

COMMUNICATION, BA: COMMUNICATION & PUBLIC SERVICE

General Communication Degree Description:

Communication is an interdisciplinary field that draws from the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. The undergraduate Communication program focuses on the theoretical, critical, and empirical examination of fundamental communication systems, institutions, processes, and effects. Communication 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 theories and research methods, including quantitative approaches such as survey research, experiments, content analysis, and computational science; and qualitative approaches such as historical, textual and discourse analysis, focus groups, and ethnographic fieldwork. In doing so, they produce scholarship that is rigorous, relevant, and multi-modal.

The major in Communication is granted by the College of Arts and Sciences, but the 14-credit major curriculum is designed, administered, and taught by the Annenberg School for Communication.

Majors may complete an optional concentration. Effective Fall 2020, Communication concentrations are as follows: Advocacy & Activism; Audiences & Persuasion; Culture & Society; Data & Network Science; and Politics & Policy. Alternatively, students may also choose to enroll in the Communication and Public Service (ComPS) program. Students interested in pursuing one of these concentrations or ComPS should make an appointment to meet with a member of the Communication Undergraduate Advising Team (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/online-advising-appointments/>).

See separate details on requirements for a Communication major concentration (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/communication-major-requirements/concentrations/>) or the Communication and Public Service program (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/communication-major-requirements/concentrations/communication-and-public-service-comps-program/>).

A list of approved COMM Communication and Public Service program courses can be found on the Annenberg School for Communication website (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate/courses/?term=All&faculty=All&concentration=112>). Non-COMM elective courses require pre-approval from a member of the Communication Undergraduate Advising Team (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/online-advising-appointments/>). Students may only complete one concentration.

In addition to concentrations, the Communication curriculum also offers opportunities for thesis research (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/academic-opportunities/communication-thesis/>), independent study (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/academic-opportunities/independent-study/>), internships (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/academic-opportunities/internship-opportunities-policies/>), study abroad (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/academic-opportunities/study-abroad-transfer-credit/>), and public service (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/academic-opportunities/public-service/>).

www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/academic-opportunities/annenberg-public-service/) (through the Communication and Public Service Program).

Communication and Public Service

A Communication major with a focus in Communication and Public Service (ComPS) offers students a special program that combines individual research opportunities with hands-on experience in the public arena. Classes, seminars, internships, field experiences, and individual research projects provide students with opportunities to meet and learn from current and former officeholders, journalists, and public servants who have been leaders in government and civil society. The program is closely matched to the undergraduate Communication major, and like the Communication major, ComPS students must complete 14 courses.

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

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 introductory core survey courses:

Code	Title	Course Units
COMM 1230	Critical Approaches to Popular Culture	1
COMM 1250	Introduction to Communication Behavior	1
COMM 1300	Media Industries and Society	1

2. Completion of a third Communication course.

3. Cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher in all University of Pennsylvania courses.

For more information: <https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/> (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/>)

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		
<i>Introductory Core Survey Courses</i>		
Select two of the following:		2
COMM 1230	Critical Approaches to Popular Culture	
COMM 1250	Introduction to Communication Behavior	
COMM 1300	Media Industries and Society	

Research Methods Course

Select one:	1
COMM 2100 Research Methods in Communication	
Or, Research Methods course from an approved list. ²	
Communication & Public Service (ComPS) Requirements	
COMM 3230 Contemporary Politics, Policy, and Journalism	1
or COMM 3950 Communication and the Presidency	
Any COMM 1000:4999 (Attribute ACCP) (http://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/accp/) ³	2
Capstone Thesis ⁴	
COMM 4797 Honors & Capstone Thesis	1
COMM 4897 COMPS Capstone Thesis	1
<i>Elective Courses</i>	
COMM Electives - Intermediate ⁵	2
COMM 1000:2999	
COMM Electives - Advanced	1
COMM 3000:4999	
Approved Non-COMM Electives ^{6,7,8}	3
Select up to three non-COMM electives related to the ComPS program	
Total Course Units	34

The degree and major requirements displayed are intended as a guide for students entering in the Fall of 2025 and later. Students should consult with their academic program regarding final certifications and requirements for graduation.

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 Visit the Annenberg School for Communication website (<https://www.asc.upenn.edu/undergraduate-program/communication-major-requirements/>) for a list of the approved Research Method courses.

³ 1 COMM 2985 course can count toward the ComPS requirement, but must receive prior permission before enrollment.

⁴ All ComPS students are required to complete a yearlong 2 CU senior thesis course sequence, COMM 4797 and COMM 4897. See information below regarding receipt of honors.

⁵ COMM Study abroad and study away courses are typically assigned the numbers COMM 2985 or COMM 2995. Students can apply a maximum of 2 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 All 3 courses meeting the non-COMM elective requirement must be related to the ComPS program.

⁷ Additional COMM ComPS courses may be substituted for non-COMM electives.

⁸ All non-COMM elective courses must be pre-approved by the Comm Undergraduate Studies Program.

Honors

A capstone thesis project is completed over two semesters during the senior year. 1 CU is earned in each semester. Students choose the topic of the capstone thesis from a range of public policy or public service issues, and work with a thesis advisor for the entire year. 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.