COMMUNICATION, BA: COMMUNICATION, CULTURE & JOURNALISM STUDIES

General Communication Degree:

Communication is a dynamic interdisciplinary major that builds students' critical thinking and writing skills while engaging them in rigorous analysis of how ideas flow from media to audiences, from corporations to consumers, from governments to citizens and vice-versa. The analytical skills Comm majors develop can be applied to a wide variety of sectors including advertising, consulting, data analytics, education, entertainment, journalism, law, marketing, media, politics, and public relations.

Penn's 14-credit Comm major is taught by faculty in the world-renowned Annenberg School. Our multi-disciplinary faculty bring to the classroom expertise not only in Communication, but in a range of related fields including Anthropology, Data Science, Engineering, Journalism, Marketing, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.

Our undergraduate courses focus on the theoretical, critical, and empirical examination of communication systems, institutions, processes, and effects. Comm majors gain deep insight into how communication shapes our individual and collective social, political, economic, and cultural lives; both historical and contemporary, local and global. Our majors learn and employ a range of research methods, including quantitative approaches such as survey research, experiments, content analysis, and computational science; and qualitative approaches such as textual analysis, focus groups, and interviews.

Majors may complete one optional concentration. Effective Fall 2026, Communication concentrations are as follows: Communication, Culture, and Journalism Studies; Data and Network Science for Communication; Media, Audiences, and Persuasion; and Politics, Policy, and Advocacy. Alternatively, students may also choose to enroll in the Communication and Public Service (ComPS) program.

Communication, Culture, and Journalism Studies

Courses in the Communication, Culture, and Journalism Studies concentration explore the ways in which communication is central to the construction, transmission, and negotiation of cultural meanings and values. Students will critically examine both historical and contemporary examples of media (mis)representation, explore how our increasingly globalized and digitized media landscape creates both rigidity and fluidity in cultural meaning-making, and gain an understanding of the critical role of journalism in knowledge production. CCJ courses enable students to expand their media literacy while improving their skills as cultural critics.

The minimum total course units (https://www.college.upenn.edu/credits-needed-major/) for graduation in the major is 34. Double majors may entail more course units.

For more information about the Communication Major, please visit the Major in Communication (https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/) page.

For information about the General Education requirements, please visit the College of Arts & Sciences Curriculum (https://www.college.upenn.edu/curriculum/) page.

Students must meet the following minimum course and GPA requirements as a condition of application to the major. Students may submit the application for the major after enrollment in the third required course. Meeting these requirements is not a guarantee of admission to the major.

The deadline for declaring the major, declaring a concentration, changing a concentration, and/or removing a concentration is the last day to add a course in the students' final semester.

1. Completion of at least two of the following Core courses:

Code	Title	Course Units
COMM 1220	Communication and Culture	1
COMM 1240	Media and Communication Industries	1
COMM 1260	Media Consumption and Effects	1
COMM 1280	Data Science for Communication	1

2. Completion of a third Communication course.
3. Cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher in all University of Pennsylvania courses.

For information about the General Education requirements, please visit the College of Arts & Sciences Curriculum (https://www.college.upenn.edu/curriculum/) page.

Code	Title	Course Units
College General Education Requirements and Free Electives		
Foundational Approaches + Sectors[1] + Free Electives		20
Major Requirements		
Core Courses		
Select three of the following:		3
COMM 1220	Communication and Culture	
COMM 1240	Media and Communication Industries	
COMM 1260	Media Consumption and Effects	
COMM 1280	Data Science for Communication	
Research Methods Course [2]		
Select one of the following:		1
COMM 2100	Research Methods in Communication	
Or, Research Methods course from the approved list. (Attribute ACRM) (https://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/acrm/) [3]		
Concentration - Communication, Culture, and Journalism Studies		
COMM concentration specific courses - Intermediate		1
COMM 1000:2999 (Attribute ACJS) (https://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/acjs/)		
COMM concentration specific courses - Advanced [4]		2
COMM 3000:4999 (Attribute ACJS) (https://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/acjs/)		
COMM Electives - Intermediate [5]		3
COMM 1000:2999		
COMM Electives - Advanced [6]		1
COMM 3000:4999		

Non-COMM Electives [7,8]	
Select two Non-COMM electives related to the concentration (Attribute ACJE) (https://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/acje/)	2
Select one Non-COMM elective either related to the concentration or General Comm (Attribute ACJE or ACGE)	1
Attribute ACJE (https://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/acje/)	
Attribute ACGE (https://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/acge/)	
Total Course Units	**34**

1. Students may count no more than one course toward both a Major and a Sector requirement. For exceptions, check the Policies Governing the Sector Requirement (https://www.college.upenn.edu/sector-policy/).
2. Students must complete the research methods course requirement prior to the beginning of their senior year.
3. Please visit the Comm Major requirements webpage for a list of the approved Research Methods courses (https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/communication-major-requirements/).
4. With department permission, COMM 3091 or COMM 4997 may be counted as one of the ComPS electives.
5. COMM Study abroad and study away courses are typically assigned the numbers COMM 2985 or COMM 2995. Students can apply a maximum of 3 total study abroad, study away, and/or transfer CUs to the major. This includes COMM 1985, COMM 1995, COMM 2985, COMM 2995, COMM 3985, and COMM 3995, as well as courses approved by other departments and applied to the Research Methods and/or Non-COMM electives requirement.
6. Students with a 3.5 or higher cumulative GPA can elect to enroll in the yearlong 2 CU senior thesis course sequence, COMM 4797 and COMM 4997.
7. Additional COMM courses may be manually substituted for Non-COMM electives.
8. Requests for potential Non-COMM elective courses not already attributed within Penn's course search must be sent to nce@asc.upenn.edu.

Honors

A thesis project is completed over two semesters during the senior year. 1 CU is earned in each semester. Students who achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher and earn an A- or higher on their project will graduate with honors.

The degree and major requirements displayed are intended as a guide for students entering in the Fall of 2026 and later. Students should consult with their academic program regarding final certifications and requirements for graduation.

Sample Plan of Study

Course	Title	Course Units
First Year		
Fall		
Fall Courses		4
	Course Units	**4.00**
Spring		
Spring Courses		4
	Course Units	**4.00**
Second Year		
Fall		
Fall Courses		4
	Course Units	**4.00**
Spring		
Spring Courses		4
	Course Units	**4.00**
Third Year		
Fall		
Fall Courses		4.5
	Course Units	**4.50**
Spring		
Spring Courses		4.5
	Course Units	**4.50**
Fourth Year		
Fall		
Fall Courses		4.5
	Course Units	**4.50**
Spring		
Spring Courses		4.5
	Course Units	**4.50**
	Total Course Units	**34.00**