

# COMMUNICATION STUDIES - MASTER OF ARTS

## Master of Arts - Communication Studies

The department offers a thesis, comprehensive exam, and applied project options in its Master of Arts program. All options require a minimum of 36 credits. The thesis option requires 30 credits of coursework, 6 credits of thesis hours (COMM 5999 Master's Thesis), and an oral defense of the thesis and coursework. The non-thesis applied project option requires 30 credits of coursework, 6 credits of project hours (**COMM 5994 MA Project**). The non-thesis project option does not require an oral defense of the project and coursework. The non-thesis comprehensive exam option requires 36 credits of coursework and 4 hours of written examination, followed by an oral defense of the student's written examination and coursework. All options require a minimum of 30 credit hours of Communication Studies courses. The oral exam committee necessary for the thesis and non-thesis comprehensive exams will consist of at least two graduate faculty members from the Department of Communication Studies and one graduate faculty member from any other NMSU department serving as the Graduate School's Dean's Representative.

### Program Requirements

All tracks (thesis, project, and comprehensive exams) require 36 credits, 30 of which must be in COMM. A grade of B- or higher must be earned in all COMM courses, and a minimum GPA of 3.0 or higher is required to graduate. Two courses (6 credits) with numbers 4500+ can be counted toward the degree, and 2 courses (6 credits) may be taken in a related field of study, but courses outside of COMM are not required. Up to 6 graduate course credits can be accepted for transfer at the discretion of the Department Head.

Students must earn a B- or better in all COMM coursework and earn a GPA of 3.0 or higher in all graduate coursework at NMSU to graduate. Additional information can be found on the department website (<https://comm.nmsu.edu>).

### Graduate Course Rotation:

#### Fall

COMM 5110 Theories of Communication

COMM 5140 Qualitative Research Methods in Communication

COMM 5510 Organizational Communication

#### Spring

COMM 5130 Quantitative Research Methods

COMM 5710 Communication and Culture

COMM 5610 Interpersonal Communication

### Admissions

Applicants must meet the following admission requirements of the Graduate School.

1. Have an undergraduate degree with a GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale from an accredited College or University; or

2. Have a graduate degree with a GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale from an accredited College or University; or
3. A minimum of five years of relevant, full-time professional work experience with an undergraduate GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale from an accredited College or University. Students with a GPA below 3.0 can be admitted on probationary status, but can not work as a Graduate Assistant until their earned GPA at NMSU is 3.0 or higher.

International students must also apply through the International Student Services (<https://isss.nmsu.edu/>) program. GPA requirements of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale are not negotiable for international students. Standardized test scores and results from language proficiency exams are not required, but submitting such scores may enhance your ability to secure a Graduate Teaching Assistantship. International students must meet graduate school application deadlines set by the International Students Services program. These deadlines are typically the last day of February and the last day of September.

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) General Test is not required for admission; however, existing GRE scores that are high will strengthen a candidate's application and are highly regarded in the awarding of Graduate Assistantships.

### Application Materials

Applicants are required to submit the following materials:

1. A letter of application including a statement of purpose discussing why and what you want to study in the program.
2. Current Resume or Vita
3. A scholarly writing sample of 20 to no more than 30 pages
4. Three letters of recommendation submitted separately. Candidates need only to supply contact information for referees.
5. Official Transcripts from all previous educational institutions, undergraduate and graduate.
6. Applicants interested in a Graduate Assistantship must respond to the application prompt and upload a letter addressing the following question: What about being a Graduate Teaching Assistant interests you?

A small number of Graduate Teaching Assistantships are available. These assistantships are the only source of funding for the graduate program. All Graduate Teaching Assistants are responsible for teaching COMM 1115G Introduction to Communication. As such, applicants with an undergraduate degree in Communication or a closely related field will receive primary consideration for assistantships.

The Department of Communication Studies is not able to waive any application fees. The first application to the NMSU Graduate School is free. Fees are only charged for additional applications. It is highly advised to only apply to one graduate program.

### Thesis Option:

Prefix	Title	Credits
<b>Degree Requirements <sup>1</sup></b>		
COMM 5110	Theories of Communication	18
COMM 5130	Quantitative Research Methods	
COMM 5140	Qualitative Research Methods in Communication	
COMM 5510	Organizational Communication	
COMM 5610	Interpersonal Communication	
COMM 5710	Communication and Culture	

Electives <sup>2</sup>		
Select 6-12 credits of COMM Electives		6-12
Select 0-6 credits from courses in a Related Fields (outside of COMM)		0-6
Thesis <sup>3</sup>		
COMM 5999	Master's Thesis	6
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>36</b>

- <sup>1</sup> Students must receive a minimum grade of B- or better in all COMM courses and an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher. Any students earning a grade of C+ or below in a COMM course will have to retake the class.
- <sup>2</sup> In order to graduate, students will need a total of 36 credits, of which 30 credits must be from COMM coursework. Students may take up to 6 credits in a related field of study, but students are not required to take any courses outside of the department. Please consult with your advisor about your specific requirements and how to complete them in order to graduate.
- <sup>3</sup> Upon completion of the thesis and with the advisor's approval, students will send their thesis to the committee consisting of the student's advisor, at least one additional graduate faculty member from the Department of Communication Studies, and one additional Graduate Faculty member from any other department at NMSU who serves as the Dean's Representative. Students must follow the guidelines from the Graduate School and the Department of Communication Studies, all found in the Graduate Student Handbook.

## Comprehensive Exam Option:

Prefix	Title	Credits
<b>Degree Requirements<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>18</b>
COMM 5110	Theories of Communication	
COMM 5130	Quantitative Research Methods	
COMM 5140	Qualitative Research Methods in Communication	
COMM 5510	Organizational Communication	
COMM 5610	Interpersonal Communication	
COMM 5710	Communication and Culture	
Electives <sup>2</sup>		
Select 12-18 credits of COMM Electives		12-18
Select 0-6 credits from courses in a Related Fields (outside of COMM)		0-6
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>36</b>

- <sup>1</sup> Students must receive a minimum grade of B- or better in all COMM courses and an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher. Any students earning a grade of C+ or below in a COMM course will have to retake the class.
- <sup>2</sup> Students will need a total of 36 credits, of which 30 credits must be from COMM coursework. Students may take up to 6 credits in a related field of study, but are not required to take any courses outside of the department. Please consult with your advisor about your specific requirements and how to complete them in order to graduate.

## Applied Project Option:

Prefix	Title	Credits
<b>Degree Requirements<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>18</b>
COMM 5110	Theories of Communication	
COMM 5130	Quantitative Research Methods	
COMM 5140	Qualitative Research Methods in Communication	
COMM 5510	Organizational Communication	

COMM 5710	Communication and Culture	
COMM 5610	Interpersonal Communication	
Electives <sup>2</sup>		
Select 6-12 credits of COMM Electives		6-12
Select 0-6 credits from courses in a Related Fields (outside of COMM)		0-6
Project Option		
COMM 5994	MA Project	6
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>36</b>

- <sup>1</sup> Students must receive a minimum grade of B- or better in all COMM courses and an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher. Any students earning a grade of C+ or below in a COMM course will have to retake the class.
- <sup>2</sup> Students will need a total of 36 credits, of which 30 credits must be from COMM coursework. Students may take up to 6 credits in a related field of study, but are not required to take any courses outside of the department. Please consult with your advisor about your specific requirements and how to complete them in order to graduate.

The Graduate School requires students to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in all courses taken as a graduate student at NMSU. The Department of Communication Studies requires that a grade of B- or higher must be earned in all COMM courses and that a minimum GPA of 3.0 or higher is required to graduate.

Students requesting transfer credit for any graduate courses taken from another institution must submit a written justification, including course syllabi and transcripts to the department head during their first semester of studies. Up to six credits can be accepted for transfer at the discretion of the Department Head. All students must take COMM 5110 Theories of Communication, COMM 5130 Quantitative Research Methods, and COMM 5140 Qualitative Research Methods in Communication from the Department of Communication Studies at NMSU. Transfers for these courses will not be accepted or approved.

## Final Examination for the Degree:

A student will satisfy the Graduate School's requirement for a final exam by completing the Organizational Communication concentration's necessary coursework for the Thesis, Project, or Comprehensive Exam option.

- The student must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on all courses taken as a graduate student at NMSU, including those taken in COMM and approved electives taken in other departments at NMSU, and courses to fulfill the requirements of the concentration or MA or approved course substitutions including any MAP courses used to satisfy the graduate degree or concentration.
- The student must complete all required and elective courses or approved course substitutions including any MAP courses used to satisfy the graduate degree or concentration with a B- or better and have a minimum GPA of 3.0 or higher.
  - The thesis student must successfully complete all coursework, pass six credits of COMM 5999 Master's Thesis, and successfully pass a committee oral defense\*.
  - The comprehensive exam student must successfully complete all coursework, pass four hours of comprehensive exams, and successfully pass a committee oral defense\*.
  - The project student must successfully complete all coursework and pass six credits of COMM 5994 MA Project. Projects are directed by the students advisor and satisfactory completion of 6 or more credits of COMM 5994 MA Project. By completing a

professional project and oral presentation of the students project, the project serves as culmination of the program required for graduation and thus along with earning a B- in all coursework and a GPA of 3.0 or higher has met and satisfied the Graduate School's requirement for a final exam. Non-thesis project students do not need to defend their project to a committee, successful completion of 6 project hours and an oral presentation of at least 15 minutes that is approved by their advisor meets the Graduate School's requirement for a final exam. Project students do not have to complete or submit the Master's Final Examination Form in order to graduate.

A student who fails to meet any of the criteria may, during one or more subsequent semesters, take or retake additional graduate-level courses to increase their cumulative GPA, thereby satisfying the Graduate School's requirement for a final exam.

\* Thesis and non-thesis comprehensive exam students must defend their thesis or written questions during a committee including their advisor from the Department of Communication Studies, one additional Graduate Faculty member from the Department of Communication Studies, and a Graduate Faculty member from any department outside of the Department of Communication Studies. Students must submit the Master's Final Examination Form (<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/current-students/graduate-forms.html>) with all necessary signatures to the Graduate School at least ten working days before their oral defense. Project students do not need to defend to a committee or submit the Master's Final Examination Form in order to meet the Graduate School's requirement for a final exam.

**Note:** The Department of Communication Studies and the College of Arts and Sciences reserve the right to change the published requirements. Any such changes will be announced and will not be retroactive without the consent of the Department Head of Communication Studies. Currently, all required courses are offered once each year except for some electives. Always consult with the Graduate Coordinator for NMSU Global, the Graduate Student Advisor, or the Department Head of Communication Studies.

New Mexico State University's Master's Accelerated Program (MAP) provides **the opportunity for academically qualified undergraduate students** to begin working on a master's degree **during their junior and senior years** while completing a bachelor's degree. A bachelor's degree typically four years to complete, and a master's degree requires an additional two years. The master's accelerated programs allow students the opportunity to complete a graduate program in an accelerated manner. You can also check NMSU's catalog for additional information about our programs. The MAP program allows undergraduate students to take graduate courses and count up to twelve credits toward both undergraduate and graduate degrees in COMM.

## MAP Requirements

- The Graduate School allows qualified junior or senior students to substitute its graduate courses for required or elective courses in an undergraduate degree program and subsequently count those same courses toward graduate requirements in a related graduate program.
- Undergraduate students may apply for acceptance to the accelerated master's program after completing 60 semester hours of undergraduate coursework, of which a minimum of 25 semester credit hours must be completed at NMSU.
- The grade point average must be at a minimum of 3.25.

- Students must receive a grade of B- or higher in this coursework to receive graduate credit. If a grade of C+ or lower is earned, it will not count toward the graduate degree.

## Accepted MAP Courses

The following courses are accepted for use in the MAP program; any other courses may be considered after a consultation with an advisor. An exception will need to be made to the degree audit in order for the additional course(s) to be included on both the Undergraduate and Graduate degrees.

Prefix	Title	Credits
COMM 5210	Political Communication	3
COMM 5220	Communication Technologies	3
COMM 5230	Strategic Communication	3
COMM 5310	Sports Communication	3
COMM 5530	Leadership Communication	3
COMM 5550	Case Studies in Leadership Communication	3
COMM 5560	Ethics & Diversity in Leadership Communication	3
COMM 5630	Family Communication	3
COMM 5640	Nonverbal Communication	3
COMM 5996	Special Topics	1-9
COMM 5997	Independent Study	1-6
COMM 5998	Communication Internship for Graduate Students	3

Enrollment in graduate courses requires the Department Head's approval and a completed MAP form before the first week of the semester when taking MAP courses for dual credit. Please meet with the Department Head or the Graduate Advisor for more information.