

Major Possibilities: Communication Studies



Summary

- Southwestern's coursework in communication studies leads to a deep, theoretical understanding of communication processes. In order to acquire more of the technical skills helpful to acquiring employment, students must also take advantage of out-of-class opportunities like working for *The Megaphone*, SU radio station, SU PR/web/creative services departments or in off-campus internships.
- Internships (especially unpaid ones) have been around quite a while in the journalism, PR and advertising fields. Having at least one, if not multiple, internship experience(s) under your belt is pretty much required to get a full-time job in these fields.
- A bachelor's degree in Communication Studies plus industry-specific knowledge and experience is generally enough to land an entry-level job. Master's or higher degrees are generally not required unless you want to pursue university teaching/research.

Communication Studies major synopsis

The goal of Southwestern's Communication Studies Department is to provide students with an understanding of how language, performance, and media construct social realities. Students will gain an understanding of three distinct disciplines but have the freedom to further investigate the area(s) that are more relevant to their interests in their selection of 12 additional course hours within the department. There are two courses which introduce students to the Communication Studies major: Introduction to Communication Studies, a course which presents the methods of analysis used within the discipline, and Public Speaking. After these foundational courses, students must take one course in each of the following areas: Rhetorical Traditions, Performing Culture, and Media & Culture. Internships can be a great way to gain upper-level elective credit in the department and obtain tangible experience in one's field of interest.

Sample occupational areas

Advertising & Public Relations

Firms in the advertising and public relations services industry prepare advertisements for other companies and organizations and design campaigns to promote the interests and image of their clients. Copy writers prepare advertising copy for use in broadcasting or print publications and often work with the client to produce advertising themes or slogans. Public relations specialists create a positive public image for their organization by drafting press releases and contacting people in the media who might print or broadcast their material. Most employees in this field work in comfortable offices operating in a teamwork environment; however, long hours, including evenings and weekends, are common. A college degree in a communications-related field combined with public relations experience is excellent preparation for public relations work. The glamour of the industry traditionally attracts many more jobseekers than there are job openings, so there is a lot of competition for jobs.

Broadcasting

The general occupational categories at large broadcast stations are: program production, news-related, and technical. Employees in program production occupations at television and radio stations create programs such as news, talk, and music shows and include assistant producers, video editors, producers, announcers, and editors. News-related occupations include reporters, correspondents, newswriters, broadcast news analysts, weather reporters, assistant news directors, assignment editors, and news directors. Entry-level jobs in news or program production increasingly require a college degree and some broadcast experience. Employees in technical occupations operate and maintain the electronic equipment that records and transmits radio or television programs. For technical positions, many stations look for employees with training in broadcast technology, electronics, or engineering.

Journalism

The writing field is subdivided into two categories: those who write original material for publications, such as magazines and TV shows, and technical writers who translate technical information into everyday language. Editors review and edit the work of writers, while further responsibilities depend on their field. Current job opportunities are best for technical writers and other people with skills in specialized fields such as law, medicine, or economics.

Sample job titles

Arts, Media, and Entertainment

Book Publishing
Critic
Editor
Graphic Artist
Illustrator
Journalist
Layout Design
Media Specialist

News Writer
Script Writer
Sports Reporter
Website Designer

Government

Campaign Manager
Communications Law
Human Resources Manager

Mediator
Museum Director
Public Administrator

Industry and Commerce

Administrator
Advertising
Educational Consultant
Guidance Counselor

Management
Marketing Executive
Public Relations
Recruiter
Sales Representative
Special Events Coordinator
Technical Writer
Telemarketer

Sample internship employers of SU students

Austin.com
Austin Children's Museum
Austin Convention Center
Austin Film Festival
Austin Wranglers
Bellville FUMC
Bobby Bones Show, Austin
Brooks Brothers, Round Rock
Capitol Metro, Austin
Celebration Church, Georgetown
Central Texas Marketing, Georgetown
Christian Life Commission, Austin
Chrome Class, Houston
Ciao! Talent Agency
Cosmogirl Magazine, New York
Davis and Fox Law, PLLC, Round Rock
David Heavener Entertainment, Georgetown

Gerson Lehrman Group, Austin
GX Creative Communications, Georgetown
Hispanic Scholarship Fund, Austin
Laity Lodge Youth Camp, Kerrville
National Instruments, Austin
NBC/SNL, New York
Peer Group Consulting, Round Rock
Positive Image Photography, Georgetown
Ride on Center for Kids, Austin
Salvation Army, Austin
Steve Bowers Attorney's Office, Austin
SU Athletic Department
SU Office of Communications
SU Public Relations
Texas Film Commission, Austin
Williamson County Public Information Office
Yoga Sol, Georgetown

Sample full-time employers of SU grads

Administrative Assistant (UT System)
Customer Service Leader (Circuit City)
Dealer Manager (Tyson Koons Toyota)
File Clerk (Herman, Howry, & Breen LLP)
Flight Attendant (Southwest Airlines)
Management Trainee (Enterprise Rent-A-Car)

Manager (Universal Promotions Marketing)
Marketing Executive (iMedia Corporation)
PR Accountant Consultant
Program Assistant (ESPN Radio 1530/1260AM)
Publicist (Phenix & Phenix Literary Publicists)
Tour Guide (Experience France)

Professional associations

American Advertising Federation: www.aaf.org
American Marketing Association: www.marketingpower.com
American Press Institute: americanpressinstitute.org
Association for Women in Communications: www.womcom.org
Center for Communication: www.cencom.org
International Association of Business Communicators: www.iabc.com
International Communication Association: www.icahdq.org
National Communication Association: www.natcom.org
Newspaper Association of America: www.naa.org
Public Affairs Council: www.pac.org
Public Relations Society of America: www.prsa.org
Society of Professional Journalist: <http://spj.org/>

Additional Web resources

Advertising and Public Relations Services: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs030.htm>
Broadcasting: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs017.htm>
Public Relations Specialists: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos086.htm>
Writers and Editors: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos089.htm>

Career Services' print resources

100 Jobs in Words
2005 Writer's Market
Career Opportunities in Advertising and PR
Career Opportunities in Writing
Careers for Writers Careers in Advertising
Careers in Communications
Careers in English Language Teaching
Creating Your Career in Comm. /Entertainment
Explore the World of Pro.I & Scholarly Publishing
Freelance Success Book
Freelance Writer: Looking on the Bright Side
Great Jobs for Communication Majors
Great Jobs for English Majors: Third Edition
How to Become a Fulltime Freelance Writer
Inside Book Publishing
Jobs for English Majors & Other Smart People
Jump Start Your Career in Library and Info. Science

Newspaper Career Directory
Newspaper Career Guide
Opportunities in Advertising Careers
Opportunities in Journalism
Opportunities in Public Relations Careers
Opportunities in Technical Writing
Opportunities in Writing Careers
Opportunities in Event Planning Careers
Peterson's Breaking into Advertising
Starting Your Career as a Freelance Writer
Teaching English Overseas
The Business of Writing for Children
Vault Career Guide to Advertising
Vault Career Guide to Journalism & Info. Media
Vault Career Guide to Media and Entertainment
Vault Career Guide to Real Estate
Vault Career Guide to Advertising & PR

