

# Communication

IN THE COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES AND FINE ARTS

**OFFICE:** Communication 237  
**TELEPHONE:** 619-594-8512 / **FAX:** 619-594-0704  
**E-MAIL:** [comm.ma@sdsu.edu](mailto:comm.ma@sdsu.edu)  
**WEBSITE:** <http://communication.sdsu.edu>

## Faculty

**Heather E. Canary**, Ph.D., Professor of Communication, Director of School

**Wayne A. Beach**, Ph.D., Professor of Communication

**Patricia J. Geist-Martin**, Ph.D., Professor of Communication, Emeritus [Senate Distinguished Professor]

**Kurt J. Lindemann**, Ph.D., Professor of Communication (Graduate Adviser)

**Brian H. Spitzberg**, Ph.D., Professor of Communication, Emeritus [Senate Distinguished Professor]

**Yea-Wen Chen**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Communication

**Lourdes S. Martinez**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Communication

**Rachael A. Record**, Sc.D., Associate Professor of Communication

**Tiffany A. Dykstra-DeVette**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Communication

**Luke A. Winslow**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Communication

**Charles E. Goehring**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Communication

**Colter D. Ray**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Communication

**Matthew W. Savage**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Communication

## General Information

The School of Communication offers graduate study leading to the Master of Arts degree in communication. The School of Communication is committed to quality graduate and undergraduate education in the field of human communication. We prepare students for civic life, professional careers, and further graduate study. We are committed to cutting edge research and instructional innovation which advances understandings of culture, health, institutions, interaction, politics, relationships, and rhetoric in everyday life. The school is dedicated to serving San Diego State University, the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts, and the diverse communities in the urban region in which we live and work.

Priority is given to the development of graduate students' expertise and skills in the following areas:

- Mastery of knowledge and abilities in communication theory and practice;
- Completion of major project that prepares students to become change agents in the career paths they are pursuing;
- Collaboration in research and instructional teams;
- Participation in fieldwork in diverse settings relevant to the social issues being investigated;
- Presentation of scholarly papers at professional conferences;
- Co-authorship of research articles with faculty and other graduate students;
- Preparation for a teaching career.

## Graduate Teaching Associate Program

Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA) positions are available to a limited number of qualified students. This valuable opportunity includes:

- Training in teaching the basic oral communication course and helping first-year undergraduates to improve their communication skills;
- A monthly stipend that helps to offset the expenses of graduate school.

Instructions for applying for a Graduate Teaching Associate position are available at [http://communication.sdsu.edu/?page\\_id=9](http://communication.sdsu.edu/?page_id=9).

The deadline for applying for a GTA position is the same deadline as applying for admission to the graduate program (February 1 for fall semester).

## Admission to Graduate Study

The M.A. degree in Communication admits students only in the fall semester. Application packages must be received and completed by previous February 1.

In addition to meeting the general requirements for admission to the university with classified graduate standing as outlined in Part Two of this bulletin, students applying for admission to the Master of Arts degree in communication with a specialization in communication studies are evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Undergraduate major or minor in communication, speech communication, or a related discipline. Those lacking adequate undergraduate preparation may be admitted conditionally to the program and are required to take one or more proficiency courses identified, as determined by the graduate adviser. Proficiency courses do not count toward the 30 units of a student's graduate program.
2. Minimum grade point average of 3.00 (when A equals 4.0) in the last 60 semester (90 quarter) units attempted (this calculation may not include lower division courses taken after award of a baccalaureate degree).

Students applying for admission should electronically submit the university application available at <http://www.calstate.edu/apply> along with the \$55 application fee.

All applicants must submit admissions materials separately to SDSU Graduate Admissions and to the School of Communication.

## Graduate Admissions

The following materials should be submitted as a complete package directly to:

**Graduate Admissions**  
Enrollment Services  
San Diego State University  
San Diego, CA 92182-7416

1. Official transcripts (in sealed envelopes) from all postsecondary institutions attended;
2. GRE scores (<http://www.ets.org> SDSU institution code 4682). All applicants must post a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) verbal score of 150 or higher; a GRE quantitative score of 142 or higher; a combined GRE verbal and quantitative score of 300 or higher; and a GRE writing assessment (GRE-W) of level 4 or higher;
3. English language score, if medium of instruction was in a language other than English (<http://www.ets.org> SDSU institution code 4682).

For international applicants for whom English is not their first language, English language paper scores of 550 (or 213 online).

## School of Communication

The following admissions materials must be submitted electronically. For information regarding the admissions process, visit the school website at <http://communication.sdsu.edu>.

### Cover Letter

- Indicate that you applied online, paid your fee, and submitted official transcripts and scores to Graduate Admissions;
- Indicate whether you have established California residency;
- Indicate if you are applying for a Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA) position and describe the details of any teaching experience. If you did not major in communication as an undergraduate, indicate any communication coursework that might prepare you for teaching.

### Application Support Materials

1. Letters of Recommendation: Three letters of recommendation from academic or professional references that speak to your ability to succeed in graduate studies. We prefer that at least two of the letters be written by professors who can speak to your academic background and capabilities.
2. Personal Statement: Personal statement of purpose that (a) describes your interest in communication, (b) describes your undergraduate and/or professional preparation for graduate studies in the communication program, (c) articulates your personal and/or career objectives that graduate studies in communication will help you pursue, and (d) optional: describes your interest in a Graduate Teaching Associate position, addressing how this desire relates to your interest in communication, your past academic and professional experience, and your career objectives.
3. Photocopies of Transcripts and Scores: It is essential to send photocopies of your transcripts and GRE scores (and English language scores, if applicable) to the School of Communication. Eventually, we will receive the official transcripts and scores from Graduate Admissions; however, we may be in a position to review your materials and make admission and GTA decisions before the materials arrive from the Graduate Admissions office.
4. Curriculum vitae or resume
5. Writing sample that you believe well represents your writing capabilities (e.g., a paper written for an undergraduate course).

### Advancement to Candidacy

All students must satisfy the general requirements for advancement to candidacy as described in Part Four of this bulletin. Students must satisfactorily complete at least 12 units of courses listed on the official program of study with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 and be recommended by the graduate adviser.

### Specific Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree

(Major Code: 06011) (SIMS Code: 661129)

In addition to meeting the requirements for the Master of Arts degree as described in Part Four of this bulletin, the student must complete a minimum of 30 units in courses acceptable in master's degree programs. At least 18 units of the total program must be in courses numbered 600-799. Approval of the graduate adviser is required for all courses numbered 500-599. Students may take up to three units of graduate coursework in departments other than the School of Communication or three units of special study. Students may petition a second course outside the School of Communication. Students may not repeat any course in their program of study without consent of the graduate adviser and instructor.

The M.A. in communication provides advanced study of language, interaction, and communication in relational, organizational, cultural, medical, and societal contexts. Individuals in this specialization explore communication as an interactive process across diverse social relationships, activities and contexts. Please see the School of Communication website for the most current information: <http://communication.sdsu.edu>.

Students may elect Plan A (Thesis) by completing Communication 799A (3 units) or Plan B (Comprehensive Examination) by completing three additional units of 600-700 level coursework in the School of Communication and pass the Comprehensive Examination in Communication.

**Graduate Courses.** The remaining 27 units of the program must include Communication 601 with a grade of B or better; six units selected from Communication 610, 620, 640, 660; 12 units selected from Communication 610, 620, 640, 660, 665, 696, 705, 706, 707, 715, 721, 735, 740, 750, 751, 752, 755, 771, 783, 786, 792, 798; and six units selected with the approval of the graduate adviser. No more than three units may be taken as special study (Communication 798).

### Courses Acceptable for Master's Degree Program in Communication (COMM)

*Refer to Courses and Curricula and Regulations of the Division of Graduate Affairs sections of this bulletin for explanation of the course numbering system, unit or credit hour, prerequisites, and related information.*

#### UPPER DIVISION COURSES

**NOTE: Communication courses numbered 500 to 599 are not acceptable for the Master of Arts degree in Communication.**

##### COMM 508. Media Literacy (3)

Prerequisites: Communication 300 and 350. Admission to a major or minor in the School of Communication.

Role played by video texts in shaping culture including information distribution, entertainment, and socio-cultural influence exercised by television. Emphasis on audience/medium relationship and to developing critical skills.

##### COMM 540. Communicating Science in the Public Interest (3)

Prerequisites: Senior or graduate standing and admission to a communication or other approved major or minor.

Case studies of scientific distortion and success. Importance, misuses, and uses of scientific communication. Competent scientific communication, from manuscript preparation to public presentation. Not applicable to the Master of Arts degree in communication.

##### COMM 555. Conflict Management Communication (3)

Prerequisites: Communication 300 and 350. Admission to a major or minor in the School of Communication.

Approaches to conflict communication in international, societal, group, institutional, and interpersonal contexts.

##### COMM 596. Selected Topics (1-4)

Prerequisite: Senior standing or above.

Specialized study in selected topics. May be repeated with new content. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Limit of nine units of any combination of 296, 496, 596 courses applicable to a bachelor's degree. Maximum credit of six units of 596 applicable to a bachelor's degree. Credit for 596 and 696 applicable to a master's degree with approval of the graduate adviser.

#### GRADUATE COURSES

##### COMM 601. Seminar: Theory and Research Methods in Communication (3)

Prerequisite: Admission to communication studies specialization graduate program in the School of Communication.

Communication phenomena, theoretical background, and research techniques to navigate variation among approaches; intellectual history of communication theory.

##### COMM 610. Seminar: Advanced Communication Theory (3)

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Advanced methods of theory construction, explication, and evaluation in communication, including alternatives to traditional communication science.

##### COMM 620. Seminar: Quantitative Methods in Communication Research (3)

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Advanced applications of survey methodology; evaluation of experimental and quasi-experimental procedures; methods of statistical inference and research design; application of computer statistical package.

##### COMM 640. Seminar: Critical and Rhetorical Methods in Communication (3)

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Methodologies for textual, rhetorical, semiotic, narrative, and reception research. Use of case studies, focus groups, and interpretive methods.

##### COMM 660. Seminar: Ethnographic Methods in Communication Research (3)

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Historical and contemporary assumptions of ethnographic inquiry, including research design, data collection, and analysis of field materials.

**COMM 665. Seminar: Conversation Analysis in Communication Research (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Assumptions and practices of conversation analysis. Repeated examinations of diverse recordings and transcriptions as resources for analyzing distinctive, methodological, and ordered nature of communication contexts.

**COMM 696. Special Topics (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Intensive study in specific areas of communication. May be repeated with new content. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Credit for 596 and 696 applicable to a master's degree only with approval of the graduate adviser.

**COMM 705. Seminar: Performance Studies (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Critical examination of embodiment of written and spoken human communication in variety of social and cultural contexts and practices to include ritual, play, narrative, storytelling, folklore, and popular media.

**COMM 706. Seminar: Organizational Communication (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Functions, forms, and consequences of communicating in organizations in a changing work world. Topics such as culture groups, networks, leadership, conflict, and decision making.

**COMM 707. Seminar: Instructional Communication (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Communication relationships in instructional setting, teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy, student communication apprehension, as a function of instructional modalities, and cultural diversity issues.

**COMM 715. Seminar: Nonverbal Communication (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Nonverbal human behavior, including body movements, gesture, gaze, touch, and integration of vocal and nonvocal activities in human interaction.

**COMM 721. Seminar: Health Communication (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Personal, interactional, cultural, and political dimensions of communication about health and illness. Assumptions, practices, and structures of discourse across boundaries of family, social, and institutional contexts. May be repeated with new content. Maximum credit six units.

**COMM 735. Seminar: Relational Communication (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Contemporary theory and research addressing interpersonal verbal and nonverbal communication in intimate and non-intimate relationships.

**COMM 740. Seminar: Rhetorical Theory (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Different perspectives on rhetoric and human communication explored to better understand historical and contemporary theories of rhetoric.

**COMM 750. Seminar: Selected Topics: Communication Contexts (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Intensive study in specific contextual forms of communication. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. May be repeated with new content. Maximum credit nine units applicable to a master's degree in communication.

**COMM 751. Seminar: Gender and Communication (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Socially constructed gender through communication. Contexts include interpersonal relationships, public discourse, and organizations.

**COMM 752. Seminar: Dark Side of Communication (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Communication considered destructive or unethical yet functional, productive or productive and ethical yet dysfunctional, destructive or evil, or ideologically ignored by current inquiry; including jealousy, infidelity, coercion, deception, aggression, and manipulation.

**COMM 755. Seminar: Public Address (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Case studies of rhetorical events which illustrate rhetorical theory. May be repeated with new content. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Maximum credit six units applicable to a master's degree.

**COMM 771. Seminar: Intercultural Communication (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Analysis of cultural influences on human communication acts. Emphasis on cultural values, perception, social organizations, language, and nonverbal codes.

**COMM 783. Seminar: Medical Interaction (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Communication in medical interviewing using conversational analysis of doctor-patient interactions.

**COMM 786. Seminar: Communication and Leadership (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Theory and research on role and function of communication behavior in exercise of leadership in contemporary organizations and public life.

**COMM 792. Seminar: Persuasion (3)**

Prerequisite: Credit or concurrent registration in Communication 601.

Contemporary theories and models of persuasion, methods of assessing persuasive effect, and analysis of research literature.

**COMM 798. Special Study (1-3) Cr/NC/RP**

Contract required. Arranged with graduate coordinator in area of study. Individual study. Maximum credit six units applicable to a master's degree.

**COMM 799A. Thesis or Project (3) Cr/NC/RP**

Prerequisites: An officially appointed thesis committee and advancement to candidacy.

Preparation of a project or thesis for the master's degree.

**COMM 799B. Thesis or Project Extension (0) Cr/NC**

Prerequisite: Prior registration in Thesis or Project 799A with an assigned grade symbol of RP.

Registration in any semester or term following assignment of RP in Course 799A in which the student expects to use the facilities and resources of the university; also student must be registered in the course when the completed thesis or project is granted final approval.

---



---

**Comparative Literature**

Refer to "English" in this section of the bulletin.