COMMUNICATIONS, B.A. (CAPITAL)

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus
End Campus: Harrisburg

Program Description
Communications is an interdisciplinary program that combines practical, professional instruction with critical and cultural examinations of mass media. Our interdisciplinary and theoretical approach enables our students to understand the contextual relationships between contemporary media and ethics, history, drama, and art, as well as the mechanics of emerging information technologies. We feature small classes, a multidisciplinary faculty with real-world professional experience, high-technology laboratories, and an excellent location for media internships. This major prepares students for careers in areas such as public relations, journalism, graphic design, photography, new media, advertising, media production, and telecommunications. Because of our analytical approach, students can use the major to prepare for postgraduate studies.

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 enjoy writing, design, photography, or film/video production.
- You enjoy solving problems or influencing others with your ability to create messages.
- You are interested in a career in public relations, journalism, graphic design, advertising, multimedia production.

Entrance to Major
Entry to the Communications major requires a 2.00 or higher cumulative grade-point average and successful completion (earning a grade of C or better) of COMM 100N.

Degree Requirements
For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications, a minimum of 120 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>39</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
At least 12 credits of Communications courses must be taken at the 400 level.

To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn a grade of C or better 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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 251</td>
<td>The Nature of Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 342W</td>
<td>Idea Development and Media Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 456</td>
<td>Media Criticism and Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 458</td>
<td>Media Law and Ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 230W</td>
<td>Writing for Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or COMM 260W</td>
<td>News Writing and Reporting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select two courses in visual communication from the following:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 215</td>
<td>Basic Photography for Communications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 241</td>
<td>Graphic Design for Communications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 242</td>
<td>Basic Video/Filmmaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 269</td>
<td>Photojournalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 270</td>
<td>Introduction to Multimedia Production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 337</td>
<td>Intermediate Documentary Production</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 415</td>
<td>Advanced Photography for Communications</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 437</td>
<td>Advanced Documentary Production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 438</td>
<td>Advanced Narrative Production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 441</td>
<td>Advanced Graphic Design for Communications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select 6 credits in Communications from the following:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC 200</td>
<td>Introduction to Corporate Communication</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 110</td>
<td>Media and Democracy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 150N</td>
<td>The Art of the Cinema</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 160</td>
<td>Basic News Writing Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 168</td>
<td>American Journalism: Values, Traditions, and Practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 215</td>
<td>Basic Photography for Communications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 234N</td>
<td>Digital Cultures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 241</td>
<td>Graphic Design for Communications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 242</td>
<td>Basic Video/Filmmaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 250</td>
<td>Film History and Theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 269</td>
<td>Photojournalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 270</td>
<td>Introduction to Multimedia Production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 320</td>
<td>Introduction to Advertising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 346</td>
<td>Writing for the Screen</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 360</td>
<td>Radio Reporting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 363</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
COMM 370  Public Relations  
COMM 372  Digital Public Relations  
COMM 374  Audio Production  
COMM 405  Political Economy of Communications  
COMM 414  Media Management  
COMM 415  Advanced Photography for Communications  
COMM 418  Media Effects: Theory and Research  
COMM 420  Research Methods in Advertising and Public Relations  
COMM 421W  Advertising Creative Strategies  
COMM 424  Advertising Campaigns  
COMM 428E  Social Media Strategies  
COMM 430  Mass Media and Politics  
COMM 436  Advanced Audio Production  
COMM 457  Media Audiences and Contexts  
COMM 459  Cultural Effects of Interactive and Online Media  
COMM 461  Magazine Writing  
COMM 462  Feature Writing  
COMM 471  Public Relations Media and Methods  
COMM 472  Public Relations Event Planning  
COMM 473  Public Relations Campaigns  
COMM 474  Depth Reporting  
COMM 481  Advanced Multimedia Production  
COMM 488  Writers’ Seminar  
COMM 495  Internship  
COMM 496  Independent Studies  

**Supporting Courses and Related Areas**

Select 12 credits in consultation with an academic adviser. These credits, combined with electives, may be applied to a minor in support of the student's interests.

### 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

### 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

- **Communications Theory:** Students will recall Communications theory and theorists.
- **Creativity:** Students will assess the Communication situation and create original written documents, images, sound, or graphics accordingly.
- **Practical Knowledge:** Students will construct media projects using a variety of visual, audio and Web technologies.
- **Professional Ethics:** Students will develop the professional, ethical and social responsibilities of the media professions.
- **Research Methods:** Students will analyze media using Communications theory and methods in their own research and writing.

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/)

Harrisburg

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ajs43@psu.edu

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).

Communications, B.A. at Harrisburg 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 15, 15S, 30T, or ESL 15‡</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 CAS 100A or 100S‡</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantification (GQ)‡</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>General Education Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 World Language, Level 2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education Course (GHW)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5 General Education Course</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>14.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.5</td>
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### Second Year

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 100N‡</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Elective or Minor Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 251†</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 COMM 215 (or Visual COMM Course from List F)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 260W (General Education Course (Choose 260W or 230W))‡</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 ENGL 202B or 202D‡</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Language, Level 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 COMM 230W (or General Education Course (Choose 260W or 230W))†</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 General Education Course</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
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### Third Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 General Education Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 342W²</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 COMM Selection from List E²</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual COMM Course from List F²</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Supporting Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA Requirement: Other Cultures</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Elective or Minor Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA Requirement: BA Fields</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Supporting Course</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

### Fourth Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 456*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 General Studies Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 COMM 45B*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM Selection from List E²</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Supporting Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA Requirement: BA Fields</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Elective or Internship</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communications, B.A. (Capital)

Elective or Minor Course | 3 BA Requirement: BA Fields | 3
---|---|---

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

1 COMM Selection - 6 credits from Department List E, at least 12 credits of COMM courses must be taken at the 400 level. See List E below.
2 Visual COMM – 6 credits from Department List F, at least 12 credits of COMM courses must be taken at the 400 level. See List F below.

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 (GH, 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/).

Program Notes:

* Prescribed Courses (12 Credits):
  • Select 6 credits each from the Comm List and the VISUAL COMM List of courses below.

* Supporting Courses (12 Credits):
  • Select 12 credits in consultation with an academic adviser. These credits, combined with electives, may be applied to a minor in support of the student’s interests.

* COMM List (E) (6 credits required):
  • COMM 1 Newspaper Practicum (2)
  • COMM 2 Newspaper Editorial Staff (2)
  • COMM 3 Radio Practicum (2)
  • COMM 4 Television Practicum (2)
  • COMM 110 Media and Democracy (3)
  • COMM 150 N The Art of the Cinema – The Art of the Cinema (3)
  • COMM 168 American Journalism: Values, Traditions, and Practices (3)
  • COMM 190 Gaming and Interactive Media (3)
  • COMM 234 N Digital Cultures (3)
  • COMM 320 Introduction to Advertising (3)
  • COMM 346 Writing for the Screen I (3)
  • COMM 370 Public Relations (3)
  • COMM 372 Digital Public Relations (3)
  • COMM 414 Media Management (3)
  • COMM 421 W Advertising Creative Strategies (3)
  • COMM 454 Documentary in Film and Television (3)
  • COMM 457 Media Audiences and Contexts (3)
  • COMM 471 Public Relations Media and Methods (3)
  • COMM 472 Public Relations Event Planning (3)
  • COMM 488 Writers’ Seminar (3)
  • COMM 495 Internship (3)
  • COMM 496 Independent Studies (3)

• VISUAL COMM List (F) (6 credits required):
  • COMM 215 Basic Photography for Communications (3)
  • COMM 241 Graphic Design for Communications (3)
  • COMM 242 Basic Video/Filmmaking (3)
  • COMM 269 Photojournalism (3)
  • COMM 337 Intermediate Documentary Production (3)
  • COMM 338 Intermediate Narrative Production (3)
  • COMM 374 Audio Production (3)
  • COMM 415 Advanced Photography for Communications (3)
  • COMM 436 Advanced Audio Production (3)
  • COMM 437 Advanced Documentary Production (3)
  • COMM 441 Advanced Graphic Design for Communications (3)
  • COMM 495 Internship (1-3 per semester/maximum of 6)
  • COMM 496 Independent Studies (3)

Career Paths

Penn State Harrisburg’s communications program features small classes, a multidisciplinary faculty with real-world professional experience, high-technology laboratories, and an excellent location for media internships.

Careers

This major prepares students for careers in areas such as public relations, journalism, graphic design, advertising, media production, and telecommunications.

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

Communications is an interdisciplinary program combining practical, professional instruction with critical and cultural examinations of mass media, including Penn State’s Master of Arts in Communications.

Opportunities for Graduate Studies (https://harrisburg.psu.edu/humanities/communications-ma/)
Contact

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717-948-6596
dzs640@psu.edu

https://harrisburg.psu.edu/humanities/communications-ba (https://harrisburg.psu.edu/humanities/communications-ba/)