

Communications Management

Program Description

The Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in communications management is intended for students working in any communications-related field, who are seeking to advance to a position with broader managerial responsibilities. For forward-looking communications professionals, this degree is a necessity.

Qualifications include a strong educational background or professional experience in a communications-related field. A student may be required to enroll in 6 hours of prerequisite undergraduate coursework. The selection of prerequisites will be determined through consultation with an academic advisor. Students must earn a grade of "B" or better in the prerequisite courses before they will be allowed to enroll in graduate courses.

The prerequisite courses do not count toward the 36 credit hours required for the degree, nor will they be considered as part of the credit hours required for advancement to candidacy.

Student Learning Outcomes

Successful graduates of this program will be able to:

- Apply all functional areas of communications to specific organizational issues or challenges;
- Manage projects within a communications framework;
- Communicate more effectively with upper level management;
- Work effectively in a business environment;
- Present solutions to communications problems;
- Work with and manage creative and technical experts;
- Use strategy and tactics in implementation of communication plans and programs;
- Adapt and integrate new skills as technologies change.

Program Curriculum

Communications Management

This degree offers students the opportunity to earn a master's degree in communications while having the flexibility to choose emphasis courses from various business and management disciplines. This degree is also available online. Online courses require excellent organizational skills, self-direction, and motivation to master the challenges of this learning environment. MEDC 5000 Media Communications is the requisite course in the communications management program.

It examines communications theory and its application to mass media, as well as introduces students to the graduate program, describes program expectations, and discusses academic preparation for MEDC 6000 Seminar in Media Communications. Therefore, students must take this course even if they have academic and/or professional experience in media communications. *Any variation from this curriculum should be approved in advance using a program option request form.*

The required courses and electives listed may be taken as Directed Studies, subject to the conditions stated in the Directed Studies section listed under Academic Policies and Procedures and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. Students taking courses that are a part of their approved curriculum and that are from outside of the School of Communications should verify prerequisites with appropriate school or college.

The course of study for students working towards an M.A. in communications management is as follows:

Core Courses (21 credit hours)

MEDC 5000 Media Communications (Requisite Course)
MEDC 5300 Strategic Communications
MEDC 5310 Media and Culture
PBRL 5323 Organizational Communications
MEDC 5350 Media Organization and Regulations
MEDC 5400 Media Production Management
MEDC 6000 Seminar in Media Communications

Emphasis Courses

A minimum of 15 credit hours must be completed from the following:

BUSN 5000 Business
BUSN 5680 Issues in Business: Project Management
HRDV 5680 Ethics, Values, and Legal Issues in Human Resources Development
HRMG 5000 Managing Human Resources
INTB 5000 International Business
INTB 5650 International Business Management
MNGT 5000 Management
MRKT 5000 Marketing
MEDC 5360 International Communications
MEDC 5430 Media Communications Technology
MEDC 5460 Media Research
MEDC 5500 or MNGT 5500 Professional Seminars
MEDC 5550 Topics in Media Communications
MEDC 5600 Introduction to Interactive Communications
MEDC 5650 Special Topics in Interactive Media
PBRL 4190 Public Relations Research
PBRL 5322 Public Relations
PBRL 5451 Communication Strategies for Investors and Financial Stakeholders
PBRL 5452 Communication Strategies for Public Affairs and Government Relations
PBRL 5453 Communication Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations
PBRL 5465 Crisis Management Communications

Course Descriptions

BUSN 5000 Business (3)

This course is designed to provide a foundation in such general business concepts as economics, finance, accounting, business law, marketing, and other business systems.

BUSN 5680 Issues in Business: Project Management (3)

This course examines the managerial perspective to project management in relation to Information Systems. The principal focus is on using the project cycle as a guideline to achieve goals (cost, schedule and performance) through project organization that would only be achieved with the greatest difficulty using traditional ways. Several tools and techniques to effective project management will be discussed, such as MS Project, Gantt charts, diagrams, cost as an independent variable, systems integration, teambuilding, work breakdown structures. The Information Systems of acquisition process and negotiation strategies along with conflict resolution will be introduced. Conflict resolution will be applied to the negotiation process and the teaming environment. Particular emphasis will be placed on the importance of planning throughout the life cycle of the project. Prerequisite: There are no formal prerequisites for this course. However, it is assumed the student has adequate writing, mathematical and analytical skills.

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HRDV 5680 Ethics, Values, and Legal Issues in Human Resources Development (3)

This course introduces the student to the various theories concerning values and human acquisition of values. Students explore personal value systems and how these systems influence their behavior and the behavior of others. Students examine ethical standards that can relate to human resources development and how these standards can affect actual workplace situations. This course investigates selected legal issues and situations that relate to the practice of human resources development.

HRMG 5000 Managing Human Resources (3)

This course is a comprehensive view of personnel policy development with emphasis on the interdependence of personnel and operating functions. Students analyze personnel functions of recruitment, development, training, compensation, integration into the workforce, and maintenance of personnel for the purpose of contributing to organizational, societal, and individual goals.

INTB 5000 International Business (3)

The student is introduced to the language and terminology of international business and major international political and economic policies that affect modern international businesses. Special attention is given to fundamental concepts of international finance, accounting, law, management, and marketing.

INTB 5650 International Business Management (3)

Course content focuses on the development of management skills related to multinational business. Students examine the issues of operating in a foreign country or across national boundaries and how management theory and practice in an international setting differ from those in the United States.

MNGT 5000 Management (3)

In this course, the student is introduced to the basic concepts of management and organizations. Primary emphasis is given to three primary functions: planning, organizing, and controlling. Additional topics include organizational theory, the global environment, ethics, and decision-making.

MRKT 5000 Marketing (3)

Students examine the character and importance of the marketing process, its essential functions, and the institutions exercising those functions. Course content focuses on the major policies that underlie the activities of marketing institutions and the social, economic, and political implications of such policies.

MEDC 5000 Media Communications (Requisite Course) (3)

This is the requisite course in the communications management program. Students examine communications theory and its application to mass media. Consideration is given to the distinctive characteristics of each of the major mass communications systems, including print, radio, film, television, and interactive media. The course introduces students to the graduate program and describes program expectations as well as introduces research methodologies used throughout the program and discusses academic preparation for MEDC 6000 Seminar in Media Communications. Therefore, students must take this course even if they have academic and/or professional experience in media communications. Prerequisite: students should have an educational background or professional experience in media communications, or they must enroll in 6 credit hours of additional preparatory undergraduate coursework, as determined by an academic advisor.

MEDC 5300 Strategic Communications (3)

This course is taught from a top-management perspective regarding the strategic role of communications, and the communications manager, in achieving the company mission and measurable bottom-line results. It introduces students to an integrated approach to managing all communications functions, including all direct and indirect communications requirements for both internal and external audiences and intermediaries, such as customers, suppliers, distributors, employees, shareholders, competitors, politicians, analysts, journalists and lobbyists. It encompasses the functional areas of marketing communications, organizational communications, media relations, investor relations, government relations and corporate branding. Prerequisite: MEDC 5000 Media Communications.

MEDC 5310 Media and Culture (3)

This course examines the mass media as it reflects and influences the attitudes, values, behaviors, myths, and preoccupations that define a given culture. The course considers the functions of mass media in society and the effect on the individual. Prerequisite: MEDC 5000 Media Communications.

MEDC 5350 Media Organization and Regulations (3)

The student examines the legal structure of the media communications industry. The course focuses on the formation, rationale, and implications of policies that form the basis of media law and regulation. Prerequisite: MEDC 5000 Media Communications.

MEDC 5360 International Communications (3)

This course focuses on the history, issues, and future of international communications. The class considers individual media systems, including different understandings of the role of the media, freedom of press and information in different areas of the world, parity between distribution of news and the shaping of the public mind, international stereotyping, and international propaganda. The course also examines the relationship between national and global media systems and the role of international communications in the development of the new world order. Prerequisite: MEDC 5000 Media Communications.

MEDC 5400 Media Production Management (3)

This course exposes the student to the principles of management, planning, and execution of media-oriented activities and events. The student examines the role and functions of the producer of media-oriented projects: pre-production organization and research; proposal writing; scheduling; union regulations; budgeting; and staff, crew, and talent coordination. Prerequisite: MEDC 5000 Media Communications.

MEDC 5430 Media Communications Technology (3)

The student explores new technologies in mass communications and the choices that these technologies present in the area of media communications. Course content focuses on the impact of interactive video, computers, and videotext on business and government and the increasing reliance on the management and communication of information. Prerequisite: MEDC 5000 Media Communications.

MEDC 5460 Media Research (3)

The course introduces students to the major research methodologies, communication theories, and topics of study within media research. Theories, models, and methods are applied toward the development of research projects. Students discuss and examine qualitative and quantitative methods of media research employed by various aspects of the media. Prerequisite: MEDC 5000 Media Communications. MEDC 5310 Media and Culture recommended.

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MEDC 5500 Professional Seminars (1-3)

Students may supplement the core and elective courses in media communications with professional seminars designed to examine contemporary issues in this field. Course may be repeated for credit if content differs. Graduate students may apply to substitute 3 seminar credit hours for one emphasis course using a program option request form. Prerequisite: Undergraduate seniors require approval of academic advisor.

MEDC 5550 Topics in Media Communications (3)

This course offers a variety of topics to address emerging theories, practices, and applications in the field of communications. Topics are timely and of interest to professionals currently working in or pursuing media-related careers. Classes may focus on such topics as graduate-level writing, research and critical thinking; media literacy and video production; ethical issues in the media, account planning for advertising and public relations, applications for podcasting and blogs, creating cultural change through organizational communications, etc. Prerequisite may vary with the topic. May be repeated once for credit if content differs and is appropriate for the student's course of study.

MEDC 5600 Introduction to Interactive Communications (3)

A practical introduction to interactive media. The course will address concept, design and production strategies, technical aspects of production and publication, and practical applications of interactive media in educational, commercial, and public environments. Students will create flowcharts, treatments, and scripts, and will publish their final project as a design document. Prerequisite: MEDC 5000 Media Communications.

MEDC 5650 Special Topics in Interactive Media (3)

This course will address current and significant issues in interactive media and interactive communications. The course focuses on existing theories and practices, with emphasis on new and emerging topics and technologies in this field. The course topics could include computer-based training, games and entertainment, journalism on the Internet, and interactive narrative writing. Prerequisites: MEDC 5000 Media Communications and MEDC 5600 Introduction to Interactive Communications recommended. Can be repeated for credit if content differs.

MEDC 6000 Seminar in Media Communications (3)

In this course, students synthesize and integrate the learning experiences acquired in all previous media communications courses and research current topics relative to production of a thesis document. Also, current topics in media communications are shared in a seminar setting. Techniques used to accomplish these goals may vary. Prerequisite: Completion of all other graduate courses in program. This should be the last course taken before graduation. Any exceptions must be approved prior to registration by submitting a program option request to be signed by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the School of Communications.

PBRL 4190 Public Relations Research (3)

Students learn the basic concepts of public relations research using the Internet for instruction and assignment. Students learn how to gather and apply data to public relations program design and evaluation. The course presents primary and secondary data collection methods used in PR research, as well as basic statistical concepts for data analysis. Students also learn to interpret, to report, and to apply findings to specific public relations cases and situations. Prerequisite: PBRL 2100 Fundamentals of Strategic Communications and Public Relations or PBRL 5322 Public Relations for graduate students.

PBRL 5322 Public Relations (3)

This course integrates communications strategy with organizational mission statements, demonstrates stakeholder and issues management techniques, and considers ethical dilemmas in public relations situations. Public relations cases are examined in order to learn effective strategic and tactical answers to public-perception problems and opportunities. Prerequisite: MEDC 5000 Media Communications and 6 hours of undergraduate coursework in public relations.

PBRL 5323 Organizational Communications (3)

This course considers the relationship of organizational mission, employee values, organizational cultures, and motivation. Both formal and informal communication networks are studied as they pertain to appropriate use of media to communicate with employees or volunteers. Students examine case studies showing proactive employee information efforts. Prerequisite: MEDC 5000 Media Communications and PBRL 5322 Public Relations or MEDC 5300 Strategic Communications.

PBRL 5451 Communication Strategies for Investors and Financial Stakeholders (3)

This course addresses the specific communication requirements of the financial stakeholder audience, including discussion of legal communication requirements, annual reports, annual meetings, analyst meetings, analyst information programs, and shareowner communications. Prerequisites: MEDC 5000 Media Communications and PBRL 5322 Public Relations or MEDC 5300 Strategic Communications.

PBRL 5452 Communication Strategies for Public Affairs and Government Relations (3)

This course focuses on managing public relations strategies and tactics used in conducting public affairs, lobbying efforts, political campaigning, and government public information functions. Prerequisites: MEDC 5000 Media Communications and PBRL 5322 Public Relations or MEDC 5300 Strategic Communications.

PBRL 5453 Communication Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations (3)

This course addresses the specific public relations strategies needed to effectively manage the communications function within the nonprofit sector of organizations. The challenges of meeting the communication needs of volunteers and donors will be addressed as well as fund-raising communication techniques. Prerequisites: MEDC 5000 Media Communications and PBRL 5322 Public Relations or MEDC 5300 Strategic Communications.

PBRL 5465 Crisis Management Communications (3)

A specialized function of the public relations practice is the management of crisis communications. Students in this course study the relationship of the organization and its culture to the external environment in times of crisis. Risk assessment, preparation of a crisis plan, and use of appropriate media in addressing crisis communication needs are studied. Prerequisites: MEDC 5000 Media Communication and PBRL 5322 Public Relations or PBRL 4800 Media Relations.

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