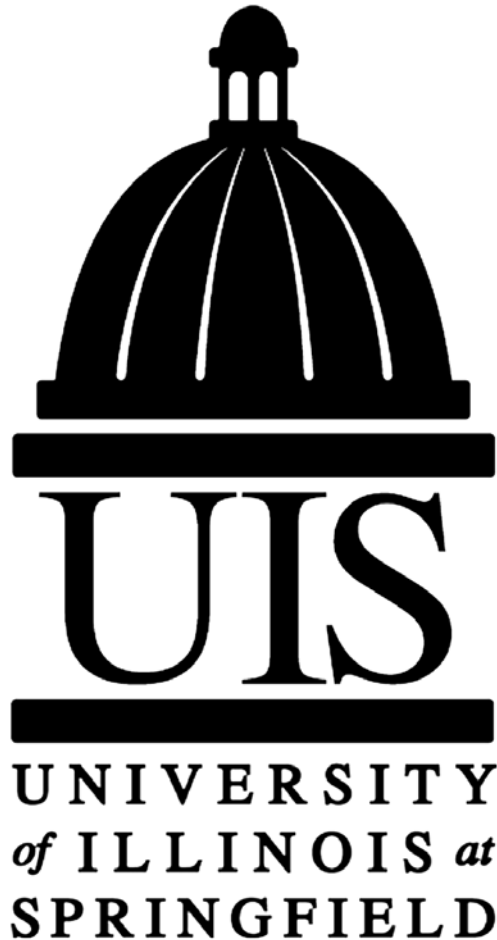


Communication Department Graduate Student Handbook



Department Office: UHB 3010
Telephone (217) 206-6790
www.uis.edu/communication
By: Jason M. Stewart, M.A.

Updated 07/30/09

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Welcome

Thank you for showing interest in the Communication Department graduate program here at the University of Illinois at Springfield. The graduate program in Communication has two main objectives:

- 1) to guide students in an intensive exploration of the structure and function of human communication
- 2) to educate students in the methods and theory of communication inquiry.

Many of our graduates have gone on to establish successful careers or continue their studies in doctoral communication programs. Why? It's simple. They received a quality education. Maybe it's our wonderful faculty. Or, maybe it's our favorable student-to-professor ratio, among other advantages. Either way, if you successfully gain admission into our program, you should be prepared for an intensive study of communication.

Afterward you will be glad that you did. Just ask our graduates.

This handbook outlines the stages that our program asks students to complete before earning their degrees. After you browse our booklet we hope that you can answer one important question: Do you have what it takes to become a UIS Communication graduate student? If you have questions pertaining to our program, please contact a faculty member or the department secretary at (217) 206-6790 or visit our website at <http://www.uis.edu/communication>

This handbook was created by Jason M. Stewart, M.A. in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Communication.

Application for Graduate Admission



The first step in applying for admission to the Communication graduate program is to contact the UIS Admissions Office. Once the Admissions Office reviews your application, you will be notified via mail. For admission, you must complete the Communication Department's graduate entrance requirements. As an applicant, you are required to submit the following:

- Completed Application for Graduate Admission. Admission

forms are available online at <http://www.uis.edu/admissions/applyNow.html> and in the Office of Admissions in University Hall, room 1080.

- Official or certified college transcripts (Includes all colleges that you attended).
- A \$50 non-refundable application fee (\$60 for international students) payable to the University of Illinois at Springfield or UIS.
- All students born January 1, 1957, or later must provide proof of immunization. International students must also provide documentation of a negative chest x-ray or tuberculin skin test. For more information please contact Campus Health Services at (217) 206-6676 or <http://www.uis.edu/healthservices/>
- International students must also complete the Financial Affidavit form available at <http://www.uis.edu/admissions/FinancialAffidavit.pdf>.

Contact Information

Office of Admissions
University Hall Room 1080
Phone: (217) 206-4847
Toll-free: 1-888-977-4847
E-mail: admissions@uis.edu
Admissions website: <http://www.uis.edu/admissions>

Department Entrance Requirements

An undergraduate degree in Communication isn't required to apply. However, you must meet the following requirements to successfully be admitted into the Communication graduate program:



- Students must have a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.00 or better (on a 4.00 scale)

- Candidates required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) must achieve a score of 580 or better for admittance into the program.

- Students must successfully complete the department written exam. The written exam includes multiple-choice grammar/word use questions and essays. Students must obtain a score of eighty percent (80%) or higher on the objective written exam while showing that they possess graduate-level writing skills in their essays.

To schedule your testing date, contact the Communication Department's secretary.

Contact Information

Department secretary
University Hall Room 3010
Phone: (217) 206-6790

Communication Department website: <http://www.uis.edu/communication>

Choosing an Adviser

Once you have successfully earned admission into the graduate program, you should choose an adviser. Your adviser must be a full-time Communication faculty member. Before choosing your adviser you should ask yourself the following questions:

- **How do I select the right adviser?** Consult the list of faculty interests on the “Meet the Faculty” page. Telephone or email the faculty members who interest you. Also, ask current graduate students which faculty members may meet your needs best.
- **What is my area of concentration?** Selecting a faculty member who is experienced in your area of concentration can be helpful, especially when planning your semester schedule and closure experience.
- **Will there be time conflicts?** In some instances students find it difficult to coordinate their schedules with that of their adviser’s schedule. For instance, if you are only available to meet with your adviser during evening hours, you may want to select a faculty member who can accommodate your time restraints. However, most professors are flexible and in most instances general questions can be answered via e-mail or telephone.
- **How do I change advisers?** You may change advisers by having your new adviser sign a form. Adviser transfer forms are available from faculty advisers or the program office.

Meet the Faculty

Mary Bohlen, Associate Professor and Department Chair, M.A. Public Affairs Reporting, Sangamon State University, teaches in the area of print journalism and media effects. Her courses include news and feature writing, editing, mass media systems, women and media and adolescents and media. E: mboh13@uis.edu, P: 217-206-7362, Office UHB-3023.

Michael Cavanagh, Assistant Professor, M.S. Journalism – New Media, Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism. **Areas of Specialization:** Journalism, reporting, media law, new media, Web design and communication technologies. Email: mcava2@uis.edu Office: UHB 3021P: (217) 206-8511

Michael Cheney, Professor, Ph.D., The Ohio State University, specializes in communication technologies. His teaching and research interests include political economy of communications, media and politics, popular music and society

J. Michael Duvall, Professor, M.A. Communication, Sangamon State University, has over twenty five years experience as an independent producer/director/videographer. He is interested in production and technology including video, audio, multimedia/internet, photography and applied aesthetics. E: jduva1@uis.edu, P: 217-726-7300, Office UHB-3014.

Jim Grubbs, Associate Professor, Ph.D. in Communication and Culture, Indiana University, specializes in new communication technologies, broadcasting, and mass media systems. E: jgrub1@uis.edu, P: 217-206-7365, Office UHB-3020.

Kathy Jamison, Assistant Professor, M.A. in Communication, University of Illinois at Springfield, specializes in mass media with a background in print journalism. She teaches media writing, advertising, research methods, consumer culture, film and culture and researches advertising/consumer culture. E: kjamison@uis.edu, P: 217-206-8032, Office UHB-3012.

Amie Kincaid, Assistant Professor, Ph.D., University of New Mexico. Amie's teaching and research interests are intercultural, interpersonal, and organizational communication; race and critical theory; public relations; and oral communication. E: akinc2@uis.edu, P: 217-206-8415 Office UHB-3021.

Hank Nicholson, Associate Professor, Ph.D. from Michigan State University, has teaching and writing interests that include: research methods, language and meaning, interpersonal communication, nonverbal communication, communication in interpersonal relationships, perception, and the uses and consequences of uses of communication. E: hnich1@uis.edu, P: 217-206-7363, Office UHB-3024.

Beth Ribarsky, Assistant Professor, M.A., Central Michigan University. Elizabeth's teaching and research interests are in constructing individual and relational identities through interpersonal communication. E: eriba2@uis.edu, P: 217-206-8416, Office UHB-3016.

Hazel Rozema, Associate Professor, Ph.D. University of Kansas, teaches interpersonal/organizational communication, public relations, family, gender and interracial communication. E: hroze1@uis.edu, P: 217-206-7297, Office UHB-3022.

Eric Thibodeaux-Thompson, Associate Professor, M.F.A. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, directs productions for the Theatre Program and teaches oral communication, acting, directing and other courses. E: ethib1@uis.edu, P: 217-206-6613, Office UHB-3018.

Missy Thibodeaux-Thompson, Assistant Professor, M.F.A. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, directs productions for the Theatre Program and teaches oral communication, acting and other theatre courses. E: mthom1@uis.edu, P: 217-206-8307, Office UHB-3013.

Adjunct Faculty and Staff

Thomas Bartl, Adjunct Instructor of Oral Communication and director of Forensics. M.A. in communication, theater, and education at South Dakota State University, and Ph.D. at the University of Oklahoma. Areas of teaching range from principles of communication and public speaking to communication research design and political de-bates. E: tbart2@uis.edu.

Cindy Greene, Adjunct Instructor, M. A. in Communication, University of Illinois at Springfield, and B. A. in Communications and Theatre, Illinois College. E: cgree2@uis.edu

Nan Vehovic, Adjunct Instructor, M. A. in Communication, University of Illinois at Springfield, and B. S. in Consumer Affairs, Eastern Illinois University. E: nvehovic@aol.com

Peter Stott, Adjunct Instructor, M. A. in Communication, University of Illinois at Springfield, and B. A. in Mass Communication, Illinois State University. E: stottrock@insightbb.com

Nancy Zimmers, Adjunct Instructor, M.A. in higher education (communications emphasis) and B.A. in journalism, University of Iowa, specializes in public relations and media relations and is director of communications and public relations at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. E: nzimm2@uis.edu, P: 217-206-6790.

Staff:

Department secretary, P: 217-206-6790, Office UHB 3010.

Communication Department Graduate Assistant: E: uisgacommunications@uis.edu, P: (217) 206-6786, Office UHB 3015.

Advising Form

The Graduate Communication Major Advising Form helps graduate students outline their academic goals for each semester.

Requirements:

COM 504 Introduction to Graduate Study in Communication	4 Hrs.
COM 506 Research Methods in Communication	4 Hrs.
500-level graduate seminars (<i>courses numbered 511-597</i>)	12 Hrs.
Graduate-level communication courses (<i>400- and 500- level courses</i>)	12 Hrs.
Elective (if outside of Communication, department approval required)	4 Hrs.
COM 501 Closure Experience	4 Hrs.
Total (minimum)	40 Hrs.

Advising forms are available from your adviser or the department office. (See Appendix A.)

Tips for Success

- Students wishing to transfer earned course credit from another institution must petition our department. Be prepared to provide a course syllabus or a catalog description.
- Prepare to write extensively and perfect your research skills.
- Students with extensive life or work experience in some area of communication may apply for academic credit through Credit for Prior Learning. Ask your adviser if you qualify.
- Non-communication courses may be accepted toward the major through petition.
- COM 504 is only offered during the fall semester in the evening.
- COM 506 is only offered during the spring semester in the evening.
- Most 500-level seminar courses are offered during the evening with the exception of occasional online classes.
- Graduate students can expect more rigorous work in the 400-level courses. Graduate students will be asked to write extra research papers and/or give special presentations to their peers.
- No grade below a B- in a communication course will be credited toward earning your master's degree. Communication courses may not be taken as credit/no credit.
- 300-level courses are not counted toward your graduate degree.

Office of Financial Assistance

The Office of Financial Assistance at the University of Illinois at Springfield coordinates federal, state, institutional and private financial aid programs for students.

Assistance is available in the form of grants, tuition waivers, assistantships, scholarships, loans, part-time employment and veterans' benefits. Staff members of the Financial Aid Office meet individually with students to counsel them in the kinds of aid for which they may qualify.



Contact Information

Office of Financial Assistance
University Hall Room 1015
Phone: (217) 206-6724
E-mail: finaid@uis.edu
Financial Assistance website: www.uis.edu/financialaid

Graduate Assistantships



The Graduate Assistantship Program offers outstanding opportunities for graduate students here at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Assistantships are offered within graduate degree programs as well as in other departments on campus. G.A. benefits include:

- Monthly stipend: \$825 per month during the academic year, running from mid-August to mid-May.
- Work Schedule: Graduate

assistants are required to work 20 hours per week.

- Tuition waiver: 8-12 credit hours per semester with up to 6 credit hours during the summer semester for those who have served the previous fall and/or spring. Summer enrollment is optional.

Contact Information

Graduate Assistantship Program
PAC, Room 525
Phone: (217) 206-6544
Toll-Free: (800) 252-8533
E-mail: gaprog@uis.edu
G.A. website: www.uis.edu/graduateassistantships/index.html

Graduate Public Service Internship

The GPSI program provides graduate students an excellent opportunity to work with state agencies. GPSI is a long term (up to 21 month) program. Interns begin working August 16 of the year of entry into the program, while enrolled as a full-time graduate student at the University of Illinois at Springfield. GPSI benefits include:



- Monthly stipend: \$850 per month during the academic year, \$1,700 per month during the summer.
- Work Schedule: 20 hours per week during the academic year and 37.5 hours per week during the summer.
- Tuition waiver: 9 credit hours for fall and spring semesters with an optional 4 credit hours for the summer semester.

Contact Information

Kim Hayden
PAC, Room 514
Phone: (217) 206-6155
E-mail: hayden.Kim@uis.edu
GPSI website: <http://cspl.uis.edu/GraduateInternPrograms>

Closure Experience

Graduate students are required to complete a master's thesis, project or comprehensive exam in order to graduate.

- **Thesis:** An extensive essay on an approved communication topic. This essay may be original research, analysis or criticism. A thesis is appropriate for all communication graduate students, in particular those who are planning to pursue a doctoral degree.
- **Project:** An applied study where students design and produce professional media or public relations projects in response to communication needs or problems. Most projects will not be accepted for those applying to doctoral programs. However, a project can serve as an excellent tool when interviewing for a job.
- **Comprehensive Exams:** Allows students to select five classes of their degree coursework for which they answer questions in essay form. The comprehensive exams may not be taken until the student's last semester and after completion of 32 (preferably 36) hours of graduate coursework. Students planning to pursue a doctoral degree shouldn't take this exam. It's important to remember that students only get two chances to pass the comprehensive exams. In other words, if you fail the exam twice, you will no longer be eligible to receive a master's degree in communication. No committee is required.

Students who choose the thesis or project options must choose a committee. Your committee must consist of two Communication professors and one non-Communication professor. One Communication professor must serve as your committee chair. Your committee chair can be your adviser or any other Communication professor who you feel will serve you best. The dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences will appoint the non-Communication professor to your committee. However, your adviser may submit a professor's name to the dean's office for consideration.

As soon as your committee is selected, you will write a proposal. Once your committee approves your proposal, you will complete your thesis or project. After you complete your thesis or project you are required to defend your work. Along with a project, you must write a process paper outlining your work. It's best to keep a personal journal in order to write a thorough process paper.

Time frames will vary depending upon your topic and the amount of research required to complete your thesis or project. It's suggested that you begin your initial research when you have completed between 32 and 36 hours of course work. Also, you must submit your thesis or project at least six weeks before the end of the semester.

Students have six years to complete their master's degree in Communication. For example, if you began the program in the fall of 2002, you must fulfill all graduation requirements by the summer of 2008 in order to graduate. Nevertheless, you may petition the program for an extension of time if you have special circumstances.

Graduate students must enroll for a total of four credit hours in the closure experience COM 501; however, they may accrue the total in increments. Campus policy requires that students be enrolled in and pay for at least one semester hour of closure experience for each semester after they have begun their graduate closure exercise until that exercise is completed. Thus, if you have paid for four hours credit of COM 501 and have yet to finish, you must enroll in one credit hour of audit in COM 502 Closure Experience Continuing Enrollment each semester (excluding summer terms) until the thesis/project/exam is completed.

Thesis/Project Examples

To view a complete list of archived Communication theses and projects on the web, go to:
<http://www.uis.edu/archives/theses/com.htm>

Here are some examples of past thesis/project topics from former Communication graduate students:

Thesis Examples

- Semiotic Aspects of Advertising Techniques in Cereal Box Illustrations
- Critical Analysis of Film Production
- Comparisons Between Psychological Types and Conflict Handling Behaviors
- Stuart Murder Case: A Metaphor for American Racism
- The Relationship Between Conflict Resolution Style and Language Code Orientation
- Filtering in Libraries-A Study of the Impediments to Free Speech
- Effects of Electronic News Gathering on Illinois Television News Organizations
- Elderly Perception of Crime and the Role of the Local Media
- Twin Language
- Ethics in Public Relations
- Contributing Factors in the Use of an Athlete in Advertisement

Project Examples

- Sexual Harassment: A Curriculum Guide for High School Students
- Workshop Design to Initiate and Nurture Church Drama
- Graduate Business Etiquette Handbook
- Springfield Pubs and Clubs Website
- Multimedia Workshop on Media Literacy for Parents and Teachers
- Continuous Improvement Teams: A Strategy for Organization and Staff Development
- Sangamon County Juvenile Probation and Court Services Department of Volunteers Guide
- Illinois Legislative Staff Internship Program Video
- Community Perceptions of Students' Needs Survey Analysis Paper

Graduation Contract

Graduation contracts can be downloaded from the Office of Records and Registration website at <http://www.uis.edu/registration/forms/index.html>(See Appendix B.)

Graduation contracts must be filed no later than the fourth week of the semester in which you plan to graduate. You may petition to participate in the May graduation if you have 4 or fewer hours to complete your degree. You must register to complete the remaining hours for the summer term.

Once you have completed your graduation contract, set up an appointment with your adviser to review it. Your adviser will approve the contract for submission to the Communication Department chair and Office of Admissions and Records.

Once the contract is processed, you will receive a copy via mail. Be sure to pay the graduation fee of \$25. Expect to be billed in April for spring graduation; July for summer graduation; November for fall graduation.

The university will not mail your diploma or transcripts if you have any outstanding bursar fees or library holds.

Commencement ceremonies are held on the first Saturday after the end of the spring semester. Master's degree hoods and gowns are available at the University of Illinois at Springfield's bookstore, which is located in the basement of the PAC. The bookstore usually sells graduation paraphernalia during the first week of April. You should receive notification via mail.

Career Development Center

Searching for a new career while finishing your degree can be stressful. Nonetheless, students can turn to the Career Development Center for help. The professional staff can assist you with the following:

- Career Counseling
- Careers with communication degrees (See the following website):
<http://www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/Majors/communication.htm>
- Vocational Assessments (Learn more about your interests, personality type and career preferences).
- Computer-Based Information (Obtain information on educational requirements, salary ranges, job responsibilities and labor market trends).
- Job Search Assistance
- Web Based Job Placement Assistance (e-Recruiting and Monster Trak).
- Employer Information (Research companies and local, state and federal agencies).
- Recruitment Visits (On campus interviews and annual career fair).
- Credential Files (Place your resume, transcripts and reference letters on file).

Contact Information

Career Development Center
SAB, Room 50
Phone: (217) 206-6508
E-mail: careerservices@uis.edu
Career Services website: www.uis.edu/careerservices/index.htm

Student Checklist

- Apply for graduate admission through the UIS Admissions Office.
- Successfully complete Communication Department multiple choice/word use exam and written essay.
- Choose an adviser.
- Complete advising form.
- Explore financial aid, assistantship and internship options.
- Take COM 504 before completing more than 8 credit hours of graduate course work.
- Complete COM 506.
- Complete 12 credit hours of graduate-level (400– or 500–level) courses.
- Complete 12 credit hours of 500-level seminar classes.
- Complete 4 credit hours of PAC or elective coursework.
- Choose closure experience (thesis, project or comprehensive exams).
- Register for COM 501.
- Choose your committee (for thesis or project).
- Have committee approve your proposal.
- Defend thesis/project or pass comprehensive exams.
- Apply for graduation.
- ***Celebrate! You've earned your master's degree in Communication from the University of Illinois at Springfield.***

Appendix A: Graduate Advising Form

GRADUATE COMMUNICATION MAJOR ADVISING FORM

Name of student _____ UIN _____

Phone number and/or e-mail _____

Date advised _____ Advised by _____

REQUIRED COURSES (12 HOURS)

COURSE

Semester completed

Semester planned

COM 504 Intro to Graduate Studies in Communication _____

COM 506 Research Methods in Communication _____

COM 501 Closure (thesis, project or comp. exams) _____

500-LEVEL GRADUATE SEMINARS (12 hours)

COURSE

HRS.

Semester completed

Semester planned

GRADUATE-LEVEL COMMUNICATION COURSES (12 hours)

* Graduate-level COM courses include 400- and 500- level courses.

COURSE

HRS.

Semester completed

Semester planned

ELECTIVE (4 HOURS)

* If outside of COM, you need to petition your advisor.

COURSE

HRS.

Semester completed

Semester planned
