Applicants must submit the following:

- a personal statement of 500 to 1000 words outlining educational goals and career objectives;
- two letters of reference attesting to the applicant’s suitability for the program (preferably from previous professors or others who are familiar with the applicant’s intellectual/creative work or interests);
- a writing sample or other creative production (e.g., short film, photo essay, advertisement or PR campaign sample, multimedia art, etc.).

International applicants must hold the equivalent of an American four-year baccalaureate degree. They must submit official or attested university records, with certified translations if the records are not in English. Notarized copies are not sufficient.

The language of instruction at Penn State is English. English proficiency test scores (TOEFL/IELTS) may be required for international applicants. See GCAC-305 Admission Requirements for International Students (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-300/gcac-305-admission-requirements-international-students/) for more information.

**Degree Requirements**

**Master of Arts (M.A.)**

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Research Degree Policies. (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/)

Students admitted to the Master of Arts in Communications Program at Penn State Harrisburg must complete 36 credits, 21 of which must be at the 500 level in order to be granted the degree. Each student must complete and submit either a master’s project or thesis. The master’s project option (COMMS 580) consists of a creative production with an accompanying scholarly essay. The thesis option (COMMS 600 or COMMS 610) consists of an original research paper that follows the guidelines established by the Graduate School’s Office of Theses and Dissertations (http://gradschool.psu.edu/current-students/etd/). The subject of the master’s project or thesis must be defined in conjunction with a faculty member, and evaluated by a committee of at least two faculty members, supplemented by outside consultants where appropriate. To register for the master’s thesis or project, a student must have completed COMMS 500 and COMMS 503 and must have earned at least 27 credits towards the Master of Arts in Communications.

The 36-credit program is distributed over two groups of courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMS 500</td>
<td>Communications and Cultural Theory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMS 503</td>
<td>Research Methods in Communications</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMS 580</td>
<td>Communications Master's Project</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMS 600</td>
<td>Thesis Research</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or COMMS 601 Thesis Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMS 525</td>
<td>Advanced Writer's Seminar</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>or COMMS 5 Media Production Workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMS 519</td>
<td>Communication Technology and Culture in History</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMS 555</td>
<td>Media Discourse Analysis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMS 560</td>
<td>Seminar on Global Culture and Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The program balances research and creative production by integrating national and international perspectives on history, culture, and society in all instruction in theory and production practice.

Because of the program’s location in the Pennsylvania state capital and its close proximity to prominent public and private institutions and other resources, students in the program will have opportunities for internships and field experiences that provide valuable context for the development of their thesis projects. This integrated approach between theory and practice positions the program to provide a strong foundation for the pursuit of doctoral studies in communications.

**Admission Requirements**

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

Applicants must hold either (1) a bachelor’s degree from a U.S. regionally accredited institution or (2) a postsecondary degree that is equivalent to a U.S. baccalaureate degree earned from an officially recognized degree-accrediting international institution and have earned at least a 3.0 grade-point average in their junior and senior years.

Exceptions may be made for those with special backgrounds or abilities who are committed to advanced interdisciplinary study in communications. All application materials should be submitted before February 15 for the fall semester and November 1 for the spring semester.

Applicants must submit the following:

- an online Graduate School application (http://gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/) with the application fee;
- official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended (http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/new-applicants/requirements-for-graduate-admission/) (with the exception of Penn State University).
Electives
Take 15 credits in additional courses at the 400- and 500-levels, from a list of approved courses maintained by the graduate program office. Elective courses can come from either Communications or other fields, including: American Studies, Business Administration, Community Psychology and Social Change, Criminal Justice, Education, Health Administration, Health Education, Humanities, Information Systems, Management, Marketing, Public Administration, Training and Development. 

| Total Credits | 36-39 |

1. COMMS 500 and COMMS 503 to be taken within the first 12 credits after enrollment in the program.
2. Students elect EITHER COMMS 580 or COMMS 600/COMMS 610. If a student chooses to write a thesis, at least 6 credits in thesis research (COMMS 600 or COMMS 610) must be included in the program.
3. The following 400-level Communications courses may not be taken to fulfill the requirements of this degree:
   - COMM 495
   - COMM 495A
   - COMM 496
   - COMM 497

Grade-Point Average and Time Limit
A 3.00 grade-point average will be required for successful completion of the degree.

A full-time student can expect to complete the program in four semesters, a part-time student in six or more semesters. All requirements for a master’s degree for the Master of Arts in Communications (including acceptance of the master’s thesis or project) must be met within eight years of admission to degree status. Extensions may be granted by the Graduate School in appropriate circumstances.

Transfer of Credits
Transfer credits are limited to 9 equivalent graduate Communications credits with a grade of B or better taken within the last 5 years from an accredited institution, subject to restrictions outlined in GCAC-309 Transfer Credit (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-309/transfer-credit/). It must be the opinion of the reviewing faculty that these courses are equivalent in quality to those offered at Penn State Harrisburg. Credit will not be given for any course used to complete a previous degree.

Minor
A graduate minor is available in any approved graduate major or dual-title program. The default requirements for a graduate minor are stated in Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/research-degrees/), depending on the type of degree the student is pursuing:

- GCAC-611 Minor - Research Doctorate (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-611-minor-research-doctorate/)
- GCAC-641 Minor - Research Master’s (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-641-minor-research-masters/)
- GCAC-709 Minor - Professional Doctorate (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-709-professional-doctoral-minor/)
- GCAC-741 Minor - Professional Master’s (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-741-masters-minor-professional/)
Contact

Campus: Harrisburg
Graduate Program Head: Jeffrey P Beck
Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Professor-in-Charge (PIC): Yonatan Tewelde
Program Contact: Amber Reichwein
    W-356
    777 W. Harrisburg Pike
    Middletown PA 17057-4898
    anr244@psu.edu
    (717) 948-6201
Program Website: View (https://harrisburg.psu.edu/humanities/communications/master-arts-communications/)