

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS | SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

# M.A./M.S. IN COMMUNICATION

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GRAD HANDBOOK

[beav.es/soc-ma](http://beav.es/soc-ma)



**Oregon State**  
University

## **Welcome to the M.A./M.S. in Communication!**

Congratulations, and welcome to the Communication M.A./M.S. program at OSU! Graduate school is a time for both intense academic focus and personal growth. This handbook is a resource guide for students in the M.A./M.S. program in Communication. OSU Graduate School policies and procedures that govern graduate students are posted online at <https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/current>. If you or your Committee Chair have questions, please contact the Graduate Program Director.

The M.A./M.S. in Communication at Oregon State University gives students extensive, advanced experience in the discipline of Communication while also preparing them to conduct specialized research in their chosen areas of emphasis. We offer specializations in areas like Environmental Communication, Health Communication, Intercultural Communication, Media Studies, and Rhetoric. Our faculty are prepared to help you research in, between, and beyond each of these areas during your time at OSU. We are excited to help you become a well-rounded scholar, researcher, and communicator during your time with us. Check out our website at: <https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/soc/communication-graduate-ma-ms>



## **School of Communication Contact Information**

104 Shepard Hall

2001 SW Campus Way

Corvallis, OR, 97331

Phone: 541-737-2461

Office Hours: Monday–Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

## **Graduate Program Contacts**

Director of Graduate Studies: Joshua Reeves

Phone: 541-737-0720

[joshua.reeves@oregonstate.edu](mailto:joshua.reeves@oregonstate.edu)

Comm 111 Coordinator: Bobette Bushnell

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Director of Forensics: Mark Porrovecchio

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Office Coordinator: Kim Rossi

Phone: 541-737-6115

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Phone: 541-737-6592

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## Arrival Checklist

### **Getting Started**

Now that you've been formally admitted, you'll need to sign up for your OSU Network ID (ONID) account <http://onid.oregonstate.edu/> (click on Sign up for ONID). If you've attended OSU before you may already have an ONID account. If this is the case, you **do not** need to set up a new account. Students' ONID email are hosted at [Google Apps for Oregon State](#), and all email sent to your ONID email address (username@oregonstate.edu) is delivered to Gmail. Google Apps also gives you access to Google Drive, Calendar and other features.

After you have your ONID account set up, go to [MyOregonState](#) Online services. You'll need your ONID username and password in order to register. We also use the email associated with your ONID account to send you registration reminders, information about new course offerings and upcoming seminars, etc. – so be sure you're checking your OSU email regularly or that you set up the account to forward to your personal email. If you have trouble setting up your ONID account or logging in, call the OSU computer help desk at 541-737-3474 or submit an online request for assistance using the following webpage: <http://is.oregonstate.edu/accounts-support/och>.

All OSU online services are protected by a two-step authentication system called DUO (<https://is.oregonstate.edu/duo>). You should sign up for DUO as soon as possible. We recommend downloading the app to your phone AND getting a hardware token. Having both can save you a lot of hassle if your phone becomes unusable or unavailable for some reason. Keep yourself and your privacy safe online by reading [information security tips](#) from our office of information security.

Both the Graduate School and E-campus maintain very handy Current Students websites that house quick-links and contact information for the services you will use on a day to day basis while enrolled at OSU. Be sure to check them out:

<https://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/students/current/> and  
<https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/current-students>.

## School of Communication (SOC) Resources

### **Office Assignment: Shepard 201**

Office assignments in Shepard 201 are coordinated by the Assistant to the School Director (Bernard Wang).

Do not change offices or remove furniture from any office. If you need additional furniture, have concerns about your office space, or are not using the space, see the Assistant to the School Director. We ask that you clean and vacate your office within 30 days of finishing your degree and leaving SOC.

### **Mail**

Drop boxes for outgoing campus and U.S. mail are available in the SOC Main Office. You will also find various express mail supplies there. You may have personal mail delivered to SOC. We will contact you by email if we receive anything. Outgoing U.S. mail with postage already applied can be left in the outgoing mail drop boxes or in drop boxes around campus.

### **Keys**

Keys for offices and facilities are issued by Bernard Wang. Contact him at Bernard Wang ([bernard.wang@oregonstate.edu](mailto:bernard.wang@oregonstate.edu)) for any key requests. Key requests are made online, and the Key Shop will contact you directly with pickup instructions once your keys are ready to be picked up. The Access Lock & Key Shop is located south of Kerr Administration – please bring your OSU ID as a form of identification in order to pick up your keys. Their hours are 11:00 am to 3:00 pm (<https://facilities.oregonstate.edu/shops/key-shop>).

### **Use of Campus Telephones**

You have access to our telephone in Shepard 201. The Office phone number is: 541-737-5394. University phone numbers have a prefix of 737 or 713. When calling from one campus telephone to another, dial only the last five digits of the phone number. When calling a local number, you must first dial 9 to get an outside line, then the area code and the number. **Please keep your general and emergency contact information updated via your <https://oregonstate.edu/myoregonstate> page.**

You will need an authorization code or personal calling card number to make long distance calls. If necessary, check with Bernard Wang for an authorization number.

## **Supplies**

SOC provides basic supplies (paper, pencils, pens, tape, chalk, erasers, whiteboard markers, etc.) to be used only for teaching assistant duties. *The School does not provide personal supplies for coursework.* School letterhead is to be used for official business only. Use for personal purposes such as expression of opinion about university issues is specifically prohibited. If in doubt, seek advice from your Committee Chair or the Graduate Program Director.

Graduate Employees can pick up classroom supplies from the supply area in Shepard. If you need additional supplies for research that would need to be ordered, request these with the office in Shepard.

## **SOC Computer Policies**

SOC recognizes and supports Oregon State University's Acceptable Use of Computing Resources Policy. Please consult this link if you have questions:

([https://policy.oregonstate.edu/UPSM/08-005\\_acceptable\\_use\\_computing\\_resources](https://policy.oregonstate.edu/UPSM/08-005_acceptable_use_computing_resources)).

## **Computing Resources for Your Use in Shepard Hall**

Computers and printers in Bexell Hall are managed by CoSINE IT Services

(<https://cosine.oregonstate.edu/>)

## **Printers in Shepard Hall and Elsewhere**

Printers are located in Shepard 104. Computers have appropriate printers already installed. Printers should not be used as copy machines and should only be used for official school business. Large print jobs should be requested in the main office. Printers are also available at student computing facilities at various locations on campus. Check out Student Multimedia Services at <http://oregonstate.edu/is/mediaservices/sms/>. They have thesis printing free to students as well as one free poster printed per term.

## **Wireless Access**

Secure wireless access is available in Shepard.

## **OSU Support for Graduate Student Travel**

Graduate School Travel Funds: the OSU Graduate School offers a Graduate Travel award with nominations open once per term, one-per-program (\$500 for domestic travel and \$1,000 for international travel). These awards are reimbursement only via the CEOAS Index. Contact OSU's Graduate Student Services for more information.

## **SOC Graduate Student Progress, Policies, and Guidelines**

### **SOC Progress Reports**

Once a year, SOC conducts a review of student progress. The progress report provides an opportunity to ensure that the student/Committee Chair relationship is healthy, that you are progressing toward completion, and that any unusual or sensitive issues can be identified and resolved. If you have issues that you are uncomfortable writing about in this context, please bring them to the attention of the Graduate Director.

The goals of the progress report are 1) to ensure that students and faculty meet once a year to review expectations and accomplishments; 2) to provide an opportunity to identify students who may be struggling; and 3) to provide the Graduate Program with pertinent information to assess the program, publicize student accomplishments, and maintain accurate student records.

You and your Committee Chair will compile a progress report that includes possible discussions of 1) your activities and accomplishments during the past year; 2) anticipated results of current research and/or conferences; 3) your future plans/career interests; 4) your summer plans and contact information; 5) an update on current status in the program; 6) an update on your project/thesis and funding; and, 7) notice of any impediments to progress and success.

The assessments are submitted to the Graduate Director.

### **Course Registration**

The OSU [Schedule of Classes](#) is available online and contains academic regulations and registration procedures that apply to all students in the university, as well as the final examination week schedule. The online [catalog](#) is the source for up-to-date changes for the current and immediately upcoming term. It is your responsibility to register for the appropriate number of credits that may be required for any funding eligibility and/or to meet the requirements of the continuous enrollment policy. Problems arising from registration procedures, such as late registration, adding or withdrawing from courses after deadlines, or late changes from letter or S/U grading are resolved through the [petition for late change in registration](#) filed with the Graduate School. A late registration fee may be applied.

Students are responsible for staying current on registration requirements that may supersede the Graduate School requirements (i.e., international, financial aid, veterans’).

Please review the OSU Academic Calendar each upcoming term for important dates such as the beginning of registration, the start of classes, drop deadlines and university holidays (<http://registrar.oregonstate.edu/osu-academic-calendar/>).

You can register for classes all the way up to the beginning of the term. We recommend that you always register as early as possible for three reasons. First, classes fill quickly and waiting will limit your options because popular classes will close early. Second, it really helps us with course planning if students register early and greatly reduces the chance that classes will be canceled due to low enrollment; it also gives us time to add new sections of courses if needed to meet student demand. Finally, it gives you enough time to order any required books. You will not be billed for tuition until after the term begins, so there is no ‘advanced cost’ to registering early.

You can find the tools you need to register by logging into your MyOregonState account (<https://my.oregonstate.edu/>) using your ONID username and password. There is also a short video about how to register on the Ecampus website (<http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/services/registration/>) and additional information about how to register here: <https://registrar.oregonstate.edu/priority-registration>. Graduate students do not need a registration PIN.

### **Minimum Course Loads**

Course load requirements for graduate students are established by the Registrar and the Graduate School. You are considered a “full-time” graduate student if you are registered for 9–16 credits in a given academic term. You are considered a “part-time” graduate student if you have fewer than nine credits. If you are a degree-seeking student, you must be registered for a minimum of **3 graduate credits** in any term you wish to be enrolled and to access university resources, including the term of the final defense. Students are responsible for staying current on course load requirements that may supersede the Graduate School requirements (i.e., international, financial aid, veterans, etc.). *Graduate Assistants must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits; this includes 3 credits, each term, of COMM 507.*

### **Continuous Graduate Enrollment Policy**

All graduate students enrolled in a degree program must register continuously for a minimum of 3 graduate credits each term (fall, winter, and spring terms) until all degree requirements are met, regardless of student’s location. Students on approved leave are exempt from the continuous enrollment policy for the term(s) they are on leave.

Graduate students who use facilities or faculty/staff time during summer session are required to register for a minimum of 3 credits during the summer session. Students



defending in the summer term are required to register for a minimum of 3 graduate credits.

### **Leave of Absence**

Leave of Absence status is available to eligible students who need to suspend their program of study for good cause. The time the student spends on approved leave will be included in any time limits prescribed by the university relevant to degree completion. Students on approved leave may not a) use any university facilities, b) make demands upon faculty time, c) receive a fellowship or financial aid, or d) take course work of any kind at Oregon State University. [Leave of Absence/Intent to Resume Graduate Study Forms](#) must be received by the Graduate School at least 15 working days prior to the first day of the term involved. Family Medical Leave (FML) may be granted at any point during a term. FML inquiries should be directed to [medical.leave@oregonstate.edu](mailto:medical.leave@oregonstate.edu).

### **Unauthorized Break in Registration**

Degree seeking graduate students who take an unauthorized break in registration relinquish graduate standing at the University. To have graduate standing reinstated after an unauthorized break, students are required to reapply to their program (complete the online graduate admission application, pay the application fee, and may be required to register for three graduate credits for each term of unauthorized break in registration). It is advisable that students in this situation state that they are applying for readmission in the application packet. A reapplication does not ensure admittance to the program.

### **Grievance Procedures**

All students desiring to appeal matters relating to their graduate degree should follow the Grievance Procedures for Graduate Students. These procedures are available at <http://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/progress/grievance-procedures>. Graduate employees, whose terms and conditions of employment are prescribed by the [collective bargaining agreement](#) between OSU and the Coalition of Graduate Employees, American Federation of Teachers Local 6069, should also refer to that document and seek guidance from OSU's Office of Human Resources. To file a program-specific grievance, please see Bernard Wang.

### **Grade Requirements**

A grade-point average of 3.00 is required: 1) for all courses taken as a degree-seeking graduate student, and 2) for courses included in the graduate degree or graduate certificate program of study. Grades below C (2.00) cannot be used on a graduate program of study. A grade-point average of 3.00 is required before the final oral or written exam may be undertaken. Enforced graduate-level prerequisite courses must be completed with a minimum grade of C. Programs may have more stringent grade requirements than those prescribed by the Graduate School.

## **Incomplete Grades**

An “I” (incomplete) grade is granted only at the discretion of the instructor. The [incomplete](#) that is filed by the instructor at the end of the term must include an alternate/default grade to which the incomplete grade defaults at the end of the specified time period. The time allocated to complete the required tasks for the course may be extended by petition to the University Academic Requirements Committee. You can obtain the form from the Registrar’s Office. It is the student’s responsibility to see that “I” grades are removed within the allotted time.

## **Student Conduct and Community Standards**

Graduate students enrolled at Oregon State University are expected to conform to basic regulations and policies developed to govern the behavior of students as members of the university community. The [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) (SCCS) is the central coordinating office for student conduct-related matters at Oregon State University. Choosing to join the Oregon State University community obligates each member to a code of responsible behavior which is outlined in the [Student Conduct Code](#). The assumption upon which this Code is based is that all persons must treat one another with dignity and respect for scholarship to thrive. Violations of the regulations subject a student to appropriate disciplinary action.

## **Opportunities to Present your Research**

There are several chances for graduate students to present aspects of their research, either their thesis/research paper or other papers they have produced for graduate courses. Within Speech Communication, there are usually one or two colloquium sessions a year dedicated to graduate students’ work. If you are interested in presenting during these colloquia, all you have to do is volunteer!

There also is the annual Lambda Pi Eta Student Communication Conference in the spring. This is a competitive conference where the top graduate paper will receive an award. We encourage graduate students to submit papers and to participate in this event. Pay attention to the call for papers which will come out at the beginning of Spring term.

Finally, many students like to attend the Northwest Communication Association conference (NWCA) in Coeur D’Alene, Idaho. NWCA is a small, friendly, regional conference usually held in April. It is a great opportunity to experience your first academic conference and to get feedback on your work from other communication professionals. The deadline for submission is usually during Winter term, so pay attention to emails that will remind you about submitting papers. We encourage as much participation as possible in NWCA, so think seriously about this opportunity to attend a conference.

### **Miscellaneous General Requirements**

\* Graduate students are required to judge OSU's annual forensics tournament, which will be held on December 2-3 in 2023.

\* Graduate students are required to attend each School of Communication colloquium, which features presentations from faculty and grad students. These are typically held on Friday afternoons two or three times per term.

\* Degree-seeking students without graduate employment must be registered for a minimum of 3 credits in any term they wish to be enrolled. Students enrolling only to "defend" need to be enrolled for 3 credits. Contact SOC Grad Administrators for information about defending "in the break" to avoid paying additional tuition. Enrollment for less than 9 credits in a term is considered part-time.

### **Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs)**

All students with graduate teaching or research employment (.30 FTE to .49 FTE) must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits. This requirement includes international students. MOST graduate fellowships also have a registration minimum. The requirements for registration and health insurance sign-up or opt-out are in your funding contracts that you sign with Arts and Sciences Business Center HR.

Degree-seeking students without graduate employment must be registered for a minimum of 3 credits in any term they wish to be enrolled. Students enrolling only to “defend” need to be enrolled for 3 credits. Contact SOC Grad Administrators for information about defending “in the break” to avoid paying additional tuition. Enrollment for less than 9 credits in a term is considered part-time.

Contact SOC Graduate Administrators if you have questions about Leave of Absence petitions, late enrollment or essay credit adjustment petitions after week one of the term. Note that completed Leave of Absence petitions have to be filed two weeks before the start of the applicable term.

*Graduate Assistants must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits; this includes 3 credits, each term, of COMM 507.*

### **Chain of Command**

If any questionable situation arises for you as a GTA, do not hesitate to communicate this information to the appropriate person. This is to protect both you and your students in a timely manner. For example, if you feel that a student is treating you in a disrespectful manner, please let your Course Supervisor know as soon as possible. The first person in your chain of command to consult is the Course Supervisor. After that, please consider communicating with Dr. Reeves in his role as Director of Graduate Studies.

### **Attending Mass Lectures and Recitations**

As a GTA, you must attend and arrive on time to all mass lectures and recitations. You must teach all of your scheduled recitation sections for the full time. If you must miss because of illness or other unavoidable dilemma, you must 1) find a replacement — you may not simply cancel class, 2) notify your course director and Kim Rossi, the Office Coordinator, as soon as you know you must miss class. Because we need parity across sections, canceling a class means that some students are getting less contact time than others. This is unacceptable.



If you cannot teach a class, you are still responsible for the content of that class time. Anytime you find a replacement to teach your class, it is expected that you will provide a specific lesson plan for the replacement to follow during your absence. Failing to provide lesson plans for replacement teachers means that you are not fulfilling your job duty as a GTA. Even if you are ill, you are still responsible to communicate some specific lesson plan to your replacement teacher.

### **Weekly Course Meetings**

You must attend each weekly meeting with the course director. You get credit for attending these meetings by signing up for COMM 507. During these meetings you'll discuss what is happening in that week's recitations, upcoming assignments, and any issues or problems you are having in your recitations.

### **Office Hours**

In addition to mass lecture and recitations, you must hold 3 hours of office hours (1.5 for each recitation). During office hours you must be in your office. If for some reason you must cancel office hours, you need to do three things: first, notify your course director, second, reschedule those office hours and send an email to your students when the rescheduled office hours will be, and finally, either post or have someone else post that office hours are canceled and when those hours are rescheduled. Because you are teaching performance oriented classes it is imperative that you hold ALL office hours.

## M.A./M.S. Program Requirements and Procedures

### M.A. Requirements

You are required to complete at least 45 credits of graduate level coursework. Your Committee Chair, graduate committee, and graduate program staff monitor your progress.

You must complete all work for the degree within seven years, including transferred credits, coursework, thesis, and all examinations.

The steps taken to obtain an M.A. include the following (not necessarily in this order):

1. Form a committee, including a GCR (see below), by the end of the first year.
2. File a Program of Study.
3. Complete required coursework.
4. Research, write and defend a thesis.

### Filing a Program of Study

The [Program of Study](#) is a document that outlines the coursework, both classes taken at OSU and transfer credits if appropriate, that you must complete in order to obtain the degree. Students must have a committee, including a GCR (Graduate Council Representative), before filling out the Program of Study. **The online Program of Study form for the M.A. degree should be completed and submitted to the Graduate School before completing 30 graduate credits;** it absolutely **MUST** be submitted before the end of the student's fourth term. Changes in your program of study can be made after this time; but be sure to resubmit a Program of Study to reflect any changes.

The Graduate School is moving to a digital submission of programs of study, which is available here: <https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/forms/#program>.

### M.A. Foreign Language Requirement

All Oregon State M.A. students must complete a graduate school-approved [foreign language requirement](#). The requirement can be met if a student:

1. Passes a placement exam given by Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at OSU demonstrating language proficiency equivalent to that attained at the end of a second-year university course with a grade of C or better.
2. Completes a second-year university level sequence language with an average grade of C or better.
3. Passes the Foreign Language Achievement Test through Brigham Young University.
4. Completes the equivalent of a U.S. high school diploma or U.S. baccalaureate degree where this language was the medium of instruction.

### **M.A. Required Coursework**

A minimum of 45 credits must appear on the M.A. program of study. The M.A. program of study must include:

*COMM 520	INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDY IN COMMUNICATION	3
*COMM 503	THESIS	6
*COMM 599	SPECIAL TOPICS	12

\* Two Theory classes, from any subfield.

\* Two Methods classes, at least one of which is a standalone graduate class.

\* An appropriate number of electives to complete at least 45 hours.

\* The OSU graduate school requires that all graduate students' coursework must be comprised of at least 50% standalone courses (including thesis credits).

## **Typical Full-Time M.A. Course Schedule**

Courses outside of those listed may be used to meet requirements with approval of the committee and the Graduate Program Director. We recommend full-time students take no more than 15 credits a quarter. Part-time students will take fewer credits depending on their own preference. *Students on a Teaching Assistantship must also register for three credits of COMM 507 every term.*

### Year 1 — Fall (9 credits)

COMM 520: INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDY IN COMMUNICATION

COMM 514: COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODS

COMM 599: SPECIAL TOPICS

### Year 1 — Winter (9 credits)

COMM 518: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION THEORY AND RESEARCH

COMM 515: CRITICAL METHODS IN COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

COMM 599: SPECIAL TOPICS

### Year 1 — Spring (9 credits)

COMM 559: CONTEMPORARY THEORIES OF RHETORIC

COMM 540: THEORIES OF CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

COMM 599: SPECIAL TOPICS

### Year 2 — Fall (9 credits)

COMM 599: SPECIAL TOPICS

NMC 535: MEDIA EFFECTS

ELECTIVE COURSE

### Year 2 — Winter (9 credits)

COMM 521: SCIENCE COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS

ELECTIVE COURSE

COMM 503: THESIS (three credits)

### YEAR 2 — Spring (9 Credits)

COMM 522: SMALL-GROUP COMMUNICATION THEORY AND RESEARCH

COMM 503: THESIS (six credits)



## **M.S. Requirements**

You are required to complete at least 45 credits of graduate level coursework. Your Committee Chair, graduate committee, and graduate program staff monitor your progress.

You must complete all work for the degree within seven years, including transferred credits, coursework, thesis, and all examinations.

The steps taken to obtain an M.S. include the following (not necessarily in this order):

1. Form a committee, including a graduate council representative, by the end of the first year.
2. File a Program of Study.
3. Complete required coursework.
4. Research, write and defend a thesis.

## **Filing a Program of Study**

The [Program of Study](#) is a document that outlines the coursework, both classes taken at OSU and transfer credits if appropriate, that you must complete in order to obtain the degree. **The Program of Study form for the M.S. degree should be completed and submitted to the Graduate School before completing 18 graduate credits** (generally the end of the second quarter of study for full-time students). The program of study is developed by the student under the approval of his or her Committee Chair and the Graduate Program Director.

The Graduate School is moving to a digital submission of programs of study, which is available here: <https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/forms/#program>.

## **Required Coursework**

A minimum of 45 credits must appear on the M.S. program of study. The M.S. program of study must include:

- \*COMM 520 INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDY IN COMMUNICATION 3
- \*COMM 503 THESIS 6
- \*COMM 599 SPECIAL TOPICS 12
- \* Two Theory classes from any subfield.
- \* Three Methods classes, at least one of which is a standalone graduate class.
- \* An appropriate number of electives to complete at least 45 hours.
- \* The OSU graduate school requires that all graduate programs contain coursework that is at least 50% standalone.

### **Typical Full-Time M.S. Course Schedule**

Courses outside of those listed may be used to meet requirements with approval of the committee and the Graduate Program Director. We recommend full-time students take no more than 15 credits a quarter. Part-time students will take fewer credits depending on their own preference. *Students on a Teaching Assistantship must also register for three credits of COMM 507 every term.*

#### Year 1 - Fall (9 credits)

COMM 520 INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDY IN COMMUNICATION  
COMM 514: COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODS  
COMM 599: SPECIAL TOPICS

#### Year 1 - Winter (9 credits)

COMM 517: RESEARCH METHODS IN COMMUNICATION  
COMM 599: SPECIAL TOPICS  
ELECTIVE METHODS COURSE

#### Year 1 - Spring (9 credits)

COMM 559: CONTEMPORARY THEORIES OF RHETORIC  
COMM 540: THEORIES OF CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT  
COMM 599: SPECIAL TOPICS

#### Year 2 – Fall (9 credits)

COMM 521: SCIENCE COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS  
COMM 599: SPECIAL TOPICS  
ELECTIVE COURSE

#### Year 2 – Winter (9 credits)

COMM 515: CRITICAL METHODS IN COMMUNICATION RESEARCH  
NMC 530: MEDIA THEORY  
ELECTIVE COURSE

#### Year 2—Spring (9 Credits)

COMM 522: SMALL-GROUP COMMUNICATION THEORY AND RESEARCH  
COMM 503: THESIS (six credits)

## **Graduate Committee and Thesis Examination**

### **MA/MS Committee**

You will work toward your degree under the guidance of 3 faculty members serving as your MA/MS committee (1 Committee Chair and 2 Committee Members). The Committee Chair and Committee Members should be identified by the end of the third quarter of study. Committee Chairs and Members must hold graduate faculty status. Until the MA/MS Committee is formed, the Graduate Director will serve as the head advisor. Two of your committee members, including your Committee Chair) **MUST** be from the School of Communication. Your third committee member may be from inside or outside the School of Communication. Your GCR must be from outside the School of Communication.

### **Committee Formation**

As soon as possible, and at least by the middle of the third quarter, students should choose a Committee Chair. The Chair can help you choose the remaining members of your committee. To discuss this with a potential Committee Chair, coordinate a meeting with your chosen professor and bring an outline of your project for discussion. Once this relationship is established, the Committee Chair will advise you on coursework, thesis topic selection/direction, thesis structure and defense, and other matters as appropriate.

### **MA/MS Final Examination**

A final examination (thesis defense) is required of all Master's candidates. The examination is intended to test the candidate's ability to integrate and interpret material in the major and supporting fields with emphasis on the work presented in the thesis. The student should be fully prepared to answer any question from members of his or her committee as it relates to all program course work and the student's independent research.

FINAL ORAL EXAMINATIONS SHOULD NOT BE SCHEDULED UNTIL ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE SATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY OF THE MA/MS THESIS AND THE DEFENSE HAS BEEN SCHEDULED WITH THE GRADUATE SCHOOL (<https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/forms>). FINAL EXAMINATIONS MUST BE SCHEDULED WITH THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AT LEAST TWO WEEKS AHEAD OF TIME, AND AFTER A FINAL PROGRAM

OF STUDY HAS BEEN APPROVED BY YOUR COMMITTEE CHAIR,  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, AND THE GRADUATE SCHOOL.

The student should expect the final oral to take approximately 2 hours. At the conclusion of the examination, the committee members meet in private, vote and return their examination form to the Graduate School. In the event the thesis requires additional revision after the oral defense, students have two weeks to submit their revised thesis to the Committee Chair and the Graduate Program Director. Failure to submit the final revised version of the thesis will result in a failed defense.

NOTE: Final examinations are open to the public. All faculty members and fellow students are encouraged to attend. During the oral defense, candidates will be addressed by their committee members and other appropriate faculty members only. Students and members of the general public may only observe the examination. Forms for scheduling the final exam are available at the Graduate School's Survival Guide: <https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/forms>.

#### **Failed Master's Oral Examination:**

Should a student fail his or her first attempt at the final oral examination, a second, final reexamination may be held at the request of the student's program/department. A waiting period of three months between the first examination and the final examination is required to allow the student time to prepare for a successful defense.

#### **General Format/Guidelines for the Final Oral Defense:**

##### Agenda:

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Purpose and Format of the Meeting
- Public Presentation (approximately 20-30 minutes)
- Open Discussion (approximately 15 minutes)
- Visitors Asked to Leave and Committee Break (if necessary)
- Questioning of Student -- Committee (can include both the thesis and coursework)
- Excuse Student
- Discussions of Performance of Student
- Voting on Performance of Student
- Invite Student to Return
- Announce Voting Results to Student
- Sign Graduate School Forms



Final Examination Guidelines:

The final thesis defense is scheduled for 2 hours. The Committee Chair chairs the defense meeting. All members of the committee may ask questions. Interested visitors may be a part of the audience during the student's presentation of research findings. Visitors will be asked to leave while the committee deliberates.

After the committee has completed its questioning of the candidate, the student is invited to leave the room while the committee deliberates. When the committee has reached a decision, the student is invited back to hear the committee's action. Actions available to the committee are Pass, Pass with one dissenting vote, Recess, or No Pass.

Students are required to submit a final electronic copy of the MA/MS Thesis to the Graduate Program Director to be included in the Valley Library collection.

All Master's degrees require a final oral exam. You must have a minimum GPA of 3.00 to schedule a final oral examination. All coursework appearing on the program of study must be completed and a grade assigned prior to scheduling the final oral examination. You are responsible for scheduling the oral exam with the Graduate School and for all other arrangements of the Master's defense.

Notify Bernard Wang of your intent to defend. You will need to see the College's requirements list AND the OSU Graduate School's list. After your defense, you will get an email from Bernie Wang providing instructions on the required distribution of your final paper and scheduling your exit interview.

## BASICS OF MA/MS THESIS

	<b>MA/MS Thesis</b>
<b>Form</b>	Up to 120 pages, formatted according to Graduate School requirements.
<b>Permanent Record</b>	One copy submitted to ScholarsArchive.
<b>Content</b>	Original work by the student including original question, data analysis and writing; may involve primary data collection by student.
<b>Committee Structure</b>	A Committee Chair and two additional committee members.
<b>Editing and Feedback</b>	Multiple drafts are reviewed by Committee Chair; committee members may review, as well.
<b>Assessment and Grading</b>	All committee members review the final draft and provide comments at defense.
<b>Master's Defense</b>	Oral presentation open to the public. Afterwards, student is tested by the committee on coursework and essay/capstone.
<b>Likelihood of Publication</b>	A publication from the Master's is useful to the student who intends to continue in graduate school or whose job requires publication. Publication of an essay/capstone depends mostly on the efforts of the authors, including the student and his/her Committee Chair and committee members. The process can take several years after the defense.

## TIMELINE/TASKS FOR COMPLETING A M.A./M.S. IN COMMUNICATION

<b>YEAR ONE TASKS</b>	<b>Target for Completion</b>
Finalize selection of Committee Chair	Early in Spring term
Prepare and submit an initial <a href="#">program of study</a> .	End of Spring term.
<b>SECOND YEAR TASKS</b>	
Finalize committee.	No later than end of Fall term.
Ensure that your Program of Study is accurate. If it is not, submit a new one.	No later than the middle of Winter term.
Coordinate with your committee to set a time and date for your final oral examination.	At least one term before final oral examination
Submit draft of thesis to your committee.	At least four weeks before final oral examination
Reserve a room for the exam.	
Schedule your <a href="#">final oral examination</a> with the Graduate School.	At least two weeks before final oral examination
Email the Assistant to the Director with the details of your defense including the defense date, time, location, degree, concentration, Committee Chair's name, and the title of your thesis.	
Submit a <a href="#">diploma application</a> (EXCEPT for SPRING Term completion, when you must submit by FIRST week of Spring Term).	At least two weeks before final oral examination
Complete final oral examination.	Prior to the end of graduating term
Submit final paper in PDF format to ScholarArchive.	Prior to leaving campus
Make an appointment for an exit interview.	Prior to leaving campus

**MA/MS Transfer Policy (45 credit degree):**

Upon approval of the committee, up to 15 graded graduate level transfer credits (quarter equivalent) not applied to a previous graduate degree may be used toward the MA/MS. Transfer courses cannot be blanket courses (e.g., thesis credits) or have non-standard grades such as “P” or “S.” Grades must be a B or better to transfer. The transfer credit grades will count on the program of study GPA if the courses are used on it, but not on the cumulative OSU GPA.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic Dishonesty is defined as an act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person, or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work or research, either through the student's own efforts or the efforts of another. It includes:

**CHEATING** — use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids, or an act of deceit by which a student attempts to misrepresent mastery of academic effort or information. This includes but is not limited to unauthorized copying or collaboration on a test or assignment, using prohibited materials and texts, any misuse of an electronic device, or using any deceptive means to gain academic credit.

**FABRICATION** — falsification or invention of any information including but not limited to falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data, or listing incorrect or fictitious references.

**ASSISTING** — helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes but is not limited to paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, changing someone's grades or academic records, taking a test/doing an assignment for someone else by any means, including misuse of an electronic device. It is a violation of Oregon state law to create and offer to sell part or all of an educational assignment to another person (ORS 165.114).

**TAMPERING** — altering or interfering with evaluation instruments or documents

**PLAGIARISM** — representing the words or ideas of another person or presenting someone else's words, ideas, artistry or data as one's own, or using one's own previously submitted work. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to copying another person's work (including unpublished material) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else's opinions and theories as one's own, or working jointly on a project and then submitting it as one's own.

Academic Dishonesty cases are handled initially by the academic units, following the process outlined in the University's Academic Dishonesty Report Form, and will also be referred to SCCS for action under these rules.

## OSU Office of Equal Opportunity and Access

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Access defines sexual harassment as the following:

- Unwelcome\* sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education;
- Submission to or reject of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or education –related decisions affecting such an individual; or
- Such conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive that it has the effect, intended or unintended, of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance because it has created an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment and would have such an effect on a reasonable person of that individual's status.

*\*Employee conduct directed towards a student—whether unwelcome or welcome—can constitute sexual harassment under OAR.*

There are two confidential resources to discuss reporting options: Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence (CARDV) provides 24/7 confidential crisis response at 541-754-0110 or 800-927-0197, and OSU Sexual Assault Support Services is available weekdays at 541-737-7604.

### **Student Records**

Both federal and state laws permit Oregon State University staff to release directory information (e.g. name, address, degree program, and birth date) to the general public without your consent. You can prohibit the release of directory information to the public by signing the Confidentiality Restriction form available from the Registrar's Office. It will not prohibit the release of directory information to entities of Oregon State University that have a "need to know" to accomplish their required tasks. It further will not prohibit Oregon State University departments from including your name on mailing lists for distribution of materials that are essential to your enrollment at Oregon State University.

### **Coalition of Graduate Employees (CGE)**

The Coalition of Graduate Employees (CGE) is a local, member-run labor union (<http://cge6069.org/>) recognized by the University and the State of Oregon as the exclusive representative for OSU graduate employees on all matters involving wages,

benefits, and working conditions. CGE is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers. All OSU graduate students are eligible to join CGE.

### **Graduate Student Representatives (GSR)**

Your GSRs seek to build a student community to balance these two aspects of graduate school. Get to know the GSR in your program. They can voice your concerns and help you get more involved with the School of Communication, participate in social events, and provide tips for getting to know your new grad student community!

GSRs are graduate students elected from each graduate program within the college. GSRs act as a liaison between the students and the school administration in order to voice student concerns. They meet regularly with the Graduate Committee.

To get you started, we've compiled some student groups and resources that could be especially helpful to SOC students:

- **ASOSU Congress:** ASOSU is every student at Oregon State University. We exist as an organization to promote academic excellence, encourage the intellectual, social, cultural, and physical development of the student body, and enable the student body to assert its varied interests as citizens and members of the academic community through democratic representation. The Legislative Branch of the ASOSU represents the collective opinion of the student body. It consists of elected members who serve in the ASOSU Congress. Find out more about ASOSU here:

<https://asosu.oregonstate.edu/get-involved>.

Contact: <https://asosu.oregonstate.edu/contact>.

- **Coalition of Graduate Employees Union:** CGE is the collective voice of Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants at Oregon State University.

Contact: [organizer@cge6069.org](mailto:organizer@cge6069.org)

Website: <https://www.cge6069.org/>

- **Library Student Review Board:** The LSRB gives OSU students a voice in decisions regarding the Valley Library.

Contact: [Beth.filar-williams@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Beth.filar-williams@oregonstate.edu)



## University Resources for COMM Graduate Students

### **OSU's Graduate School Office**

The Graduate School at OSU assures quality and consistent interpretation of Graduate Council policies related to graduate education across all programs. The [OSU Catalog](#) is the official source for information regarding OSU graduate education policy and procedures. It is the student's responsibility to refer to the catalog for this information.

The Graduate School supports students throughout the academic lifecycle, from admissions to degree completion.

The Graduate Schools offers an array of [professional development opportunities](#) specific to the success of graduate students. Topics covered in these offerings include research and ethics, teaching and facilitation, writing and communication, leadership and management, career skills, grad life and wellness. Please visit the Graduate School links to browse their student success offerings:

<https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/graduate-student-success>

The Graduate School has walk-in hours and can be contacted via email or phone. Additional information on contacting the graduate school is available here:

<https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/contact>.

### **Academic and Support Resources**

OSU offers a wide array of academic and support resources designed to meet graduate student needs. Some of the more commonly used resources are included below. For a more complete list, please visit the Graduate School's [Student Resources web page](#).

[Childcare and Family Resources](#) – University childcare centers, child care assistance  
[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) – Individual and group counseling  
[Cultural Resource Centers](#) – Cultural based community centers, social support  
[Disability Access Services \(DAS\)](#) – Academic accommodations  
[Equal Opportunity and Access \(EOA\)](#) – Employment discrimination or bias response  
[Financing your education](#) – Funding options and information, graduate awards  
[Graduate Student Success Center \(GSSC\)](#) – Lounge, study space, printing, meeting rooms  
[Graduate Writing Center](#) – Writing workshops, groups, and 1:1 writing coaching  
[Health Insurance](#) – Plans for graduate students and graduate employees  
[Human Services Resource Center \(HSRC\)](#) – Food pantry, housing and food stamp assistance  
[Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) – Review for human subjects research  
[Office of International Services \(OIS\)](#) – Visa and immigration advising  
[Ombuds Conflict Management Services](#) – Informal, impartial conflict resolution advising  
[Recreational Sports](#) – Dixon Recreation Center, intramural sports  
[Statistics Consulting Service](#) – Graduate student research statistical advising

[Student Health Services \(SHS\)](#) – Clinic and pharmacy

[Student Multimedia Services \(SMS\)](#) – Poster printing, equipment and laptop loans

[Transportation Alternatives](#) – Bike, bus, SafeRide

[Transportation and Parking Services \(TAPS\)](#) – Parking permits, maps

[Valley Library](#) – Reference and research assistance, study spaces, research tools

### **Career Development**

Graduate school is fundamentally training for your future job and we encourage you to start planning for your next step early. We encourage you to take advantage of the [OSU Career Development Center](#) and make an appointment with Karla Rockhold. She is available to work with grad students to help them advance in their careers—whether that’s resume/CV help, interviewing practice, salary negotiation strategy, job searching, fellowship applications, and more. Visit Handshake ([oregonstate.joinhandshake.com](https://oregonstate.joinhandshake.com)) to make a career advisor appointment, apply for jobs, and/or sign up for career fairs, workshops for grad students, webinars, employer networking events, and more.

## Words of Wisdom

Former grad students were asked to provide you with words of wisdom based on the following questions:

### 1. *What advice could you offer incoming GTA/Grad Students?*

GTA 1: For incoming Grad students and GTAs I would let them know that they should now treat the classes they are taking like a job. You can't skip, you can't be late and if you don't perform well in class and on the final paper, your boss is going to let you know about it. For the 4.00, anal retentive, detail oriented, type A's. You are going to have to immediately chill out or this program is going to frustrate you. That doesn't mean you should lower your standards on your own work but just know that not everyone you will be working with is going to care to live up to your standards and the whole world is going to continue turning. The other group, are the ones who never expected to be in grad school. They are the 3.00, disorganized, type B's. You "gotta fake it till you make it!" You have the skills to be here but you have to fake that confidence in yourself especially when you are sitting next to Miss/Mr. Type A and their 25 page beast of a paper. When you conquer those hurdles the reward will be so much sweeter.

GTA 2: This is very broad! Start your thesis right away would be my best advice. And don't expect it to be like undergrad, aka manage your time as if it were a full time job.

GTA 3: Remember this is a required class, students do not willingly take the class. On that note, many students will S/U the course, hence an explanation for the crappy work we sometimes have to grade.

GTA 4: It is important to learn how to balance your educational goals, teaching goals and still allow yourself time to socialize or decompress. Determine what your thesis topic will be by the second quarter, and then use each class project as a way to gather data for your topic. Finally, don't be afraid to ask questions, ask for clarification, or ask for help.

### 2. *What is your best memory of teaching? Worst?*

GTA 1: I have a couple great memories of teaching. One would have to be the student that spent the whole period wearing a wetsuit underneath his clothes so that he could surprise the class with an interpretive dance in place of his rebuttal (they weren't graded back then). My other good memories came from those classes that laughed with me and appeared to be happy they were there. Some faces become very comforting over the term.

GTA 2: My best memory has been meeting some wonderful co-workers and also some great students. It is always fun helping others and teaching young people to do well at what you love. The worst memory is once again, certain students that will bring you down. For

example, students being aggressive, pushy, and complaining about their grade, etc. Many students still are children at heart and aren't used to having to be college students yet!

GTA 3: Best- probably a really enjoyable class fall term at 9 am, best class I ever had, quality work and students were really willing to learn. Worst- When I found out a student was trying to get his way out of an assignment...from his Twitter...

GTA 4: My best memories have been watching my students grow, seeing that light turn on when they have finally "gotten it", and the appreciation I get from students for being an instructor that really cares about them. The worst memory is when in spite of my best intentions a student fails to learn, thrive or grow in the class. I am often left feeling that I could have done more or should have approached things differently.

### **3. *Best part of grad school? Worst?***

GTA 1: One of the best parts of grad school for me was getting to know the professors and faculty better. That recognition of Dr. Iltis saying "Hello \_\_\_\_\_" in the hallway was something that made me feel more important than I ever did in my undergrad. The other best part was having a group of people around you all the time to talk to and share your experiences with. That really helped get me through. The worst part would have to be those late nights writing papers and the days when I didn't know where the time was going to come from to get everything done. Around winter term of my first year, I hit my breaking point and let the stress get to me. It was partly because I was in an incredibly difficult class that I was certain I was going to fail and partly because of the other life stresses that are amplified when it feels like everything is crashing down. I got through it with the support of my parents and my close friends and we now refer to it half- jokingly as my "dark days."

GTA 2: Best part: getting to learn more about something you love for two more years and getting to focus your term papers and research on a topic that you choose. Worst: a huge amount of stress and pressure.

GTA 3: Best—teaching. Worst—having to balance so many things

GTA 4: Best part of grad school is the advanced learning that took place, the greater understanding of self that transpired and the ability to critically think about issues. I enjoyed relationships that were built, teaching and counseling students and building partnerships within the department. The worst part of grad school is the high levels of stress, my failure to ask pertinent questions out of fear of appearing ignorant and not ceasing more opportunities to not only challenge myself but to allow for constructive criticism from peers in order to fully grow in my field.

### **4. *If you knew then what you knew now you would....***

GTA 1: If I knew then what it would feel like to watch people defend their theses on time and be spending these last moments cleaning their desks and closing this chapter of their lives I would have decided on a thesis topic on day 1.

GTA 2: I don't have too many regrets all in all, just start my thesis a little earlier and maybe I would've stressed a bit less because everything works out in the end! Just relax and try to enjoy the ride.

GTA 3: Students are not the type of student that I am. Things that may seem obvious to me, or things that seem like common sense to me are NOT to students (i.e. If you are going to give a lecture, you have to tell them to take out their notebooks and take notes and tell them what exactly to take notes on).

GTA 4: I would have sat down with my Committee Chair to brainstorm thesis topics from day one and chosen a topic by the second quarter. I would have gotten a committee together by the second quarter. I would have asked more questions about the MAIS program. I would have learned more about how to choose my three areas of focus and how it would affect my participation as a GTA for the Department. I would have worked with professors to find an area of focus that is supported in the job market. I would have asked a lot more questions and sought out more feedback. I would have attended and participated in the Northwest Communication Conferences and I would have taken advantage of all of the opportunities to present my research.

**School of Communication**

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