

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FINE, PERFORMING AND COMMUNICATION ARTS

Department of Communication

MASTER OF ARTS and GRADUATE CERTIFICATE HANDBOOK

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

comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/mahandbook.pdf

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Communication is part of the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts (CFPCA) (cfpca.wayne.edu) at Wayne State University (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

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 five areas:

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

The Department also offers a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Dispute Resolution (DR). Two degree options are offered:

- Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution (MADR)
- Joint Program in Law and Dispute Resolution (Joint JD/MADR)

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

- Communication and New Media
- Dispute Resolution
- Health Communication

The Dispute Resolution program relocated to the Department of Communication from the former College of Urban Labor and Metropolitan Affairs. The program maintains distinct admission requirements and offers courses with a DR (rather than COM) prefix designation.

C. Graduate Program Staff and Other Resources

The key staff for the Graduate Program are the Master's Program Director, Dispute Resolution Program Academic Director, and Director of Graduate Studies. Students may contact any of them with their questions and concerns. The Department website (comm.wayne.edu) provides the contact information for the Director of Graduate Studies, Master's Program Director, and Dispute Resolution Program Academic Director.

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. 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).

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 term.

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 potential to do 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 Master's Program 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 Master's Program 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. M.A. Program in Dispute Resolution. The M.A. Dispute Resolution (MADR) Program requires applicants to have a *minimum* GPA of 3.0 (=B) in their upper-division coursework. Prior coursework in conflict resolution, alternative dispute resolution, or peace and conflict studies is desirable but not required; a minimum number of communication courses is also not required. A writing sample is recommended but not required.

Graduates of the Dispute Resolution program often work as helping professionals. As such, a compassionate and trustworthy character, willingness to engage with dispute resolution as both a scholarly and professional field of practice, and readiness to do graduate-level scholarly and applied work is essential. Applicants are required to submit three letters of reference that speak to these qualities. An academic/professional statement of purpose that addresses these qualities is also required.

M.A. Dispute Resolution applicants are admitted in the fall and winter semesters. The deadline for applications for fall semester is *August 1* and winter semester is *December 1*.

3. 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 Master's Program 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 (optional for MADR program), and three letters of reference (only for MADR program). Applications are reviewed monthly by committee.

Applicants should complete the online Application for Graduate Admission (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
- 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 (optional for MADR program), 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 from 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.
- MADR program applicants only are also required to submit three 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.

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), 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
- 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).

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).

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). 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).

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. Students in the MADR program can also apply for the Stanley “Hank” Marx Scholarship. For more information, contact the Master’s Program Director.

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) 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). 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).

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

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. Adviser

1. Initial and Permanent Adviser. All students are assigned a faculty adviser who helps with selection of courses and assistance with filing a Plan of Work (described below). The Master’s Program Director is the initial faculty adviser for all incoming students in the M.A. Communication program. A permanent faculty adviser is assigned in consultation with the student typically by the end of the first semester of coursework. For all students in the M.A. Dispute Resolution program, the Director of Dispute Resolution program is the permanent faculty adviser.

Students should not begin any graduate coursework before consulting with their faculty adviser. 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 term, or even every year.

The adviser will be able to help plan ahead and guide the coursework required for the program. The adviser 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 adviser. The Department has created a multi-year rotation of communication and dispute resolution graduate courses (comm.wayne.edu/grad-forms/graduatecoursesrotation.pdf) that should be used to plan the coursework.

2. Changing Adviser and Concentration. Graduate students are allowed to change faculty advisers. The adviser may be changed by asking a member of the full-time faculty to serve as the new adviser, informing the current adviser, and completing the Change of Adviser Form (comm.wayne.edu/files/grad_change_adviser.pdf). Students desiring an adviser change should first consult with the Master's Program Director.

All graduate students in the dispute resolution program are advised by the Dispute Resolution Program Academic Director. Students in the program requesting an adviser change are required to identify a new faculty adviser who is knowledgeable in dispute resolution scholarship and practice.

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 Master's Program Director. Various factors will affect a student's ability to change a Concentration midway in the program. The Director will also assist students in identifying a potential new adviser 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) 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). AccessID and password are required. The online Schedule of Classes is available at classschedule.wayne.edu. Detailed information regarding registration procedures is available in the Graduate Bulletin at 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 adviser and course instructor to enroll. Courses numbered 7000 and above are solely for graduate students.

MADR students can only have *one* 5000-level course offered for graduate credit on their plan of work. The following courses, PCS 5000, CRJ 5994, PS 5890, and PSY 5710, cannot be used as MADR electives as their content is covered in MADR core courses.

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 a 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) 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 (or DR) 7990: Directed Study-M.A. with a fulltime faculty member. Students must obtain the approval of the adviser 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) to which should be attached the (b) Course Add/Override form (reg.wayne.edu/pdf-forms/add.pdf) for COM 7990 or DR 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.

MADR required core courses offered outside the Department are an exception, as they will also be counted toward the residency requirement.

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) 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 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).

Dispute Resolution students are required to review the online plan of work builder (madr.comm.wayne.edu/pow.html) prior to consultation with the Dispute Resolution Program Academic Director.

M.A. students must file the Plan of Work form *before 12 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 by the first 12 credits will have their registration blocked until a plan is filed.*

The Plan of Work must be completed in consultation with the faculty adviser. Students must select the appropriate M.A. Coursework Requirements Curriculum Checksheet and/or G.C. Coursework Requirements Curriculum Checksheet (located at the end of this Handbook and on the Department website) corresponding to the program and Concentration they noted on their application. The Checksheet 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), which provides a tentative schedule of graduate courses to be taught in the upcoming semesters.

Once the adviser has approved and signed the Plan of Work form, the student must submit the form, the completed Checksheet, 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 adviser 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.

E. Master's Capstone Plans

A graduate degree is more than an assortment of classes; it includes an opportunity for students to synthesize and apply what they have learned. 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. This option is not available in the MADR program.
- **Plan B:** Coursework plus a 3-credit essay 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 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 adviser 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 adviser may result in a thesis or essay that is unacceptable.

Students should note that different M.A. Concentrations strongly encourage selection of a particular plan. The M.A. Communication Concentration of Public Relations & Organizational, for example, encourages students to select Plan C. Similarly, the MADR also expects that most students will 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)

A 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 is typically seen as a step toward producing new knowledge. Therefore, a thesis 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 essay.

The thesis requires a two-person committee that includes the thesis adviser. Committee members must be fulltime faculty members. The thesis requires preparation of a full research proposal that details how the proposed project is sufficiently original and significant. The full thesis committee participates in the planning and approval of the research proposal as well as the evaluation of the completed research project.

Additional Option for M.A. Thesis. An M.A. Thesis normally takes the form of a written paper as described below. However, students may be permitted to pursue an M.A. Creative Project, which includes, but is not limited to, fictional film, documentary, television or web piece, long-form journalism piece, and public relations campaign materials. Students interested in such an option must first consult with the Director of Graduate Studies.

1. Preparation for the Master's Thesis. M.A. students who wish to complete a thesis (or creative project) must follow the procedure described below:

a) Complete the **Thesis Proposal form**, which must be approved and signed by the adviser. 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) for up to 6-credits of COM 8999 Master's Thesis Research and Direction, and have it signed by the adviser. Typically, students distribute the 6-credits over two or more consecutive semesters, with approval of the adviser and the Director of Graduate Studies. In this case, 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 Proposal form and signed Course Add/Override form to the Director of Graduate Studies for review and approval. Once approved, the M.A. Thesis course with section number will be established for the student. Students should retain a copy of the forms for their records.

c) Constitute a two-person committee in consultation with the adviser. The committee includes the thesis adviser 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. Thus, it is recommended that the student request a thesis proposal meeting with the committee to secure a formal approval of the project.

Students should be aware that limited funding may be available for conducting thesis projects. Students should contact the Director of Graduate Studies for more information.

2. Planning for the Master's Thesis.

a) Students must consult with the thesis adviser about the specific style guide to be used for the essay and 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).

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).

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 copies of the completed thesis to adviser and committee for evaluation. *Keep in mind that the committee may require two to three weeks to review the document.*

a) After reviewing the thesis document 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 adviser.
- **Fail** - Significant revisions of the research and/or writing and then resubmission to the committee.

b) Make changes to the thesis document as required by the committee.

c) Upon approval of the thesis document 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 document.

The oral examination must be held *no later than the last day of classes for the semester*. The student and adviser must be physically present for the defense. Normally the committee members are also physically present but may join the defense through an audio-visual platform such as Skype. Students should be aware that faculty are not normally under contract during the spring and summer terms, and, therefore, may not be available during these periods for advising or consultation.

d) After successfully passing the oral examination, the adviser and 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 adviser and 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). 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 (Plan B)

A 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.

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

1. Preparation for the Master's Essay. M.A. students planning to write an essay must follow the procedure described below:

a) Complete the **Essay Proposal form**, which must be approved and signed by the adviser. 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 are established to the satisfaction of the adviser, complete a Course Add/Override form (reg.wayne.edu/students/forms.php) for 3 credits of COM 7999: Master's Essay Direction and have it signed by the adviser.

Prior to the registration deadline for a semester, students should submit the Essay Proposal and the signed Course Add/Override form to the Director of Graduate Studies for review and approval. Once approved, the M.A. Essay course with section number will be established for the student. Students should retain a copy of the forms for their records.

Additional Option for M.A. Essay. An M.A. Essay normally takes the form of a written paper as described below. However, students may be permitted to pursue an **M.A. Creative Project**, which includes, but is not limited to, fictional film, documentary, television or web piece, long-form journalism piece, and public relations campaign materials. Students interested in such an option must first consult with the Director of Graduate Studies.

2. Planning for the Master's Essay.

a) Select a committee member in consultation with the adviser. The committee consists of the essay adviser 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). 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. Submit copies of the completed essay to adviser and second committee member for evaluation. *Keep in mind that the committee may require two to three weeks to read the document.*

a) After reading the essay document 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 adviser.
- **Committee Meeting/Oral Examination** – Requires an oral defense to discuss, explore, and probe details of the study and the student's grasp of the project;
- **Fail** - Significant revisions of the research and/or writing and then resubmission to the committee.

b) Make changes to the essay document 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. Students should be aware that faculty are not normally under contract during the spring and summer terms, and, therefore, may not be available during these periods for advising or consultation.

c) Have adviser and second committee member sign the cover page of the final approved copy of the essay. Submit a signed copy of the essay cover page to the Director of Graduate Studies *no later than the last day of the final exam period for the semester*. The adviser and second committee member may require a copy of the approved essay document 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 adviser. Students with a second grade of B- or lower will not be allowed to continue in the program without approval from both the adviser 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 adviser 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 adviser 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 term of enrollment in the M.A. Communication program; this course is not a requirement for students in the M.A. Dispute Resolution 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 term must pass the

course during their second term of enrollment and within the first 12 unit of coursework. Students who withdraw from the course in the first term of enrollment are required to take and pass the course in their second term of enrollment and within the first 12 units 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 terms 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) signed by the faculty adviser to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval before retaking the course. Students are allowed to retake maximum 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). For students in the M.A. Dispute Resolution program, a grade of B- or lower in a core course requires the course to be repeated.

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) 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 adviser, and complete the Incomplete Contract form (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 (dos0.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) *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) 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. 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. Graduate Student Association

The Department of Communication Graduate Student Association (GSA) (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, Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution program, and the different Graduate Certificate programs are in the next section. Please consult your adviser regarding these requirements. Your Plan of Work must conform to the requirements listed below unless specific adjustments have been approved by your adviser 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 adviser.

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.