COMMUNICATIONS, B.A. (ALTOONA)

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus
End Campus: Altoona

Program Description
The curriculum of this B.A. in Communications provides a general grounding in traditional media forms along with work in the area of media convergence. Students must do coursework at both the practical and theoretical level. On the theory side, coursework will be offered in the areas of media criticism and theory, visual communications, and media history at the introductory and advanced levels. On the applied side, coursework will be offered in video and audio production, news writing and photojournalism, radio and television studio production, and public relations and advertising at the introductory and advanced levels. In the Convergent Media News service courses, which form the most distinctive component of the program, students will actually produce and deliver a college news service in print, broadcasting (TV and streaming radio), and a multimedia online format. This hands-on experience will provide students an opportunity to create materials suitable for inclusion in a portfolio. Although not required, students will be strongly encouraged to do an internship sometime during their junior or senior years. Finally, the capstone Convergent Media Seminar will bring seniors together to consider the larger, theoretical issues related to the fast-paced changes in communications today and in the future. With a degree in this program, students will be well-positioned to go right into industry, where they will be able to compete in a number of different job markets, or to graduate school for advanced training.

What is Communications?
Communications is an academic discipline that deals with the creation and distribution of mass communication messages through media such as books, newspapers, television, radio, film, video games, and the Internet. Mass communications use writing, speech, photographs, video, and interactive content to give information or influence the audience. Communications also concerns the study of how we communicate in different ways with diverse audiences through marketing, advertising, public relations, corporate communications, digital journalism, film and other media.

You Might Like This Program If...
- You want the experience, knowledge, and skills you need to become a versatile media practitioner.
- You are interested in a career in journalism, media, public relations, advertising, or marketing.
- You would like to gain practical experience and build a portfolio of work in a state-of-art production facility.

Entrance to Major
In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:
1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have third-semester classification (http://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm).

Degree Requirements
For the Bachelor of Arts in Communications, a minimum of 123 credits is required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements for the Major</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if foreign language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Requirements for the Major
A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better
  COMM 100N | The Mass Media and Society           | 3       |
  COMM 150N | The Art of the Cinema                | 3       |
  COMM 260W | News Writing and Reporting           | 3       |
  COMM 490  |                                       | 3       |
| Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better
Select 12 credits from the following, including 6 credits at the 400-level:
  COMM 1   | Newspaper Practicum 1                | 1       |
  COMM 2   | Newspaper Editorial Staff 1           | 1       |
  COMM 215 | Basic Photography for Communications  |         |
  COMM 241 | Graphic Design for Communications    |         |
  COMM 242 | Basic Video/Filmmaking               |         |
  COMM 251 | The Nature of Media                  |         |
  COMM 269 | Photojournalism                      |         |
  COMM 270 | Introduction to Multimedia Production|         |
  COMM 282 | Television Field Production          |         |
  COMM 283 | Television Studio Production         |         |
  COMM 296 | Independent Studies                  |         |
  COMM 337 | Intermediate Documentary Production   |         |
  COMM 339 | Intermediate Alternative Production   |         |
  COMM 346 | Writing for the Screen I             |         |
  COMM 360 | Radio Reporting                      |         |
  COMM 374 | Audio Production                     |         |
  COMM 415 | Advanced Photography for Communications|      |
  COMM 421W| Advertising Creative Strategies       |         |

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/)
Communications, B.A. (Altoona)

COMM 436 Advanced Audio Production
COMM 439 Advanced Alternative Production (max 6 credits)
COMM 448 Advanced Group Production I
COMM 460W Reporting Methods
COMM 461 Magazine Writing
COMM 462 Feature Writing
COMM 467 News Editing and Evaluation
COMM 468 Graphic Applications in Print Communications
COMM 469 Photography for the Mass Media
COMM 471 Public Relations Media and Methods
COMM 472 Public Relations Event Planning
COMM 481 Advanced Multimedia Production
COMM 495 Internship
COMM 496 Independent Studies

Select 12 credits from the following, including 6 credits at the 400-level:

COMM 110 Media and Democracy
COMM 180 Survey of Electronic Media and Telecommunications
COMM 190 Gaming and Interactive Media
COMM 205 Gender, Diversity and the Media
COMM 250 Film History and Theory
COMM 251 The Nature of Media
COMM 256 The Literature of Journalism
COMM 292 Introduction to Media & Politics
COMM 294 Research Project Courses
COMM 296 Independent Studies
COMM 320 Introduction to Advertising
COMM 370 Public Relations
COMM 401 Mass Media in History
COMM 403 Law of Mass Communications
COMM 408 Cultural Foundations of Communications
COMM 409 News Media Ethics
COMM 411 Cultural Aspects of the Mass Media
COMM 412 Sports, Media and Society
COMM 413W The Mass Media and the Public
COMM 417 Ethics and Regulation in Advertising and Public Relations
COMM 431 Topics in Television Culture and Communication
COMM 451 Topics in American Film
COMM 452 Topics in International Cinema
COMM 454 Documentary in Film and Television
COMM 494 Research Project Courses
COMM 496 Independent Studies

Select 6 credits from the following:

COMM 470A Convergent Media News Service: Newspaper Production
COMM 470B Convergent Media News Service: TV
COMM 470C Convergent Media News Service: Radio and Online Publications

1 A student may apply only 6 credits total of COMM 1 and COMM 2 towards the requirements of the Communications degree.

General Education
Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required.)
- Quantification (GQ): 6 credits
- Writing and Speaking (GWS): 9 credits

Knowledge Domains
- Arts (GA): 6 credits
- Health and Wellness (GHW): 3 credits
- Humanities (GH): 6 credits
- Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS): 6 credits
- Natural Sciences (GN): 9 credits

Integrative Studies (may also complete a Knowledge Domain requirement)
- Inter-Domain or Approved Linked Courses: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements
First Year Engagement
All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement
6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements
- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum
3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits
A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits.
Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work
Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition
The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements
Foreign Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one foreign language. See the Placement Policy for Penn State Foreign Language Courses (https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student’s primary major; foreign language credits in this category must be in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language)

Other Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the General Education US/IL requirement.

Program Learning Objectives
- Effective written communication skills.
- Effective oral communication skills.
- Effective visual communication skills.
- Knowledge of professional standards and practices.
- Ability to perform in professional settings with clarity, effectiveness, and in a manner that is appropriate to industry standards.
- Ability to understand and connect communications theory and research methods to ensure the development of effective critical thinking skills.
- Knowledge of the roles communications systems and professionals play in shaping communities at the global, national, and local levels.

Academic Advising
The objectives of the university’s academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee’s unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/)

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Suggested Academic Plan
The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2022-23 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition (Note: the archive only contains suggested academic plans beginning with the 2018-19 edition of the Undergraduate Bulletin).

Communications, B.A. at Altoona Campus
The course series listed below provides only one of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an Academic Requirements or What If report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 15, 30H, or ESL 15‡</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Education Course (GQ)‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 100N/AMST 106N or 150N†</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Education Course (GHW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSU 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>General Education Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Language Course Level 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>World Language Course Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.5</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Fall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education Course (GQ)‡</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>COMM 242‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Language Course Level 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CAS 100‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 100N/AMST 106N or 150N†</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ENGL 202B‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Education Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A. Requirement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Education Course (GHW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in Other Cultures.

See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as Other Cultures courses (https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/courses-lists/ba-other-cultures/).

### Additional Notes

#### Communications Theory Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 110</td>
<td>Media and Democracy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 180</td>
<td>Survey of Electronic Media and Telecommunications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 190</td>
<td>Gaming and Interactive Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 205</td>
<td>Gender, Diversity and the Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 250</td>
<td>Film History and Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 251</td>
<td>The Nature of Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 261</td>
<td>The Literature of Journalism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 292</td>
<td>Introduction to Media &amp; Politics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 294</td>
<td>Research Project Courses</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 296</td>
<td>Independent Studies</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 320</td>
<td>Introduction to Advertising</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 370</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 401</td>
<td>Mass Media in History</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 403</td>
<td>Law of Mass Communications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 408</td>
<td>Cultural Foundations of Communications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 409</td>
<td>News Media Ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 411</td>
<td>Cultural Aspects of the Mass Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 412</td>
<td>Sports, Media and Society</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 413W</td>
<td>The Mass Media and the Public</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 454</td>
<td>Documentary in Film and Television</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 417</td>
<td>Ethics and Regulation in Advertising and Public Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 451</td>
<td>Topics in American Film</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 452</td>
<td>Topics in International Cinema</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 494</td>
<td>Research Project Courses</td>
<td>1-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 496</td>
<td>Independent Studies</td>
<td>1-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Communications Application Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 1</td>
<td>Newspaper Practicum</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 2</td>
<td>Newspaper Editorial Staff</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 215</td>
<td>Basic Photography for Communications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 241</td>
<td>Graphic Design for Communications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 242</td>
<td>Basic Video/Filmmaking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 251</td>
<td>The Nature of Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 269</td>
<td>Photojournalism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 270</td>
<td>Introduction to Multimedia Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 282</td>
<td>Television Field Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 296</td>
<td>Independent Studies</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 337</td>
<td>Intermediate Documentary Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 338</td>
<td>Intermediate Narrative Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 339</td>
<td>Intermediate Alternative Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 346</td>
<td>Writing for the Screen I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 360</td>
<td>Radio Reporting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 374</td>
<td>Audio Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 415</td>
<td>Advanced Photography for Communications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Career Paths

The Communications major is a good fit for students interested in a career in media, as well as those considering graduate school. The major is designed to give you the experience, knowledge, and skills you need to become a versatile media practitioner. The program emphasizes a balance of theory and practice, as you develop hands-on skills (in a state-of-the-art production facility) while gaining an understanding of the many complexities of today’s media landscape. The Communications major is a good fit for students interested in a career in media, as well as those considering graduate school.

Careers

In addition, graduates have achieved distinction in a variety of areas. Recent Communications alumni have won Emmy Awards, the prestigious Murrow Award, and several AP awards in multiple states.

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

Graduates of the Communications program excel in the job market and graduate school. Student acceptance rate among graduate programs exceeds 90 percent.

Contact

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request-information (http://altoona.psu.edu/academics/bachelors-degrees/communications/request-information/)