COMMUNICATION ARTS AND SCIENCES

Graduate Program Head
Denise Solomon

Program Code
CAS

Campus(es)
University Park (Ph.D., M.A.)

Degrees Conferred
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
Master of Arts (M.A.)
Dual-Title Ph.D. in Communication Arts and Sciences and Bioethics

The Graduate Faculty

The graduate program in Communication Arts and Sciences at the Pennsylvania State University trains students in communication science and rhetorical studies, with particular attention to political deliberation, health communication, interpersonal communication, public address, rhetorical theory, and the rhetoric of public culture. Our graduate students conduct research investigating how communication influences attitudes and behavior, relationship development and family dynamics, public life and public memory, democratic decision making, and struggles for social justice. The most recent assessment of doctoral programs conducted by the National Communication Association ranked our program in the top five for rhetorical studies, interpersonal and small group communication.

Part of the mission of Penn State’s Communication Arts and Sciences Department is “to create knowledge about the role of communication in diverse interpersonal, communal, national, international, and cultural settings.” To accomplish this goal, the department welcomes graduate students and affiliated scholars who represent the widest array of identities and perspectives. We value every individual’s race, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, level of ability/disability and political perspective. We respect and seek to ensure each person’s right to define their own identity and to craft the language that best represents who they are. We foster community and shared belonging, but we also recognize that positions and interests sometimes diverge. A quality graduate program, like good communication, is the result of making room for and communicating across difference.

Admission Requirements

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the Graduate School application for admission (http://gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply). Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Admissions Policies (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies).

Scores from the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) are required for admission.

The minimum undergraduate preparation is 12 credits in communication studies/speech communication. Students who cannot meet this requirement in full may be admitted but must make up their deficiencies without credit toward the graduate degree.

Additionally, students with a 3.00 junior/senior grade-point average (on a 4.00 scale) and appropriate course backgrounds will be considered for admission. The best-qualified applicants will be accepted up to the number of spaces that are available for new students. Exceptions to the minimum 3.00 grade-point average may be made for students with special backgrounds, abilities, and interests. A student must have completed the master’s degree before being admitted as a doctoral student.

Degree Requirements

Master of Arts (M.A.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies)

Students pursuing the M.A. degree in Communication Arts and Sciences must schedule a review of their program of courses during the first year of residence and receive approval by a duly constituted advisory committee.

A total of 30 credits, including 6 for the master’s thesis and at least 12 other 500-level credits, is required. Candidates must schedule a proposal meeting in which their research plan for their thesis is approved by their committee. They are also required to present an oral defense before their committee.

Although typically discouraged, students in unique circumstances may apply to complete a nonthesis track. Students must apply in advance for acceptance in the nonthesis track and additional course credits will be required, among other differences from the thesis track.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies)

The communication and foreign language requirement for the Ph.D. degree may be satisfied by options selected from designated areas including, but not restricted to, foreign languages. Doctoral students must schedule a qualifying examination during their first year. Following completion of the language requirement and all courses from the program of study, doctoral students must take a comprehensive examination to determine their mastery and competence in the discipline of communication. After successful completion of the written and oral component of the comprehensive exam, doctoral candidates must schedule a proposal meeting at which the research plan for their dissertation is approved by their committee. Doctoral candidates must present a final oral defense of their dissertation before their committee.

Dual-Titles

Dual-Title Ph.D. in Communication Arts and Sciences and Bioethics

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs).

Admission Requirements

Dual-title bioethics graduate students will first be admitted to their primary programs in accordance with the requirements stipulated by the Graduate School and the primary program. They will then be admitted to graduate study in the Bioethics program by an admissions committee consisting of faculty affiliated with the Bioethics program. Applicants should have a junior/senior cumulative average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) and an appropriate background in undergraduate coursework.
Prospective dual-title students will write a statement of purpose that addresses the ways in which their research and professional goals reflect an interest in interdisciplinary bioethics research. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the Bioethics Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/bioethics). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in Bioethics prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

Degree Requirements
To qualify for a dual-title degree, students must satisfy the requirements of the CAS program in which they are primarily enrolled. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title Ph.D. in Bioethics, listed on the Bioethics Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/bioethics). Within this framework, final course selection is determined by the student, their CAS and Bioethics advisers.

Qualifying Examination
Students must meet the Ph.D. qualifying examination requirements specified by the CAS program. During the qualifying examination, the student will also be assessed for the Bioethics program, and at least one member of the qualifying examination committee must come from the Bioethics program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs may serve in a combined role.

Ph.D. Committee Composition
In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation), the Ph.D. committee of a CAS and Bioethics dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the Bioethics Graduate Faculty. Graduate students are encouraged to have a second committee member so qualified. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs’ Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the Ph.D. committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in Bioethics, the member of the committee representing Bioethics must be appointed as co-chair. The Bioethics representative on the student’s Ph.D. committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Comprehensive Exam
The faculty member (or members) affiliated with the Bioethics Program will be responsible for administering a portion of the comprehensive exam that will require the student to demonstrate an understanding of various theoretical and methodological approaches to bioethics, and an ability to apply them to issues and problems (including, where appropriate, practical problems) in their primary field.

Dissertation and Final Oral Examination
A dissertation on a bioethics-related topic or with a substantial bioethics component is required of students in the dual-title Ph.D. program. The bioethics-related topic of the dissertation or the bioethics component will be approved by the student’s committee. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

Student Aid
Graduate assistantships available to students in this program and other forms of student aid are described in the Tuition & Funding (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-funding) section of The Graduate School's website. Students on graduate assistantships must adhere to the course load limits (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad-gsad-900/gsad-901-graduate-assistants) set by The Graduate School.

In addition to the fellowships, traineeships, graduate assistantships, and other forms of financial aid described on The Graduate School’s website (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-funding), the following awards typically have been available to graduate students in this program:

Edwin Erle Sparks Fellowships in the Humanities
Available to beginning and continuing graduate students in one of the following graduate programs:

- Communication Arts and Sciences
- Comparative Literature
- English
- French
- German
- History
- Linguistics
- Philosophy
- Spanish

Apply to department before February 1.

Courses
Graduate courses carry numbers from 500 to 699 and 800 to 899. Advanced undergraduate courses numbered between 400 and 499 may be used to meet some graduate degree requirements when taken by graduate students. Courses below the 400 level may not. A graduate student may register for or audit these courses in order to make up deficiencies or to fill in gaps in previous education but not to meet requirements for an advanced degree.

Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS) Course List (https://bulletins.psu.edu/university-course-descriptions/graduate/cas)

Learning outcomes
1. Graduates will demonstrate command of the history of and current developments in rhetorical or communication science theory and methods.
2. Graduates will demonstrate the capacity to organize, synthesize, and critique the theoretical and methodological literature relevant to their area of disciplinary specialization.
3. Graduates will formulate and execute an independent research project that significantly furthers knowledge and theory in rhetoric or communication science.
4. Graduates will articulate ideas, arguments, and evidence with clarity, creativity, and compatibility with the conventions of the discipline in oral and visual presentations and written formats.
5. Graduates will develop professional practices through department service, conference participation, and disciplinary engagement.
6. Graduates will display capacity to deliver effective undergraduate and graduate instruction, including course design and delivery.
Contact

Campus University Park
Graduate Program Head Denise Haunani Solomon
Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Professor-in-Charge (PIC) Andrew High
Program Contact Robin Kowa Chakravorty
234 Sparks Building
University Park PA 16802
rlk5025@psu.edu
(814) 865-5558
Program Website View (http://cas.la.psu.edu)