

COMMUNICATION STUDIES (BA)

Offered at: San Luis Obispo Campus

Understanding the process of communication is no less important in today's Information Age than it was during the Golden Age of Athens, when skill in oral communication determined one's success in life. The study of the human capacity for speech as a means of influence, entertainment, and information was at the foundation of Western Civilization. A course of study in communication, always one that required knowledge of many cognate fields such as psychology and logic, remains interdisciplinary in nature. Faculty in Communication Studies teach aesthetic, historical, critical, and empirical methods for understanding communication.

The aims of the discipline are both conceptual and practical. In broad terms, students who enroll in a liberal arts curriculum do so to develop the ability to analyze and reason critically, write and speak effectively, and appreciate the influences of culture upon their lives. The first goal of the department is to advance these objectives.

The department offers fully articulated major and minor programs. Courses focus on the history, theory, and practice of human communication across personal, professional, and civic contexts. Required courses introduce students to the importance of communication in several key areas: debate, interpersonal communication, media studies, organizational communication, performance of literature, rhetoric, and small group communication. Through the use of electives, the major can be shaped to assist students in preparing for their educational and career objectives.

Students use a Communication Studies major to prepare for careers in business, advertising, public relations, human relations, law, education, the mass media, non-profit work, theatre, and the clergy. In addition to providing students with an option to select from a broad range of internships and to participate in various Learn by Doing activities, the department houses an extensive program in competitive debate. It also offers individual and sequenced courses to develop practical skills in oral composition, critical thinking, and effective human communication.

Program Learning Objectives

1. Describe the foundational concepts, theories, and methods of critical, humanistic, and social scientific approaches to studying communication.
2. Analyze mediated and non-mediated communication practices, messages, and effects considering the culture and context in which they occur.
3. Practice self-reflexivity about one's own communication practices.
4. Develop a critical framework for making ethical and inclusive communication choices.
5. Select appropriate modalities and technologies to accomplish communication goals.
6. Apply communication concepts, theories, and methods to real-world events, issues, and problems.
7. Produce effective and ethical communication based on awareness of diverse perspectives, contexts, and social identities.

Degree Requirements and Curriculum

In addition to the program requirements listed on this page, students must also satisfy requirements outlined in more detail in the Minimum Requirements for Graduation (<https://catalog.calpoly.edu/academic-standards-policies/general-requirements-bachelors-degree/#generaleducationtext>) section of this catalog, including:

- 40 units of upper-division courses
- 2.0 GPA
- Graduation Writing Requirements (GWR)
- U.S. Cultural Pluralism (USCP)

Note: No Major or Support courses may be selected as credit/no credit. In addition, no more than 12 units of cooperative or internship courses can count towards your degree requirements.

Code	Title	Units
MAJOR COURSES		
COMS 1100	Introduction to the Communication Studies Major	2
Select from the following: (1C) ¹		3
COMS 1101	Public Speaking	
COMS 1102	Public Speaking in Digital Spaces	
COMS 2205	Rhetorical Studies	3
COMS 2206	Communication Theory	3
Select from the following:		3
COMS 2208	Performance, Literature, and Culture	
COMS 2250	Building Advocacy Skills ²	
Select two from the following:		6
COMS 2211	Interpersonal Communication	

COMS 2213	Organizational Communication	
COMS 2215	Media Studies	
COMS 2217	Small Group Collaboration and Creativity	
Select from the following:		3
COMS 3312	Quantitative Research Methods in Communication Studies	
COMS 3313	Qualitative Research Methods in Communication Studies	
COMS 3316	Intercultural Communication ((Upper-Division 4) (USCP))	3
Select from the following: (GWR)		3
COMS 3332	Rhetorical Criticism	
COMS 3385	Media Criticism	
COMS 4460	Undergraduate Seminar	1
COMS 4461	Senior Project	2
Focus Area		
Select from the following focus areas or any courses in the list below:		18
Culture, Identity, and Power		
COMS 3308	Group Performance of Literature	
COMS 3319	Critical Cultural Studies and Communication	
COMS 3320	Intergroup Communication	
COMS 3331	Contemporary Rhetorical Approaches	
COMS 3333	Race and Rhetoric	
COMS 3350	Advocacy Coaching and Consulting ²	
COMS 3351	Speech and Debate Team ³	
COMS 3352	Spanish-language Speech and Debate Team ³	
COMS/JOUR 3387	Sports Communication	
COMS 4404	Video Games and Society	
COMS 4418	Health Communication	
COMS 4420	Nonverbal Communication	
COMS 4421	Gender and Communication	
COMS 4428	Family Communication	
COMS 4430	The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication	
COMS 4435	Rhetoric and Social Change	
Media and Technology		
COMS 3317	Technology and Human Communication	
COMS 3384	Media Effects	
COMS 3386	Communication, Media, and Politics	
COMS/JOUR 3387	Sports Communication	
COMS/ISLA 3395	Science Communication	
COMS 4402	Rhetorics of Science, Technology, and Medicine	
COMS 4404	Video Games and Society	
COMS 4418	Health Communication	
COMS 4421	Gender and Communication	
COMS/BUS 4458	Solving Big World Challenges	
ISLA 3303	Values and Technology	
Persuasion and Social Influence		
COMS 2226	Applied Argumentation	
COMS 3301	Business and Professional Communication	
COMS 3302	Advanced Public Speaking	
COMS 3305	Persuasion	
COMS 3317	Technology and Human Communication	
COMS 3330	Classical Rhetoric	
COMS 3350	Advocacy Coaching and Consulting ²	
COMS 3351	Speech and Debate Team ³	

COMS 3352	Spanish-language Speech and Debate Team ³	
COMS 3384	Media Effects	
COMS 3386	Communication, Media, and Politics	
COMS 4418	Health Communication	
COMS 4420	Nonverbal Communication	
COMS 4435	Rhetoric and Social Change	
Politics, Advocacy, and Civic Engagement		
COMS 2226	Applied Argumentation	
COMS 3302	Advanced Public Speaking	
COMS 3305	Persuasion	
COMS 3308	Group Performance of Literature	
COMS 3319	Critical Cultural Studies and Communication	
COMS 3330	Classical Rhetoric	
COMS 3331	Contemporary Rhetorical Approaches	
COMS 3350	Advocacy Coaching and Consulting ²	
COMS 3351	Speech and Debate Team ³	
COMS 3352	Spanish-language Speech and Debate Team ³	
COMS 3384	Media Effects	
COMS 3386	Communication, Media, and Politics	
COMS 3390	Environmental Communication	
COMS 4402	Rhetorics of Science, Technology, and Medicine	
COMS 4435	Rhetoric and Social Change	
Relationships, Organizations, and Socialization		
COMS 3301	Business and Professional Communication	
COMS 3320	Intergroup Communication	
COMS 3333	Race and Rhetoric	
COMS/JOUR 3387	Sports Communication	
COMS 4413	Training and Development	
COMS 4420	Nonverbal Communication	
COMS 4421	Gender and Communication	
COMS 4428	Family Communication	
COMS 4430	The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication	
COMS/BUS 4458	Solving Big World Challenges	
COMS Electives		
Select any 3000-4000 level COMS courses ^{4,5}		6
SUPPORT COURSES		
STAT 1110	Applied Statistical Concepts and Methods (2) ¹	3
GENERAL EDUCATION (GE)		
(See GE program requirements below)		37
FREE ELECTIVES		
Free Electives ^{6,7}		24
Total Units		120

¹ Required in Major or Support; also satisfies General Education (GE) requirement.

² Repeatable course; Major credit limited to 3 units.

³ Repeatable course; Major credit limited to 6 units.

⁴ Courses taken to meet the focus area requirement cannot be double-counted in the COMS Electives.

⁵ A maximum of 3 units may be applied toward COMS electives: COMS 4400, COMS 4480, COMS 4485.

⁶ Free electives may need to be at the 3000-4000 level to ensure completion of the required minimum of 40 units of upper-division.

⁷ If a General Education (GE) course is used to satisfy a Major or Support requirement, additional units of Free Electives may be needed to complete the total units required for the degree.

General Education (GE) Requirements

- 43 units required, 9 of which are specified in Major and/or Support.
- If any of the remaining 34 Units is used to satisfy a Major or Support requirement, additional units of Free Electives may be needed to complete the total units required for the degree.
- See the complete GE course listing (<https://catalog.calpoly.edu/academic-standards-policies/general-requirements-bachelors-degree/#generaleducationtext>).
- A grade of C- or better is required in one course in each of the following GE Areas: 1A (English Composition), 1B (Critical Thinking), 1C (Oral Communication), and 2 (Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning).

Lower-Division General Education

Area 1	English Communication and Critical Thinking	
1A	Written Communication	3
1B	Critical Thinking	3
1C	Oral Communication (3 units in Major) ¹	0
Area 2	Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning	
2	Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning (3 units in Support) ¹	0
Area 3	Arts and Humanities	
3A	Arts	3
3B	Humanities: Literature, Philosophy, Languages other than English	3
Area 4	Social and Behavioral Sciences (Area 4 courses must come from at least two different course prefixes.)	
4A	American Institutions (Title 5, Section 40404 Requirement)	3
4B	Social and Behavioral Sciences	3
Area 5	Physical and Life Sciences	
5A	Physical Sciences	3
5B	Life Sciences	3
5C	Laboratory (may be embedded in a 5A or 5B course)	1
Area 6	Ethnic Studies	
6	Ethnic Studies	3
Upper-Division General Education		
Upper-Division 2/5	Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning or Physical and Life Sciences	3
Upper-Division 3	Arts and Humanities	3
Upper-Division 4	Social and Behavioral Sciences (Area 4 courses must come from at least two different course prefixes.) (3 units in Major) ¹	0
Total Units		34

¹ Required in Major or Support; also satisfies General Education (GE) requirement.

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