

## 2015-2016 CommStudies Major At A Glance

The Communication Studies major at Southwestern University focuses on the critical study of communication. As the pace of social and cultural change continues to accelerate and the forms of communication seem to change daily, understanding *how to think about communication* becomes more and more important. Instead of training students for a particular job or career as a communications professional, the major prepares students for a life of learning and ongoing active engagement with communication phenomena. Faculty teach in seminar-style classes using dynamic teaching pedagogies to help students develop their own flexible yet disciplined approach to understanding, critically engaging, and researching communication texts, technologies, processes, and practices. Our students become skilled communicators as they become skilled analysts of communication, and they graduate ready to understand *and* shape the many different kinds of professional and civic environments they will inhabit throughout their lives.

The basic structural aim of the CommStudies curriculum is to ensure that students have worked in the full range of methodologies and subject areas in the major as well as in an intensive writing and methods class in preparation for the Capstone, which culminates the major with a significant original research project. All of the courses in the major involve a significant amount of writing, research, and creative work, but Critical/Cultural Methods (COM 75-804) even more explicitly engages in the teaching of writing, research, and creative methods in preparation for the Senior Research Capstone.

The CommStudies curriculum is organized around two subject areas that represent the distinct, yet interrelated focal points of the major: Rhetorical Studies and Critical Media Studies. Each area is represented by one of the two COM Core Courses (75-204 and 604) as well as a group of courses that represent further interventions into the cognate areas. It is important to notice that except for 000, 100, 800 and 900 level courses, COM courses are numbered according to subject area, not level of difficulty. Rhetorical Studies courses are located in the 75-200s and 75-300s (with the exception of 75-304, the general upper-level COM Special Topics course number). Critical Media Studies courses are located in the 75-600s and 75-700s. Courses in the 400s and 500s are what we call Bridge Courses, which explore content areas and themes that connect Rhetorical Studies and Critical Media Studies.

The major requires a total of 40 credits or 10 courses, comprised of 6 required courses and 4 elective courses in the major. The required courses consist of 2 foundational courses (75-134 & 154); 2 Core Courses (75-204 and 604); Critical/Cultural Methods (75-804), and the Capstone Research Seminar (75-964). All of these courses except for Public Speaking, Academic Internship, and the Capstone are eligible to satisfy the University-wide AREA II Humanities Division requirement.

Every CommStudies major must meet the following requirements:

**2 CommStudies Foundational Courses** (Must take both)

COM 75-134: Critical/Cultural Communication Studies

COM 75-154: Public Speaking

**2 CommStudies Core Courses** (Must take both)

COM 75-204 Rhetorical Theory (pre-reqs: 75-134 & 154)

COM 75-604 Media and Culture (pre-reqs: 75-134 & 154)

**COM 75-804 Critical/Cultural Methods** (Formerly Sonic, Visual and Rhetorical Criticism)

(pre-reqs: 75-134, 154, 204, 404, 604)

**COM 75-964 Capstone Research Seminar**

(pre-reqs: 75-134, 154, 204, 404, 604; 804)

**4 CommStudies Elective courses**

Most elective courses are located in the three areas below. The only exceptions are Special Topics courses (75-004; 75-304), Independent Studies, and Academic Internships, which can count as CommStudies elective courses but are not located in a specific subject area.

Rhetorical Studies

Rhetorics of Resistance  
Rhetoric of Civil Rights  
Rhetoric of Women's Rights  
Rhetorics of Health

Bridge Courses

Race, Ethnicity & Comm  
Environmental Comm  
Communication & Memory  
Gender and Communication  
Communicating Leadership  
Comm, Culture & Social Justice

Critical Media Studies

Road Movies  
Journalism  
Media & Ethics  
Music & Identity  
Film Studies

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