

# WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

---

## COLLEGE OF FINE, PERFORMING AND COMMUNICATION ARTS

### **Department of Communication**

#### **MASTER OF ARTS and GRADUATE CERTIFICATE HANDBOOK**

*Mail:* 585 Manoogian Hall, 906 W. Warren, Detroit, MI 48201

*Phone:* 313.577.2943

*Fax:* 313.577.6300

*Email:* [communication@wayne.edu](mailto:communication@wayne.edu)

*Website:* [comm.wayne.edu](http://comm.wayne.edu)

The Master of Arts and Graduate Certificate Handbook is available online at:

[comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/mahandbook.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/mahandbook.pdf)

January 2021

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Communication is part of the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts (CFPCA) ([cfpca.wayne.edu](http://cfpca.wayne.edu)) at Wayne State University ([wayne.edu](http://wayne.edu)). The Department offers graduate programs leading to a doctoral degree, master's degree, and graduate certificate.

The Department has a faculty of 30 full-time members with strong backgrounds in scholarly and professional approaches to the study and practice of communication. The Department is home to approximately 650 undergraduate majors and 150 graduate students.

The Department and faculty offices are in Manoogian Hall, located near the intersection of the John C. Lodge Freeway Service Drive and Warren Avenue, in the heart of Detroit's Midtown Cultural Center. There are two television production facilities associated with the Department, the Midtown Studio (developed in partnership with Detroit Public Television, Channel 56) located on the main floor of 5057 Woodward, and Old Main studio located in the Old Main building at the intersection of Warren and Cass Avenues.

Additional information about the Department of Communication is available on the Department's website, [comm.wayne.edu](http://comm.wayne.edu)

### A. Philosophy of Master of Arts and Graduate Certificate Programs

Communication is an activity in which ideas, information, and perceptions are shared. The observation and study of human communication involves theory, research, and practice of human interaction among individuals, groups, institutions, and cultures, using quantitative, qualitative, rhetorical, and critical perspectives and methodologies as well as journalistic investigations and creative approaches.

The Master of Arts (M.A.) and Graduate Certificate (G.C.) programs in the Department of Communication are designed to establish and maintain high standards of scholarly, creative, and professional activity, while providing excellence in academic instruction at both the theoretical and applied levels. The graduate programs encompass a wide range of perspectives, methodologies, and approaches in which each student is focused through a personal Plan of Work.

The research interests and methodological approaches of the faculty are diverse. Faculty members and graduate students have written extensively on computer-mediated communication, critical and cultural studies, dispute resolution, health and risk communication, interpersonal communication, journalism studies, media effects, media studies, organizational communication, public relations, and rhetorical theory and criticism. The program is deeply committed to research and scholarship on the interrelations of theory, research, practice, experience, strategy, and ethics.

The Department offers a broad array of graduate courses, which range from the development of hands-on skills to exploration of theory, a focus on practice and application to analysis of state-of-art research, and a general survey of broad areas to narrow study of specialized topics. Most graduate courses are offered in Manoogian Hall in the evening but also include hybrid and online options.

Alumni of the program are skilled researchers, practitioners, creative artists, critical consumers, and thoughtful observers of communication and conflict processes. Whereas many serve as recognized scholars and educators throughout the country and world, others occupy responsible positions as dispute resolution, communication and creative professionals in business and industry, government, and academia.

### B. Overview of Master of Arts and Graduate Certificate Programs

The Department offers degree programs leading to the Master of Arts (M.A.) in Communication with Concentrations in the following areas:

- Communication Studies
- Journalism
- Media Arts and Studies
- Public Relations & Organizational Communication

The Department also offers Graduate Certificates (G.C.) in:

- Communication and New Media
- Health Communication
- Risk and Crisis Communication

### C. Graduate Program Staff and Other Resources

The key staff for the Graduate Program are the Graduate Academic Adviser and Director of Graduate Studies. Students may contact any of them with their questions and concerns. The Department website ([comm.wayne.edu](http://comm.wayne.edu)) provides the contact information for the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Academic Advisor.

The Department website also offers additional information about the graduate programs and links to useful resources. All Department forms are available on the website at [comm.wayne.edu/graduate/forms.php](http://comm.wayne.edu/graduate/forms.php). The Department of Communication can be contacted in-person at 585 Manoogian Hall or by phone at 313.577.2945.

## II. ADMISSION

### A. Requirements

Admission to the M.A. and G.C. programs is competitive and is based on an applicant's entire academic record. The stated requirements are *minimum* standards for consideration of an application and do not guarantee admission. Admission to the programs is contingent upon admission to the Graduate School ([wayne.edu/gradschool](http://wayne.edu/gradschool)).

*Admission is only applicable for the semester admitted. Applicants must be officially admitted to a program before enrolling in coursework.* Admitted students who are not able to register for classes for the admitted semester must contact the Director of Graduate Studies prior to the beginning of the semester.

**1. M.A. Program in Communication.** The M.A. Communication program requires *at a minimum* that applicants have a B.A. in communication or a closely related field, a 3.2 (B = 3.0) grade point average (GPA) for the upper-division coursework (usually the coursework in the major), and 15 credits of coursework in communication.

The Department also closely evaluates the sample of written work and academic/professional Statement of Purpose for evidence of the potential to perform graduate-level work.

In instances where an applicant's B.A. is not in communication and the transcript shows fewer than 15 credits of coursework in communication, the applicant may be admitted with a requirement to take specific and/or additional coursework. The Graduate Director should be contacted for further information.

Applicants with a GPA below 3.2 for the upper-division coursework (usually the coursework in the major) may submit Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores as additional evidence of academic ability. Applicants may also seek admission as a post-bachelor student to the university and take upper-division classes in the Department of Communication to raise their undergraduate GPA. The Graduate Director should be contacted for further information.

M.A. Communication applicants are admitted in the fall and winter semesters. The deadline for applications for the fall semester is *June 1* and winter semester is *November 1*.

**2. Graduate Certificate Program.** For the G.C. programs the Department requires *at a minimum* that the applicant have a B.A. and a 3.0 (= B) GPA for the upper-division coursework (usually the coursework in the major). The department also closely evaluates the academic/professional statement of purpose for evidence of potential to do graduate level work.

Applicants with a GPA below 3.0 for the upper-division coursework (usually the coursework in the major) may submit Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores as additional evidence of academic ability. Applicants may also seek admission as a post-bachelor student to the university and take upper-division classes in the Department of Communication to raise their undergraduate GPA. The Graduate Director should be contacted for further information.

G.C. applicants are admitted in the fall and winter semesters. The deadline for applications for the fall semester is *August 1*, and winter semester is *November 1*.

## **B. Application Materials**

**1. M.A. Application.** The M.A. application requires a completed application form, transcripts, academic/professional statement of purpose, writing sample. Applications are reviewed monthly by committee.

Applicants should complete the online Application for Graduate Admission ([wayne.edu/admissions/graduate](http://wayne.edu/admissions/graduate)), and upload the following to the application site:

- Degree transcripts from each college and university previously attended. Official transcripts should be sent directly from the degree-granting institution to the Office of Graduate Admissions. Unofficial transcripts should be uploaded prior to the document being officially sent to Graduate Admissions. Information for international applicants for the verification of their degrees is available here: [wayne.edu/admissions/graduate/applying/international](http://wayne.edu/admissions/graduate/applying/international)
- Academic/professional statement of purpose (approximately 500 words) that presents the academic and professional preparation for and interest in the preferred M.A. program and Concentration, academic/professional goals, and how the graduate degree fits the academic and/or professional goals.
- Scholarly/academic writing sample, which serves as evidence of preparation to do graduate-level work. The typical writing sample is an individually written final paper or project report of minimum 8-10-page length that cites scholarly information, prepared for a university course. Applicants are encouraged to submit additional writing samples such as newspaper and magazine articles, excerpts from documentary and movie scripts, press releases, and public relations communications.

**International applicants** whose native language is not English or applicants whose undergraduate degree is not from an English-speaking country are also required to submit official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores to the Office of Graduate Admissions.

Scores must be within five years of the date of proposed admission. Unofficial scores should be uploaded to the online application site prior to the official scores being sent. The minimum acceptable score is 100 on the TOEFL Internet Based Test (iBT) and 6.5 on the IELTS.

**2. Graduate Certificate Application.** The G.C. application requires a completed application form, transcripts, academic/professional statement of purpose, and (for dispute resolution applicants only) two letters of reference.

Applicants should complete the online Application for Graduate Admission ([wayne.edu/admissions/graduate](http://wayne.edu/admissions/graduate)), and upload the following to the application site:

- Degree transcripts from each college and university previously attended. Official transcripts must be sent directly from the degree-granting institution to the Office of Graduate Admissions. Unofficial transcripts should be uploaded prior to the document being officially sent to Graduate Admissions. Information for international applicants for the verification of their degrees is available here: [wayne.edu/admissions/graduate/applying/international](http://wayne.edu/admissions/graduate/applying/international)
- Academic/professional statement of purpose (approximately 500 words) that presents the academic and professional preparation for and interest in the preferred Graduate Certificate, academic/professional goals, and how the Certificate fits the academic and/or professional goals.

- Dispute resolution applicants are also required to submit two letters of reference, at least one of which must be from an academic source.

**International applicants** whose native language is not English or applicants whose undergraduate degree is not from an English-speaking country are also required to submit official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores to the Office of Graduate Admissions. Scores must be within five years of the date of proposed admission. Unofficial scores should be uploaded to the online application site prior to the official scores being sent. The minimum acceptable score is 100 on the TOEFL Internet Based Test (iBT) and 6.5 on the IELTS.

**3. Application by Current Wayne State University Graduate Students.** Current Wayne State University graduate students wishing to change to a new graduate program from their current graduate program or add a new graduate program to their current graduate program *do not* need to submit the online application. Such students must directly apply to the Department of Communication using the paper *Change of Graduate Status* form ([comm.wayne.edu/files/changeofstatus.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/files/changeofstatus.pdf)).

Application materials (unofficial degree transcripts, academic/ professional statement of purpose, and as appropriate, writing sample and letters of reference) as described above must be attached to the form and submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies by the application deadline. International students whose native language is not English or applicants whose undergraduate degree is not from an English speaking country must include unofficial TOEFL or IELTS scores with their application as described above. Applicants should note that *official* degree transcripts and *official* TOEFL or IELTS scores should be directly sent to the Office of Graduate Admissions.

### III. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

**1. Support for Tuition and Other Academic Expenses.** Financial support for tuition and other academic expenses for M.A. and G.C. students is *limited* both at the University and Department levels. The Graduate Professional Scholarship is awarded by the University to M.A. students. Information about this and other awards is available on the Graduate School website ([wayne.edu/gradschool/funding/grad-prof-scholarship](http://wayne.edu/gradschool/funding/grad-prof-scholarship)).

The Department occasionally employs M.A. students as Graduate Assistants. In these rare instances when M.A. students do receive assistantships, it is almost always because they have extensive professional and academic experience that prepares them to work with debate/forensics coaching or film/television/web production. Assistantships provide a monthly stipend (semester, 9-month, or 12-month appointment), annual subsidized medical, vision and dental insurance, and a tuition scholarship for up to 10 credits per regular (fall and winter) semester.

Graduate Assistants are required to register for at least 6 credits every regular semester. After the initial year of appointment, assistantships may be renewed for an additional one year for M.A. students, dependent on satisfactory academic progress and job performance. All Graduate Assistantships in the Department are covered by the Department Graduate Assistant Work Rules and Policies (see [comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/gaworkrules.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/gaworkrules.pdf)). Most, but not all, of the assistantship positions in the Department are covered by the University Graduate Employee Organizing Committee (GEOC) Agreement (for more information see [wayne.edu/gradschool/funding/assistantships/geoc](http://wayne.edu/gradschool/funding/assistantships/geoc)).

The Department on occasion, given availability of funds, offers financial awards for eligible M.A. students. These awards can be applied toward tuition only. Specific named awards are given for exemplary community service, and demonstrated excellence in research and/or professional applied practice.

Graduate students may also be eligible for loans or the Federal College Work Study Program. The Office of Student Financial Aid ([wayne.edu/financial-aid](http://wayne.edu/financial-aid)) located in the University Welcome Center assists students seeking financial assistance to attend Wayne State University.

**2. Travel Support.** The Graduate School and the Department provide travel funds for the professional and scholarly activities of graduate students. Both these funds are handled by the Department through the Graduate Student Travel Fund Award. The funds are limited and preference is given to doctoral students. This Award is

available to help fund travel to conferences and professional meetings for presentation of work that has been accepted after peer-review. The work must have been done in the communication or dispute resolution graduate programs at Wayne State University. The application form is available on the Department website ([comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/graduate-travel-application.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/graduate-travel-application.pdf)). Contact the Director of Graduate Studies for more information.

The College also offers support for professional travel through the Harriet Kanter Award for Student Development. See the College website for details ([cfpca.wayne.edu/scholarships.php](http://cfpca.wayne.edu/scholarships.php)).

The Humanities Center offers travel support for graduate students doing work in the humanities and the arts. For more information, see the Center's website, [research2.wayne.edu/hum/studentfunding/graduatetravel/guidelines.html](http://research2.wayne.edu/hum/studentfunding/graduatetravel/guidelines.html)

**3. Other Sources of Financial Support.** Graduate students are encouraged to seek funding from sources external to Wayne State University such as foundations. The Graduate School and Department will provide support for these activities and students should contact the Director of Graduate Studies for more information.

## IV. ELEMENTS OF THE M.A. AND G.C. PROGRAMS

### A. Advisor

**1. Initial and Permanent Advisor.** All graduate students are initially assigned to the Graduate Academic Advisor who helps with selection of courses and assistance with filing a Plan of Work (described below). The Graduate Academic Advisor is the initial advisor for all incoming students in the M.A. Communication program. A permanent faculty advisor is assigned in consultation with the student typically by the end of the first semester of coursework. Students whose concentration is Journalism, Media Arts, Media Studies (Media Arts and Studies) or are pursuing a Project, Essay or Thesis will be assigned a Faculty Advisor.

*Students should not begin any graduate coursework before consulting with their graduate or faculty advisor. If classes are begun without seeking advice, students may find later that they have wasted time and/or money for classes that are not required in their program or that they have fallen behind in a required sequence of courses. In addition, not every class is offered each semester, or even every year.*

The advisor will be able to help plan and guide the coursework required for the program. The advisor will also help with completing forms and meeting deadlines. Students should seek advice at the beginning of, and as needed, throughout their program, or as requested by the advisor. The Department has created a multi-year rotation of communication and dispute resolution graduate courses ([comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/graduatecoursesrotation.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/graduatecoursesrotation.pdf)) that should be used to plan the coursework.

**2. Changing Advisor and Concentration.** Graduate students may change faculty advisors. The advisor may be changed by asking a member of the full-time faculty to serve as the new advisor, informing the current advisor, and completing the Change of Advisor Form (<http://comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/graduate-change-of-advisor-petition.pdf>). Students desiring an advisor change should first consult with the Graduate Director.

M.A. Communication students who are interested in changing their Concentration after being admitted and enrolled in the M.A. program should meet with the Graduate Academic Advisor. Various factors will affect a student's ability to change a Concentration midway in the program. The Graduate Academic Advisor will also assist students in identifying a potential new advisor and in processing the required paperwork to facilitate the transition. Change in Concentration requires a completed Change of Graduate Status form ([comm.wayne.edu/files/changeofstatus.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/files/changeofstatus.pdf)) along with an academic/professional statement of purpose relevant to the new Concentration.

## B. Coursework

**1. Registering for Classes.** Students must register for classes using web registration available via Academica ([academica.wayne.edu](http://academica.wayne.edu)). Access ID and password are required. The online Schedule of Classes is available at [classschedule.wayne.edu](http://classschedule.wayne.edu). Detailed information regarding registration procedures is available in the Graduate Bulletin at [bulletins.wayne.edu](http://bulletins.wayne.edu).

Students should make a concerted effort to register in a timely manner. By doing so, an accurate enrollment figure is established that ensures students get the classes of their choice and protects classes from cancellation.

**2. Course Numbering.** Any course numbered 1000-4999 is solely for undergraduate students; graduate students may take such courses for background but under no circumstances can these be counted toward a graduate degree.

Courses numbered 5000-6999 are for undergraduate and graduate students, although some 5000-level classes are restricted for undergraduate students only and graduate students require permission of the advisor and course instructor to enroll. Courses numbered 7000 and above are solely for graduate students.

**3. Course Load.** The Department considers 2 courses (minimum 6 graduate credits) in a regular (fall, winter) semester to be a full-time load for graduate students. M.A. and G.C. students typically take 1-3 courses per semester, with the norm being 2 courses. The Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) (<https://oiss.wayne.edu/>) and the Office of Student Financial Aid ([wayne.edu/financial-aid](http://wayne.edu/financial-aid)) may have a different policies concerning full-time status. International students and students receiving financial aid must directly contact these offices. Students devoting full time to graduate study, with no outside employment or personal obligations, are allowed to register for up to 16 credits per semester, although this is extremely unusual for most students.

**4. COM 7000.** All incoming M.A. Communication students are required to complete COM 7000: Introduction to M.A. Studies in Communication with a grade of B or better in their first semester of coursework. See more information below under Grades. This course is not required for M.A. Dispute Resolution students.

**5. Directed Study.** Students interested in pursuing an in-depth study of a specific research topic may wish to arrange for a directed study by taking COM 7990: Directed Study-M.A. with a fulltime faculty member. Students must obtain the approval of the advisor and instructor of the Directed Study course and ensure that the Directed Study is noted on the Plan of Work or added to the coursework through a Change to Plan of Work form. A maximum of 6 credits of Directed Study are allowed for M.A. programs; a maximum of 3-credits of Directed Study are allowed for G.C. programs.

To register for a Directed Study course, *prior to the registration deadline for a semester*, students must submit the following to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval and setting up of the M.A. Directed Study course: (a) Petition and Authorization for Directed Study form ([comm.wayne.edu/files/directed-study-petition.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/files/directed-study-petition.pdf)) to which should be attached the (b) Course Add/Override form ([reg.wayne.edu/pdf-forms/add.pdf](http://reg.wayne.edu/pdf-forms/add.pdf)) for COM 7990.

## C. Residency Requirement, Transfer of Credits, and Double-Counting of Credits

All M.A. students must earn at least 24 credits toward their degree at Wayne State University to fulfill the residency requirement. All these credits must be taken in the Department of Communication.

Credits beyond the 24 required to be taken at Wayne State University under the residency requirement may be transferred from other accredited graduate schools. Typically 6 credits, with a maximum of 9 credits, may be transferred. Students must submit a Petition for Transfer of Graduate Credit ([comm.wayne.edu/files/petitiontransfergradcredit.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/files/petitiontransfergradcredit.pdf)) to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval who will then send it to the College for the final approval. Before completing the form, students must closely look at the policies for transfer of credits noted on the petition form to determine eligibility for the transfer.

No transfer of credits is allowed for the G.C. program. All courses for the program must be taken at Wayne State University.

Students enrolled in the M.A. and G.C. programs *concurrently* may have a maximum of 6 credits double-count toward both the M.A. and G.C.

## D. Plan of Work

Unlike undergraduate programs that usually provide rigid requirements, the M.A. and G.C. programs in Communication are designed to help students fully develop their individual interests and abilities. The approved Plan of Work (POW) is a contractual agreement that makes this possible. This “contract” also protects students against changes in requirements and policies as they move through the graduate program.

Toward the beginning of their program, both M.A. and G.C. students must prepare and file a Plan of Work form ([comm.wayne.edu/files/maplanofwork.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/files/maplanofwork.pdf)).

M.A. students must file the Plan of Work form upon completion of the first 9 *hours of coursework* (i.e., 3 to 4 classes) are completed. G.C. students must file it in their first semester of coursework.

Prompt filing of the Plan of Work helps to ensure that students take required courses when they are available and that they enroll in courses that will satisfy the degree requirements. *M.A. students who do not file a Plan of Work upon completion of the first 9 hours will receive a Registration Academic Hold Error Message until a plan is filed.*

The Plan of Work must be completed in consultation with the faculty and/or graduate academic advisor. Students must select the appropriate M.A. Coursework Requirements located within the Academic Bulletin (<http://bulletins.wayne.edu/graduate/college-fine-performing-communication-arts/communication/communication-ma/#concentrationstext>) corresponding to the program and Concentration they noted on their application. The Academic Bulletin should be used to choose appropriate courses and ensure that all the requirements for the program and Concentration are met. For the semester-wise scheduling of courses, students should refer to the Graduate Courses Rotation ([comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/graduatecoursesrotation.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/graduatecoursesrotation.pdf)), which provides a tentative schedule of graduate courses to be taught in the upcoming semesters.

Media Arts and Studies students are required to complete a media production survey (<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=yd4c5R2BHUE75t09jVTCi0qVMB7U9uVCvW-JCbIrtw9UMUNNTTjBRDRZQIYwQUcxVzjLVjhERjFYTC4u>) before they may start their Plan of Work.

Once the faculty or graduate advisor has approved and signed the Plan of Work form, the student must submit the form and the signed Acknowledgment of M.A. and G.C. Handbook Policies and Procedures form for review and approval by the Director of Graduate Studies.

The Plan of Work can be changed with the approval of the advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. The form for changing the Plan of Work is available on the department website at [comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/change-in-ma-plan-of-work.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/change-in-ma-plan-of-work.pdf).

## E. Master’s Capstone Plans

The Graduate School has approved three capstone plans for students seeking the M.A. degree, although not all options are available in each of the M.A. Concentrations and programs:

- **Plan A:** Coursework plus a 6-credit Thesis that is approved by a 2-member faculty committee; includes an oral examination. Before deciding to pursue a Thesis, students should find a faculty member who will oversee the thesis or project.
- **Plan B:** Coursework plus a 3-credit essay or Creative Project that is approved by a 2-member faculty committee.
- **Plan C:** Only coursework, requiring more coursework than Plan A and Plan B.

The M.A. Thesis and M.A. Essay/Creative Project are distinguished in terms of the amount of work required of the student, originality, and significance of the research, participation of the student's committee, preparation and submission of the research report, and evaluation of the research report. For both the thesis and the essay,

the student should discuss their progress with the advisor regularly. This includes the initial planning stages of the project and the completion of each subsequent section. Completion of a thesis or essay without substantive direction from the thesis advisor may result in a thesis or essay that is unacceptable.

Students should note that different M.A. Concentrations strongly encourage selection of a specific plan. The M.A. Communication Concentration of Public Relations & Organizational Communication, for example, encourages students to select Plan C.

Any change to the preferred capstone plan, such as a change from Plan A to Plan C, requires the submission of a *new* Plan of Work and not of a Change in Plan of Work form.

## **F. Master's Thesis (Plan A)**

An M.A. thesis typically takes the form of a written paper as described below. However, students may be permitted to pursue an M.A. project, which includes, but is not limited to, fictional film, documentary, television or web piece, long-form journalism piece, and public relations campaign materials.

The 6-credit research thesis requires systematic analysis and/or examination of research questions, propositions and/or hypotheses. Skill in the application of an appropriate research method is, therefore, required. A thesis or project is typically viewed as a step toward producing new knowledge; therefore, it must reflect original research either in, or very closely related to, the student's major area of specialization. A thesis would be considerably greater in length and complexity of production than an essay and the standards employed in evaluating thesis research are more rigorous than those for the 3-credit essay.

The thesis requires a two-person committee that includes the faculty advisor. Committee members must be fulltime faculty members. The full thesis committee participates in the planning and approval of the research proposal as well as the evaluation of the completed research project.

### **1. Preparation for the M.A. Thesis**

M.A. students who wish to complete a thesis (or project) must follow the procedure described below:

- a) Complete the **Thesis Proposal form**, which must be approved and signed by the advisor and committee member. It is strongly recommended that students begin this process in the semester prior to the one in which they plan to register for COM 8999: Master's Thesis Research and Direction.
- b) Complete a Course Add/Override form ([reg.wayne.edu/students/forms.php](http://reg.wayne.edu/students/forms.php)) for up to 6-credits of COM 8999 Master's Thesis Research and Direction, and have it signed by the advisor. Typically, students distribute the 6-credits over two or more consecutive semesters, with approval of the advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. A separate Course Add/Override form must be completed for each semester.

*Prior to the registration deadline for a semester*, students should submit the Thesis / Project Proposal form and signed Course Add/Override form to the Director of Graduate Studies for review and approval. The appropriate M.A. course with section number will not be established for the student until the proposal has been approved. Students should retain a copy of the forms for their records.

- c) Constitute a two-person committee in consultation with the graduate advisor. The committee includes the thesis advisor and one other full-time faculty member in the Department. It is always to a student's advantage to secure the committee's advice and approval for the nature and scope of the thesis / project before investing extensive time and effort on the research. Students should be aware that limited funding may be available for conducting a thesis / project. Students should contact the Director of Graduate Studies for more information.

### **2. Planning for the Master's Thesis**

- a) Students must consult with the faculty advisor about the specific style guide to be used for the thesis / project. For the thesis, the two most common academic styles are the American Psychological Association (APA) and Modern Language Association (MLA). A thesis must be prepared according to the formatting specifications required by the Graduate School ([wayne.edu/gradschool/masters/thesis](http://wayne.edu/gradschool/masters/thesis)).
- b) If necessary, complete the request for permission to use human subjects and secure approval of the project from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Research conducted for a thesis that entails the

participation of, or collection of data from, people requires the approval of the IRB ([irb.wayne.edu](http://irb.wayne.edu)).

Completion of the IRB paperwork requires prior completion of an online research ethics training program. It is important to complete the IRB paperwork and submit it well in advance of the planned research because approval is sometimes a lengthy process. The Department Chair must approve the completed paperwork prior to its submission to the IRB. Students must be aware that no data can be collected until the formal IRB approval is received.

### 3. Completing the Master's Thesis

Submit the completed thesis / project to the committee for evaluation. *Keep in mind that the committee may require two to three weeks to review the document/project.*

- a) After reviewing the thesis / project, the committee members have three evaluation options available:
  - **Pass** - Meets all requirements and expectations of the committee; minor changes may be required.
  - **Conditional Pass** - Requires substantive changes to be supervised by the advisor.
  - **Fail** - The thesis / project does not meet the requirements and expectations of the committee.
- b) Make changes to the thesis / project as required by the committee.
- c) Upon approval of the thesis / project by the committee, participate in an oral examination, which is an oral defense to discuss, explore, and probe details of the thesis/project. The oral examination is scheduled only when the committee does not find any major problems with the thesis / project.

The oral examination must be held *no later than the last day of classes for the semester*. The student and advisor must be physically present for the defense. Normally the committee members are also physically present but may join the defense electronically. Students should be aware that faculty are not normally under contract during the spring and summer semesters, and, therefore, may not be available during these periods for advising or consultation.

d) After successfully passing the oral examination, the committee members sign three copies of the cover page of the approved copy of the thesis. Submit one signed copy of the thesis cover page to the Graduate School (see below) and two signed copies to the Director of Graduate Studies, one for the Department and the other for the College. The committee members may require a copy of the approved thesis document for their records.

e) Fulfill the Graduate School requirements for an M.A. Thesis submission ([wayne.edu/gradschool/masters/thesis](http://wayne.edu/gradschool/masters/thesis)). These include submission of the following to the Graduate School: original signed copy of the thesis cover page; complete approved thesis document for format check; and final thesis document after format corrections for archiving.

### G. Master's Essay or Creative Project (Plan B)

The 3-credit research essay must show evidence of scholarly study and writing and must be related to the student's major interests. A student who elects to complete an essay may conduct research that makes no original contribution to knowledge about the field, but clearly synthesizes and integrates what is presently known.

A Creative Project should be a capstone project that represents an equivalent of 3-credit hours of course work. After finding and consulting a faculty member who can appropriately oversee a creative project, the student's work should showcase strong analytic, creative, and professional skills and techniques. Additionally, the work should meet the professional standards of the field and follow all ethical guidelines for such projects.

The essay requires a two-person committee that includes the essay advisor and one fulltime faculty member. An essay proposal is typically approved by the essay advisor only and may be completed without the input of the second committee member.

#### 1. Preparation for the Master's Essay or Creative Project

M.A. students planning to write an essay must follow the procedure described below:

- a) Complete the **Essay/Project Proposal form**, which must be approved and signed by the advisor. It is strongly recommended that students begin this process in the semester prior to the one in which they plan to

register for COM 7999: Master's Essay Direction.

b) After the parameters of the essay or creative project are established to the satisfaction of the advisor, complete a Course Add/Override form ([reg.wayne.edu/students/forms.php](http://reg.wayne.edu/students/forms.php)) for 3-credits of COM 7999: Master's Essay Direction and have it signed by the advisor.

*Prior to the registration deadline for a semester*, students must submit the Essay/Project Proposal and the signed Course Add/Override form to the Director of Graduate Studies for review and approval. The appropriate M.A. Essay course with section number will not be established for the student until the proposal is approved. Students should retain a copy of the forms for their records.

## **2. Planning for the Master's Essay or Creative Project.**

a) Select a committee member in consultation with the essay or project advisor. The committee consists of the advisor and one other fulltime faculty member from the Department.

b) If necessary, complete the request for permission to use human subjects and secure approval of the project from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Research conducted for an essay that entails the participation of, or collection of data from, people requires the approval of the IRB ([irb.wayne.edu](http://irb.wayne.edu)). Completion of the IRB paperwork also requires prior completion of an online research ethics training program. It is important to complete the form and submit it well in advance of the planned research because approval is sometimes a lengthy process. The Department Chair must approve the completed form prior to its submission to the IRB. Students must be aware that no data can be collected until the formal IRB approval is received.

**3. Completing the Master's Essay or Creative Project.** Submit copies of the completed essay or creative project to advisor and second committee member for evaluation. *Keep in mind that the committee may require two to three weeks to read the document/project.*

a) After reviewing the project the committee members have four evaluation options available:

- **Pass** - Meets all requirements and expectations of the committee; minor changes may still be requested.
- **Conditional Pass** - Requires substantive changes to be supervised by the advisor.
- **Committee Meeting/Oral Examination** – Requires an oral defense to discuss, explore, and probe details of the study/project and the student's grasp of the project;
- **Fail** - Significant revisions of the research and/or writing or creative project and then resubmission to the committee.

b) Make changes to the essay or project as required by the committee.

Participate in an oral examination if required by the committee. Please note that the committee may require an oral examination even if it does not find any major problems with the essay document or project. Students should be aware that faculty are not normally under contract during the spring and summer semesters, and, therefore, may not be available during these periods for advising or consultation.

c) Have advisor and second committee member sign the cover page of the final approved copy of the essay or a cover page and summary of the creative project. Submit a signed copy of the cover page to the Director of Graduate Studies *no later than the last day of the final exam period for the semester*. The advisor and second committee member may require a copy of the approved document or project for their records.

## **H. Grades**

**1. Minimum GPA.** Graduate students must maintain a minimum 3.0 *cumulative* grade point average (GPA), which is equivalent to the letter grade B, *across all graduate coursework* taken at Wayne State University (irrespective of whether the courses taken are for the M.A./G.C. program or not) to graduate; this is a University requirement. If a grade of B- (= 2.67 GPA) or lower is received in a graduate course, the course will count toward the degree, but the grade must be offset with a grade of B+ (= 3.33 GPA) or higher in another graduate course to maintain the minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA.

**2. Failing Grades and Probation.** Grades of B- and below are considered failing grades at the graduate level. One grade of B- or lower in any class will result in a meeting with the advisor. Students with a second grade of B- or lower will not be allowed to continue in the program without approval from both the advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. In the event of a second grade of B- or lower the student must provide a written explanation

to the Director of Graduate Studies and make an appointment with both the advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss the deficiency *before enrolling in any additional courses*.

Registration for subsequent coursework will be allowed *only* if the advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies are satisfied that continuance in the program is warranted. *Should a student receive a B- or lower grade in a third graduate course, or two grades of C or below, a hold is placed on all future registration and the student will be dismissed from the program and denied admission to any other programs in the Department.*

Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 are put on probation. After receiving a probation status, a student has two consecutive regular semesters to obtain the necessary grades to increase the cumulative GPA to 3.0 or higher and be removed from the status. *Should a student remain on probation for a third consecutive regular semester, a hold is placed on all future registration and the student will be dismissed from the program and denied admission to any other programs in the Department.*

**3. Grade in COM 7000.** COM 7000 must be taken and successfully passed during the student's first semester of enrollment in the M.A. Communication program. In order to pass COM 7000, students must receive a grade of B or higher in the course; a grade of B- or lower is considered unacceptable. COM 7000 can be taken up to two times.

Students who fail to meet the passing grade requirement in COM 7000 during their first semester must pass the course during their second semester of enrollment and within the first 12 hours of coursework. Students who withdraw from the course in the first semester of enrollment are required to take and pass the course in their second semester of enrollment and within the first 12 hours of coursework.

Students who do not do this will not be allowed to register for any courses other than COM 7000 until a passing grade in the course is achieved. COM 7000 is offered in the fall and winter semesters only. *Failure to secure a grade of B or better in COM 7000 after the second attempt will result in dismissal from the M.A. Communication program.*

**4. Retaking Courses with a Failing Grade.** Students who wish to retake a course in which they have received a grade of B- or lower must submit the Petition to Repeat a Graduate Course form ([comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/petition-repeat-graduate-course.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/petition-repeat-graduate-course.pdf)) signed by the faculty advisor to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval before retaking the course. Students can retake a maximum of two courses.

For students in the M.A. Communication program a grade of B- or lower in COM 7000 requires the course to be repeated (see above).

The original grade in the repeated course remains on the transcript but the new grade only is used for computation of the total credits taken and the cumulative GPA. Students should consult with the Office of Student Financial Aid ([wayne.edu/financial-aid](http://wayne.edu/financial-aid)) to find out if they can receive university financial aid for repeating a course.

**5. Grade of Incomplete.** Two grades of Incomplete (I) are permitted in the M.A. and G.C. coursework. More than two such grades will lead to an assessment of unsatisfactory progress in the program. A grade of Incomplete is rarely granted. Students seeking an Incomplete must discuss this request in a timely manner with the course instructor, inform the advisor, and complete the Incomplete Contract form ([comm.wayne.edu/files/incompletecontract.pdf](http://comm.wayne.edu/files/incompletecontract.pdf)) and submit it to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval.

Students should note that the completion of all remaining course requirements for the removal of the Incomplete must be done *by the date required by the course instructor*. Students should also be aware that all grades of I turn to a grade of F if all requirements for the removal of the Incomplete are not completed within one calendar year of the receipt of the I grade.

**6. Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty.** Students are held to the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Misconduct as outlined in the University Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity documents ([doso.wayne.edu/student-conduct-services.html](http://doso.wayne.edu/student-conduct-services.html)).

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty are examples of student misconduct, which can result from, among other things: stealing or using someone else's work or ideas and presenting them as your own; using part or all of another student's work and presenting it as your own; submitting a paper or other work that someone else has written; using information from the internet without citing the source or sources; having someone else do your

work for you; having your work edited to the point that it is no longer your work; buying a paper or other assigned work from any source; submitting anything that is not your own work; and submitting the same work for more than one class without the express permission of the instructors involved.

All students are expected to display the highest level of honesty and integrity in regard to academic life and as such every student must: abstain from cheating, avoid appearance of cheating, and desist from assisting or otherwise making it possible for others to cheat -- any intentional act of dishonesty in the fulfillment of academic course or program requirements is academic cheating; and give credit for ideas or materials that have been taken from another source – to copy and submit intentionally or unintentionally the ideas of others, without acknowledging the author/creator, is regarded as plagiarism.

Student misconduct, based on an instructor's policy, can result in grade reduction or failing grade on an assignment, grade reduction or failing grade for a course, probation in the academic program, or expulsion from the University.

### **I. Applying for Graduation**

Students must file an Application for Degree online through Academica ([academica.wayne.edu](http://academica.wayne.edu)) *no later than the last day of the registration period for the semester in which they expect to complete the requirements for the degree*. If an application for a degree was filed for a previous semester but not all the graduation requirements were completed for that semester, a new application for the current semester is necessary.

Students must remain aware that a minimum GPA of 3.0 *cumulative across all graduate coursework* at Wayne State University (irrespective of whether the courses taken are for the M.A. or G.C. programs or not) is required to graduate.

### **J. Time Limitation**

M.A. students have a 6-year period in which to complete all requirements for the master's degree. G.C. students have a 3-year period in which to complete all requirements for the certificate.

The 6-year and 3-year periods begin at the end of the first semester during which the student has taken coursework that applies toward meeting the program requirements. So, for example, M.A. students starting in fall 2018 have until December 31, 2024 to complete the requirements for the degree. Similarly, a student concurrently in an M.A. and G.C. program who started the G. C. program in Fall 2018, took 9 credits during the 2018-19 the academic year, and then added an M.A. program effective Fall 2019, the 6-year time period would start Fall 2018 and run out December 31, 2024.

The College may, in some instances, re-validate course credits that are older than the time period required for program completion and which represent courses completed at Wayne State University. This seldom occurs but when it does, it typically requires convincing evidence of circumstances leading to non-completion of the program in a timely manner as well as the potential for academic success and/or professional advancement. Expired course credits earned at other institutions will not be revalidated.

### **K. Student Contact Information and Email**

The Department of Communication maintains contact information based upon initial admission information. Students are responsible for notifying the department of any mailing address, telephone, and email address changes. In addition, students are expected to utilize their Wayne State University email account. All official email correspondence will be sent to students' Wayne State University email address. The Computing & Information Technology department ([computing.wayne.edu](http://computing.wayne.edu)) has instructions on how to forward Wayne State email to other accounts.

All M.A. and G.C. students who register for courses in their semester of admission are automatically added to the Department's M.A. email listserv with their Wayne State University email address. This listserv is used by the Department for announcements, news, work opportunities, and other similar notifications. Students are expected to regularly check their Wayne State University email.

### **L. Dismissal and Reinstatement**

**1. Exclusion.** A student who has not achieved a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 after two semesters on probation, failed to pass COM 7000 for a second time, or failed to meet academic expectations outlined by an advisor and Director of Graduate Studies after a second grade of B- or lower, shall be dismissed from the graduate program.

This dismissal may be appealed to the departmental graduate committee if the student submits a cover letter explaining the circumstances and reasons for a poor academic performance and appropriate paperwork evidencing his/her eligibility to return and remain successful.

To appeal, a student should contact the Director of Graduate Studies and provide the cover letter and evidence to challenge the dismissal decision. The materials will be provided to the departmental graduate committee and a decision will be made. If the student wishes to appeal the graduate committee decision, he or she may contact the CFPCA Associate Dean of Curriculum and Student Affairs to review the case.

A student dismissed from the department may not be reinstated until one calendar year has passed. A student may appeal dismissal during the semester following the dismissal notification.

**2. Reinstatement.** After one year of exclusion, the student may apply for reinstatement to the graduate program. To reapply, the student should apply through the graduate school application process. The personal statement should provide clear explanation and evidence that circumstances have changed and that the probability for success has increased. The decision to reinstate will be made by the department graduate committee.

### **M. Withdrawal from Program and University**

Students wishing to withdraw from the M.A. or G.C. programs must send an email to the Director of Graduate Studies. The email should note if the withdrawal is only from the M.A. or G.C. program in the Department of Communication, or from both the M.A. or G.C. program and the University as well. The email should also note the semester in which the withdrawal will take effect. The Director will notify the College, who after approval will notify Student Records.

## **V. DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES**

### **A. Department Colloquia and Events**

The Department sponsors several colloquia, programs, and other events designed to promote discussion and awareness of communication scholarship, practice, and creative works. *The Department expects graduate students to participate in these activities.* Graduate education is not restricted to academic courses. Rather, a good measure of learning derives from participation in these academic extra-curricular activities. Students are notified about these events through the Department's M.A. listserv.

### **B. Graduate Student Orientation**

During or immediately prior to the first full week of classes of the fall semester, the Department holds a Graduate Student Orientation for all new graduate students and interested continuing students. The orientation is mandatory for all new graduate students.

### **C. Communication Graduate Student Association**

The Communication Graduate Student Association (CGSA) ([comm.wayne.edu/graduate/student-association.php](http://comm.wayne.edu/graduate/student-association.php)) represents the graduate students in the Department of Communication. The GSA holds regular meetings, speaks on behalf of students' needs, and encourages a sense of community among students. A representative of the GSA attends meetings of the faculty and the Graduate Committee.

## **VI. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

Descriptions and degree requirements for the various Concentrations in the Master of Arts in Communication program and the different Graduate Certificate programs are in the next section. Please consult your advisor regarding these requirements. Your Plan of Work must conform to the requirements listed below unless specific adjustments have been approved by your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

The coursework requirements for each M.A. degree and Graduate Certificate are provided as a Curriculum Checksheet. Submit the appropriate Checksheet and use it when developing your Plan of Work. It will clarify the program requirements for you and your advisor.

*The completed Curriculum Checksheet, along with the signed Acknowledgment of M.A. and G.C. Handbook Policies and Procedures, must be submitted with the completed and signed Plan of Work form for it to be processed for approval by the Director of Graduate Studies.*