The Ph.D. Program in Mass Communications is administered by the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications. The purpose of the program is to prepare graduates for entry into college and university teaching and research and for a variety of communications-related professions. The program emphasizes the following seven areas of academic strength around which graduate students and their committees may wish to organize the selection of courses and program plans:

- Critical and Cultural Media Studies
- International, Global and Development Communications
- History, Law, Government and Politics
- Media Effects
- Science, Health and Environmental Media
- Strategic Communications
- Telecommunications, Technology and Information Policy