

COMMUNICATION, B.A. (BEHREND)

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: Erie

Program Description

The B.A. major in Communication offers a liberal arts background with emphasis in mass media studies and corporate communication. It prepares students for careers in corporate communication, print and broadcast journalism, multi-media and video production, and advertising/public relations by providing an interdisciplinary study of spoken, written, visual, and technically mediated messages.

What is Communication?

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're the first on board when a social media app is released.
- You can envision yourself presenting creative ideas across multiple communication platforms.
- You welcome the challenges of working with new technology and new communication mediums.

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 at least third-semester classification (<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

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/>)

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	9-21
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	45

0-3 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 0-3 credits of GA courses in the Journalism/Media Productions (Multimedia Area).

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.

Per Senate Policy 83.80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of coursework in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned.

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 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
CAS 204	Communication Research Methods	3
CAS 303	Communication Theory	3
COMM 160	Basic News Writing Skills	1
COMM 251	The Nature of Media	3
COMM 315	Applications for Media Writing	3
Additional Courses		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
CAS 212	Professional Public Speaking	3
or CAS 252	Business and Professional Communication	
CAS 271N	Intercultural Communication	3
or COMM 410	International Mass Communications	
COMM 242	Basic Video/Filmmaking	3
or COMM 270	Introduction to Multimedia Production	
COMM 494	Research Project Courses	3
or COMM 495	Internship	
Select 3 credits of the following:		3
CAS 101N	Introduction to Human Communication	
CAS 175	Persuasion and Propaganda	
COMM 100N	The Mass Media and Society	
COMM 110	Media and Democracy	
COMM 118	Introduction to Media Effects	
COMM 150N	The Art of the Cinema	
COMM 168	American Journalism: Values, Traditions, and Practices	
COMM 180	Survey of Electronic Media and Telecommunications	
Select 2 credits of the following:		2
COMM 1	Newspaper Practicum	
COMM 2	Newspaper Editorial Staff	
COMM 3	Radio Practicum	
COMM 4	Television Practicum	
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		

Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better

Select 15 credits (at least 9 credits at the 400 level) of supporting coursework, from departmental list ¹ 15

¹ In consultation with an academic adviser, students will select 6-9 credits from 2 of 3 Concentrations:

1. Communication Studies
2. Strategic Communication
3. Journalism/Media Production

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 and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

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

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 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 (<https://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

- **Critical Thinking Skills:** The student will connect communication theory and research methods through effective critical thinking skills.
- **Cultural Competence:** The student will demonstrate culturally competent communication skills and understanding of the role

communications systems play in shaping local, national and global citizens and communities.

- **Oral, Written, Visual Communication Skills:** The student will develop strong oral, written, and visual skills.
- **Problem-Solving Skills:** The student will demonstrate advanced creative, analytical, and problem-solving skills in their academic and professional lives.
- **Professional Skills:** The student will generate a body of work that shows career readiness, professional skills, and discipline knowledge.
- **Professional Standards and Ethical Practices:** The student will use professional standards and ethical practices in applied experiences.

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/>)

Erie

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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 2023-24 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).

Communication, B.A. at Erie 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.

First Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
World Language (Level One)	4	General Education	3
General Education	3	General Education	3

ENGL 15*	3	Quantification Selection*	3
General Education	3	Other Cultures selection	3
First Year Seminar	1	World Language (Level Two)	4
100-Level CAS/COMM Additional Course*	3	COMM 1, 2, 3, or 4*	1
		17	17

Second Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
COMM 160	1	ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D*†	3
General Education	3	General Education	3
General Education	3	BA Knowledge Domain	3
World Language (Level Three)	4	General Health and Wellness	1.5
CAS 100A or 100B†	3	Quantification Selection†	3
COMM 1, 2, 3, or 4*	1	CAS 303*	3
		15	16.5

Third Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
COMM 315	3	CAS 204*	3
COMM 242 or 270*	3	CAS/COMM Supporting Course*	3
CAS 212 or 252*	3	CAS/COMM Supporting Course*	3
COMM 410 or CAS 271N*	3	General Education*	3
BA Knowledge Domain*	3	400-Level Supporting Course*	3
General Health and Wellness	1.5		
		16.5	15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
COMM 251*	3	BA Knowledge Domain	3
400-Level Supporting Course*	3	COMM 494 or 495*	3
General Education	3	400-level Supporting Course*	3
Elective*	3	Elective	3
		12	12

Total Credits 121

- * Course requires a grade of C or better for the major
- ‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education
- # Course is an Entrance to Major requirement
- † Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain)

requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

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/course-lists/ba-other-cultures/>).

- ¹ Arts Selection (GA)
- ² GD 100 Recommended

Additional Notes

*For the Media Communications Selection, students may select from CAS 101, CAS 175, COMM 100N, COMM 110, COMM 118, COMM 168 or COMM 180.

Career Paths

The B.A. in Communication prepares you for careers in corporate communication, print and broadcast journalism, social media management, advertising, public relations, and media production. You'll practice your craft by writing, editing, or serving as a photographer for The Behrend Beacon newspaper, or writing, producing, or hosting a show on BVZ Radio or PSB-TV. Penn State Behrend has a comprehensive support system to help you identify and achieve your goals for college and beyond. Meet with your academic adviser often and take advantage of the services offered by the Academic and Career Planning Center beginning in your first semester.

Careers

Because it is a diverse and practical field of study, Penn State Behrend Communication alumni pursue a wide variety of careers. Our graduates include public relations directors, account executives, marketing managers, teachers, broadcasters, writers, journalists, pastors, coaches, professional videographers and photographers, and sports information directors.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE COMMUNICATION PROGRAM (<https://behrend.psu.edu/school-of-humanities-social-sciences/academic-programs/communication/>)

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

A B.A. in Communication can be the starting point for graduate-level education in more specialized fields, including journalism, fine-art photography or photojournalism, integrated marketing communication, strategic communications, digital media, communication or media studies, and education at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary level.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://behrend.psu.edu/school-of-humanities-social-sciences/academic-programs/communication/>)

Professional Resources

- American Communications Association (<https://www.americancomm.org/>)
- Association for Women in Communications (<https://womcom.org>)
- International Association of Business Communicators (<https://www.iabc.com/>)
- Public Relations Society of America (<https://www.prsa.org/>)
- Society of Professional Journalists (<https://www.spj.org/>)

Contact

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