

**Graduate Study in Speech Communication at the
University of Southern Mississippi:
A Handbook for Students**

*... the teaching of communication will always be with us ... for the most
fundamental of reasons: Freedom goes to the articulate. **Rod Hart***

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I. Introduction

The Speech Communication Department offers the Master of Arts, Master of Science, and the Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Communication with a Speech Communication emphasis. These degrees are offered in cooperation with the School of Mass Communication and Journalism, which provides an emphasis in Mass Communication. The University of Southern Mississippi has been awarding the masters degree for almost 50 years and the doctoral degree for more than 25 years.

These graduate degrees help students to pursue careers in business, health, and educational institutions. The graduate program also prepares students to teach in post-secondary institutions. Graduates with our master's degree are employed in community colleges throughout Mississippi and our doctoral graduates at colleges and universities across the country.

This document describes the policies, procedures, and practices followed by the Speech Communication Department in administering its graduate programs. This guide clarifies the university's general rules and degree requirements as stipulated in the *Graduate Bulletin*, which should be examined for additional details and should be considered the final authority on policies and procedures. Deadlines for completing degree requirements can be obtained from the Office of Graduate Admissions at: <http://www.usm.edu/graduatestudies/index.php>.

This document may also be obtained by clicking on the appropriate link at: <http://www.usm.edu/speech/scm-prog.htm>.

All stipulations of this document will apply to students who began graduate study during or after the fall semester of 2008. Most parts of this document contain no change of policy and therefore apply to all students. Students should consult their academic advisors or dissertation directors to discuss specific issues or concerns.

II. Master's Program

A. Admissions Requirements

The department admits to the graduate program only students whose records demonstrate the ability to succeed in advanced study. Members of all underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

Procedure. A detailed description and explanation of general rules and procedures may be found in U.S.M.'s *Graduate Bulletin* (<http://www.usm.edu/registrar/bulletins/index.php>). Admission application can be completed online or downloaded from the university's web site: <http://www.usm.edu/graduatestudies/index.php>. Scores from the Graduate Record Exam must be submitted. Applicants whose native language is not English must submit results of the TOEFL. Additionally, applicants must send three current letters of recommendation that refer to the student's academic ability and preparation to pursue

graduate study. These should be written by faculty members who have taught and/or supervised the student. The letters should be sent to the Department of Speech Communication, 118 College Drive 5131, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS 39406.

Deadlines. Admission deadlines for master’s students are April 15, July 15, and December 1. *Students seeking assistantships for the fall semester are strongly encouraged to apply prior to March 1 for assistantships.* See additional information about assistantships below.

Regular Admission. For Regular Admission, students must have an overall 3.0 GPA and 3.0 GPA in their major. Meeting this minimal requirement, however, does not guarantee acceptance. The admissions process takes into account the GPA, the GRE, and the letters of recommendation. Students whose record suggests a strong likelihood of success in advanced study will be admitted.

Conditional Admission. Students who do not meet the requirements for Regular Admission may be considered for Conditional Admission, provided that the applicant has a 2.75 GPA on the last 60 hours of course work. Students whose records suggest a reasonable expectation of success in advanced study may be admitted conditionally. Students with Conditional Admission status must take their first nine (9) hours of graduate coursework within the department and earn a 3.00 GPA.

International students must score at least 550 on the TOEFL examination for Regular or Conditional Admission.

B. Degree Requirements

1. Thesis Option (Master of Arts)

Coursework. A minimum of thirty (30) semester hours must be completed, including thesis credit.

Substantive Core	
SCM 600, SCM 735.....	6
Research Methods	
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REF 602, REF 671, SCM 721, or SCM 722..	.6
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Additional Requirements. All candidates complete a thesis and take a comprehensive examination along with the oral defense of the thesis. A 3.0 GPA is required for graduation. Students must complete the degree within 4 years of initial enrollment and adhere to the University’s continuous enrollment requirement. Details may be found in the *Graduate Bulletin* (<http://www.usm.edu/registrar/bulletins/index.php>). In brief, students should be continuously enrolled after completing coursework until completing all requirements for the masters degree. The Department of Speech Communication requires that students register for 3 hours of credit during any semester the student works with a professor on a thesis. Students using other university resources such as the library can register for 1 credit hour.

2. Non-Thesis Option (Master of Science)

Curricular requirements. A minimum of thirty (30) semester hours must be completed.

Substantive Core	
SCM 600, SCM 735.....	6
Research Methods	
SCM 720.....	3
REF 602, REF 671, SCM 721, or SCM 722 ...	6
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Additional requirements. All candidates complete a written comprehensive exam. A 3.0 GPA is required for graduation. Students must complete the degree within 4 years of initial enrollment and adhere to the University’s continuous enrollment requirement. Details may be found in the *Graduate Bulletin* (<http://www.usm.edu/registrar/bulletins/index.php>). In brief, students should be continuously enrolled after completing coursework until completing all requirements for the masters degree. Students using university resources such as the library must register for at least 1 credit hour.

C. Advising and registration.

The Director of Graduate Studies of the Speech Communication department is the official advisor for all non-thesis, masters students. Students pursuing the thesis option will be advised by a faculty member who will direct the student’s work. Students must meet with their advisor each semester to discuss and secure approval for courses to be taken prior to registration.

D. Comprehensive Exam.

Non-thesis masters students must successfully complete a written comprehensive exam designed to assess knowledge of the field of speech communication and ability to think analytically and critically about speech communication. Students completing a thesis will have an oral comprehensive exam that is part of the thesis defense.

The written comprehensive exam can be taken only after the student has completed all coursework. Generally the exam is given during the first full month of the semester (September, February, and June). The exam is scheduled in two, 4-hour segments on successive days. Students should notify the Director of Graduate Studies of her/his desire to take the exam and will then be notified of the exam schedule. The exam is composed and evaluated by a committee of faculty. Students who do not pass the exam will be allowed to re-take the exam only once. Students failing the comprehensive exam twice will be terminated from the program without being awarded the masters degree.

E. Thesis

Students who choose to write a thesis should secure the help of a faculty advisor and two faculty committee members. Individuals should be selected because of their expertise and ability to help the student.

The student first works with the advisor on the production of a prospectus that outlines the subject of the thesis, reviews pertinent literature, formulates research questions or hypotheses, and describes the methods by which the study will be completed. When approved by the thesis advisor, the student presents a prospectus to the thesis committee who will assess the work and approve, require changes, or reject the proposal. Upon approval of the committee, the student has permission to proceed with the conduct of the research. Approval of the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee is required for any study involving human subjects. The student will seek the advice of the thesis advisor during the conduct of the research and will present to the thesis committee a final draft of the completed thesis, upon the recommendation or consent of the advisor. A minimum of 10 working days should be given after submitting the thesis to committee members before holding a meeting in which the student defends the thesis. After giving the student ample time to explain and justify her/his work, the committee will decide to approve, require changes, or reject the thesis.

III. Doctoral Program

A. Admissions. The department admits to the doctoral program only students whose records demonstrate the ability to succeed at this advanced level of study. Members of all underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

Procedure. A detailed description and explanation of general rules and procedures may be found in the *Graduate Bulletin* (<http://www.usm.edu/registrar/bulletins/index.php>). Admission application can be completed online or downloaded from the university's web site: http://www.usm.edu/graduatestudies/apply_online.php.

Scores from the Graduate Record Exam must be submitted. Applicants whose native language is not English must submit results of the TOEFL. Applicants must send three current letters of recommendation that refer to the student's academic ability and preparation to pursue graduate study. These should be requested from faculty members who have taught and/or supervised the student. The letters should be sent to the Department of Speech Communication, 118 College Drive, 5131, Hattiesburg, MS 39406. Additionally, the applicant must submit a 500-700 word goals statement. This statement allows the applicant to discuss career plans and to supply additional information that will assist the department in selecting those individuals who can most benefit from and contribute to the doctoral program.

Deadlines. All admission materials for doctoral students seeking to enroll in each fall term must be received by April 15. *Students seeking assistantships for the fall semester are strongly encouraged to apply prior to the March 1 deadline for assistantships.* See additional information about assistantships below.

Regular Admission. For regular admission, students must have completed a masters degree in a relevant field and achieved a 3.5 cumulative GPA in masters coursework. Meeting this minimal requirement, however, does not guarantee acceptance. The admission process takes into account the GPA, the GRE, the letters of recommendation, and the goals statement. Students whose record suggests a strong likelihood of success in the doctoral program will be admitted.

Conditional Admission. Students who do not meet the requirements for regular admission may be considered for conditional admission, provided that the applicant has a 3.25 on masters coursework. Students whose records suggest a reasonable expectation of success in doctoral student may be admitted conditionally. Students with Conditional Admission status must take their first nine (9) hours of graduate coursework within the department and earn a 3.50.

International students must score at least 550 on the TOEFL examination for Regular or Conditional Admission.

B. Degree Requirements.

1. Curricular Requirements. Doctoral students must complete: 1) a 6-hour theory core; 2) 15 hours of required and optional research methods courses; 3) 24 hours in their major areas of study, including at least one independent research course; and, 4) 12 hours of dissertation work. Students coming into the program without previous coursework in communication must complete additional requirements: 1) students without either an undergraduate degree or master's degree in communication must take an additional 30 hours of coursework; 2) students with an undergraduate degree in communication and a masters degree in a discipline other than communication must take an additional 15 hours of coursework. Students whose master's degrees are in related areas can request a reduction of these additional requirements based upon the comparability of prior coursework. The student's academic committee can approve reductions in these supplemental course requirements only after examining the student's transcript and the content of specific courses previously taken by the student.

a. Theory Core. (6 hours) A two-course theory core is required of all doctoral students: SCM 600 – Speech Communication Theory and Research and SCM 735 – Rhetorical Theory. Equivalent courses taken at the masters level may be accepted, pending approval of the student's academic committee. Students may be allowed to substitute more appropriate, non-redundant courses.

b. Methods. (15 hours). All students are required to take SCM 720: Introduction to Graduate Research, SCM 722: Communication Research Methods, and an introductory quantitative methods course. Students must take 2 additional research methods classes appropriate to their academic interests. Equivalent courses taken at the masters level may be accepted, pending approval of the student's academic committee. Students may be allowed to substitute more appropriate, non-redundant courses.

c. Major Areas of Study (24 hours). A minimum of twenty-four additional hours of elective coursework is required. A student's doctoral committee may require more courses if the student's background (see above) or goals necessitate additional study. Students may take no more than 6 hours of SCM 692 or 792 Special Problems. The student's academic committee must approve all coursework.

i. Electives (18-21 hours). Students in conjunction with their committee select these courses to provide the substantive background in our discipline. At least 12 of these hours must be within the department.

ii. Independent research (3-6 hours). Students must complete an independent research project that involves an in-depth examination of an area of communication research. Minimally this involves a comprehensive review of literature on a selected topic but may also involve the completion of a study based on some form of data. Generally the difference between taking 3 or 6 hours of SCM 792 depends on whether the student completes only the first or both of these two goals.

d. Dissertation (12 hours). The student must enroll for at least 12 hours of dissertation credit (SCM 898) as detailed below.

2. Additional Requirements

a. Continuous enrollment. Students must adhere to the university's continuous enrollment requirement. See the *Graduate Bulletin* for details (<http://www.usm.edu/registrar/bulletins/index/php>). In brief, students should be continuously enrolled while pursuing the doctoral degree. Students *must* register every spring and fall semester after completing the comprehensive exam until degree requirements have been completed. The Department of Speech Communication requires that students register for at least 3 hours of SCM 898 during any semester the student works with a professor on the dissertation. Students using other university resources such as the library can register for 1 credit hour of SCM 898.

b. Comprehensive exam. The student takes a rigorous written and oral examination in order to demonstrate mastery of knowledge about speech communication. See details below.

c. Grades. The student must obtain a 3.0 GPA over all doctoral coursework for graduation

d. Professional Development Seminar presentations. Students must make two presentations to the department's Professional Development Seminar (see below).

e. Residency. Students must meet the residency requirements specified in USM's *Graduate Bulletin* (<http://www.usm.edu/registrar/bulletins/index.php>). Normally this is met by two consecutive terms in which the student enrolls for 12 hours or three consecutive terms enrolling for 9 hours.

f. Time Limit. Students must complete their comprehensive exam within 6 years of their initial enrollment in the doctoral program and successfully defend their dissertation within 8 years.

C. Advisor and Academic Committee

The Director of Graduate Studies will advise students initially. Afterwards, the student should be advised by the chair of the academic committee constituted as follows. During the first semester, or before completing 9 hours, the student should seek an academic advisor from among eligible graduate faculty to chair the doctoral committee. Upon securing the consent of a faculty advisor, the student should confer with the advisor to identify individuals qualified and appropriate to serve on the academic committee. The student should then confer with and secure the agreement of at least 4 additional faculty to serve on the committee, 3 of whom must be from the Speech Communication

Department. The student should then request that the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair recommend approval of the committee from the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters.

The student, with the advisor's recommendation, should present to the academic committee a plan-of-study that details how the student intends to meet curricular and residency requirements. In a meeting, the committee will approve or modify this plan, which is then submitted to the College of Arts and Letters. This form is available from the Office of Graduate Admissions website: <http://www.usm.edu/graduatestudies/planofstudy.php>. Departures from the plan should be discussed with the advisor.

The student must seek approval and guidance of the advisor and committee members for the conduct of the study of communication that fulfills the independent research requirement.

During the final semester of coursework, the student will meet again with the academic committee to secure their approval of coursework. Additionally, in this meeting the student should present to the committee a recommendation concerning areas to be covered in the comprehensive exam. Generally these consist of theory and research methods, plus one or two areas of specialization such as interpersonal communication, organizational communication, rhetoric, gender and communication, intercultural communication, persuasion and social influence, etc. The committee will at this time plan the administration of the exam (see below).

D. Comprehensive Exam.

Students are required to complete a multi-part comprehensive exam. The purpose of this exam is to certify the students' understanding of the body of knowledge that constitutes the speech communication discipline and methodological competence to conduct dissertation research. Students who cannot demonstrate competence in both of these areas fail the exam. The student can take the exam only after completing all required coursework, including the independent research requirement. The exam consists of three requirements.

1. Independent research paper. As part of the independent research requirement, the student must write a paper of approximately 25 pages that demonstrates her or his ability to grasp the theoretical rationale and methods for studying some aspect of the communication process. This paper must be submitted to all committee members at the time the student takes the written exam.

2. The written exam. The academic committee in consultation with the student will decide on the date and topics or areas to be emphasized on the exam. The written exam will be given during January, February, August, or September. The doctoral committee will compose the exam questions. The final version of the exam should be prepared by the committee chair and approved by the doctoral committee. A document listing exam

questions previously given to students is maintained for public inspection in the department office.

The student will be given 12 hours to complete the exam, typically divided into three blocks of approximately 4 hours each taken over a 3-day period. If students take more time than is given to answer questions, this should be noted by the test administrator in a memo to the committee chair, who should in turn inform the committee members. Exams will be given in a manner that ensures the integrity of the answers.

3. The oral exam. A defense of the written exam should be scheduled at the time the student takes the exam and must be no less than two weeks and normally no more than 4 weeks after completing the exam. If members cannot meet within this time period, the student can opt to either delay the oral or the written exam.

The purpose of the oral defense is to ensure that the student understands and can support the descriptions, conclusions, and assessments contained in the written answers. In the oral exam the student may also be asked questions about the independent research paper that must be submitted to the committee prior to the exam. Additionally, the oral exam can focus on other issues or topics requisite for demonstrating knowledge of the discipline and ability to independently conduct communication research.

After the oral exam, the student will be informed if he/she has passed or failed. The Office of Graduate Studies should also be informed of the results. If the student fails the exam, the student should take remedial efforts before retaking the exam. The earliest a student may take a second comprehensive exam is the following semester. If the student takes a second comprehensive examination, the same procedures used in the first exam will be followed. Students failing the comprehensive exam twice will be terminated from the program without being awarded the doctoral degree.

E. Dissertation

A director and committee guide the student's work on the dissertation. The director and committee members are normally, but not always, the academic advisor and academic committee members. In consultation with the academic advisor, the student should secure a dissertation director and committee whose interests and abilities are best suited to supervise the student's desired research project.

The student first works with the advisor on the production of a prospectus that outlines the subject of the dissertation, reviews pertinent literature, formulates research questions or hypotheses, and describes the methods by which the study will be completed. When approved by the dissertation advisor, the student presents a prospectus to the doctoral committee who will assess the work and approve, require changes, or reject the proposal. Upon approval of the committee, the student has permission to proceed with the conduct of the research. Approval of the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee is required for any study involving human subjects. The student will seek the advice of the

dissertation advisor during the conduct of the research and will present to the doctoral committee a final draft of the completed dissertation, upon the recommendation or consent of the advisor. A minimum of 10 working days should be given after submitting to committee members before holding a meeting in which the student defends the dissertation. A presentation summarizing the dissertation should be presented to the committee in a venue open to the public. Following this, the student will defend the dissertation in a meeting with the committee who will then decide to approve, require changes, or reject the dissertation.

The student must enroll for a minimum of 12 hours of dissertation coursework (SCM 898). At least 3 hours must be taken during the semester a prospectus is submitted to the dissertation committee and at least 3 must be taken during the semester the student defends the dissertation.

F. Annual Progress Review and Evaluation

Students who have completed coursework must present a yearly statement of progress toward completion of degree to their advisor. This report should also outline a timetable for completing the dissertation.

4. Non-Degree Graduate Students

In exceptional cases students may be permitted to take courses in the Speech Communication Department as non-degree students: 1) the student does not seek a degree from the University of Southern Mississippi but merely wants to take selected graduate courses; 2) the student plans to submit an admission application during the semester in which he/she starts courses. Students must still meet applicable university rules for graduate admissions, i.e., obtained a bachelor's degree and requisite GPA, and have the approval of the Department Chair and the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters. No more than 9 hours taken as a non-degree student may be applied toward a masters degree. No courses taken as a non-degree student can be counted toward a doctoral degree.

5. Assistantships

Students seeking an assistantship must submit a written request to the department chair. The Speech Communication Department awards a limited number of assistantships each year. Students receive a waiver of all fees and tuition, including out-of-state tuition. **Students seeking assistantships for the fall semester are strongly encouraged to apply by March 1.**

Speech Communication Department graduate assistants generally teach two courses a semester. Only students who have completed 18 hours of graduate courses in speech communication are eligible for teaching assistantships.

Students who have not finished the requisite coursework for teaching are eligible for other assistantships awarded by offices on campus. Masters students in our program have worked in the Office of Student Affairs, Alumni Office, the University Planner's Office, Student Support Services, Graduate Admissions, Office of Community Service Learning, and other programs on campus. Contact the department chair for assistance seeking these non-departmental assistantships.

Students on assistantship must register for at least 12 hours of coursework every semester, follow all department and university policies and procedures, and make satisfactory progress toward completion of degree requirements. Failure to do so could result in the revocation or non-renewal of an assistantship. Teaching assistants are required to enroll every semester in a section of SCM 598 (Teaching Public Speaking) corresponding to their teaching responsibilities. All students on assistantships should register for at least one hour of SCM 697 or SCM 797 (see Professional Development Seminar below). Course hours mentioned in this paragraph count towards a semester's hour total, but do not count as part of a student's overall plan of study.

Assistantships are awarded for a stipulated time, generally the academic year. Students may reapply for an award yearly. Renewal of assistantships will depend upon student performance of required duties, progress toward completion of degree, and availability of funds. Doctoral students are normally renewed twice.

6. Professional Development Seminar

The department hosts a series of meetings designed to promote exchange of knowledge and the development of professional values. All graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend. They are announced via posters and e-mail. Faculty and students make presentations about research, professional practices, graduate study and degree requirements, careers, etc. Doctoral students are required to make at least two presentations at the seminars. Students may register for SCM 697 or SCM 797 credit for attending this seminar. These hours count for semester enrollment but do not count toward required coursework.

7. Academic Integrity

Honesty and adherence to professional ethics are required of graduate students. Students are expected to learn and follow the principles of ethical research that are taught in courses and contained in the university's official policy. For details see the University's web sites for the policy of research ethics (<http://www.usm.edu/spa/policies/ethics.html>) and for the use of human subjects in research (<http://www.usm.edu/irb/hs-review.html>).

All work submitted by a student is expected and required to be the result of the student's own research, writing, and/or work. Plagiarism, the appropriation of other's words, ideas, and research, is a serious violation of academic honesty. Fully acknowledge the sources of all statements, ideas, studies, and projects when writing or speaking. Students who violate this policy may receive failing grades in a class and expelled from the

program and/or university. For details on sanctions see the University of Southern Mississippi *Student Handbook* under the heading Academic Honesty-Plagiarism (<http://www.usm.edu/pubs/studenthandbook/index.htm>).

8. General Academic Policies

The university's general academic policies on grading, withdrawals, course loads, etc. may be found in the *Graduate Bulletin* at: <http://www.usm.edu/registrar/bulletins/index.php>.

9. Forms

Forms may be obtained from the Office of Graduate Admissions at: http://www.usm.edu/graduatestudies/prog_degree_forms.php. The plan of study form and degree application form may also be obtained from this site.

10. Graduation Deadlines

Each year the Office of Graduate Studies publishes a list of deadlines for submitting graduation applications, defending theses and dissertations, etc. This may be found at: <http://www.usm.edu/graduatestudies/deadlines.php>.

11. Speech Communication (SCM) Graduate Courses

598. **Teaching Public Speaking.** 1-3 hrs. Provides instruction on how to teach public speaking. Emphasis on course assignments, grading, classroom management.

599. **British Studies in Communication.** 3-6 hrs. Communication research and practice in Great Britain. Taught only in Great Britain under auspices of the College of International and Continuing Education. For more details, see the course web site: <http://ocean.st.usm.edu/~ctardy>.

600. **Speech Communication Theory & Research.** 3 hrs. A survey of major research traditions in the field of speech communication. Topics will include persuasion, nonverbal communication, networks, and theories of communication.

603 . **Political Communication.** Examines the use of rhetoric to create and maintain political relationships and power.

605. **Interpersonal Communication.** 3 hrs. A comparative approach to the study of interpersonal communication theories and methods.

609. **Speech Communication Seminar.** 3 hrs. A rotating seminar that addresses topics in speech communication.

610. **Problems in Organizational Communication.** 3 hrs. Analysis of work organizations as communication networks. Emphasis on identification, analysis of selected problems, consultation methods, and administration of communication training programs. Field project.

625 . **Communication, Conflict, and Negotiation.** Surveys theory and research on the role of communication in the management of conflict in personal and professional relationships.

674. **Dimensions of Learning in Speech Communication Education I.** 3 hrs. Provides a broad introduction to concepts, contexts, and practices of teaching speech communication and theatre at the secondary level. This course includes a clinical supervision component.

675. **Dimensions of Learning in Speech Communication Education II.** 3 hrs. Provides a broad introduction to concepts, contexts, and practices of teaching speech communication and theater at the secondary level. This course includes a clinical supervision component.

692. **Special Problems.** 3 hrs. For independent research projects designed to answer specific questions in applied or theoretical communication.

697. **Independent Study and Research.** Hours arranged. Not to be counted as credit toward a degree. Students actively working on a thesis, consulting with the major professor, or using other resources of the university may enroll in this course. Students who are not in residence and are not enrolled in at least 3 hours of thesis hour credit but who are actively working on a thesis, consulting with the major professor, or using other resources of the university must enroll in this course for at least 3 hours each semester.

698. **Thesis.** 3-6 hrs.for a total of 6 hours.

700. **Intercultural Communication.** Explores the forms and functions of interpersonal communication in different cultures. Emphasizes issues related to communication across cultural boundaries.

715. **Message Processes and Effects.** 3 hrs. Examines construction and structuring of messages by communicators to form conversation, the effects of messages upon receivers, and factors which affect construction, structuring, and reception of messages.

720. **Introduction to Graduate Research.** 3 hrs. Analysis of types of problems, concepts, variables, definition, design measurement techniques, and interpretation of data prevalent in communication research. Involves elementary statistics and development of research proposals and designs. May also be taken as MC 720.

721. **Content Analysis.** 3 hrs. Study of theory and methods of defining, categorizing, coding, and interpreting verbal and nonverbal elements of the communication process. Emphasizes source and message elements. Elementary statistical analysis, research report, and design of studies. May also be taken as MC 721.

722. **Communication Research Methods.** 3 hrs. A study of the techniques and strategies used in conducting empirical studies of communication. Topics will include measurement, sampling, and content analysis. May also be taken as MC 722.

725. **Seminar in Organizational Communication.** 3 hrs. Topics under the heading of organizational communication are explored, including such issues as organizational cultures, communication climate, and conflict management.

726. **Seminar in Interpersonal Communication.** 3 hrs. Readings in narrative approaches to investigating human communication, including theoretical issues, methods, and case studies.

730. **Theory and Research in Small Group Communication.** 3 hrs. A study of human interaction in small group settings and the determinants and effects of such interaction.

735. **Rhetorical Theory.** 3 hrs. A study of the development of rhetorical theory, ancient through contemporary. The course will examine classical, medieval, Renaissance, and late European rhetoricians, and re-emergence of rhetorical theory in the 20th century.

740. **Rhetorical Criticism.** 3 hrs. This course examines the variety of contexts and situations to which can be applied principles of rhetorical criticism. Emphasis will be placed on public discourse and media.

745. **Communication and Humor.** Examines the use of humor in public speeches, workplace, and personal relationships. Assesses current theory and research on the topic.

750. **Theory and Research in Nonverbal Communication.** 3 hrs. A study of nonverbal communication and its relation to effective oral communication. Topics include gender and cultural differences, detecting deception, persuasive strategies.

755. **Contemporary Theory and Research in Persuasion.** 3 hrs. This course is designed to familiarize students with current issues and research in persuasive communication.

792. **Special Problems.** 3 hrs. For independent research problems designed to answer specific questions in applied or theoretical communication.

797. **Independent Study and Research.** Hours arranged. Not to be counted as credit toward a degree. Students actively working on a dissertation, consulting with the major professor, or using other resources of the university may enroll in this course. Students

who are not in residence and are not enrolled in at least 3 hours of dissertation hour credit but who are actively working on a dissertation, consulting with the major professor, or using other resources of the university must enroll in this course for at least 3 hours each semester.

809. **Speech Communication Seminar.** 3 hrs. A rotating seminar that addresses topics in speech communication.

898. **Dissertation.** 3-12 hrs, for a total of 12 hrs.

11. Faculty

The faculty of the Department of Speech Communication consists of experienced teachers who are leaders in, and major contributors to, the communication discipline. All hold doctoral degrees. Faculty have received numerous awards: USM Excellence in Teaching and Excellence in University Service; the Southern States Communication Association Excellence in Teaching, Distinguished Service, Communication Theory Division Outstanding Scholar, Gender Studies Division Outstanding Scholar; the Southern Regional Education Board Faculty Mentor Award, and the National Communication Association Golden Anniversary Monographs Award. Grants to support faculty research have been provided by the National Institutes of Health, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Department faculty have produced 11 books and published articles in virtually all of the journals sponsored by our professional associations.

Wendy Atkins-Sayre (Ph.D., University of Georgia). Teaching and research interests focus on social movement rhetoric, feminist criticism, public controversy discourse, and rhetorical criticism. (601) 266-4965. wendy.atkinssayre@usm.edu

Richard L. Conville (Ph.D., Louisiana State University). Teaching and research center on interpersonal communication, and in particular the role of communication in constructing relationships. He uses qualitative methods to interpret and understand conflicts between adults' personal and professional lives and dilemmas encountered in interracial communication. (601) 266-4272. richard.conville@usm.edu.

Keith V. Erickson (Ed.D., University of Michigan). Teaching and research interests include presidential and political communication, and rhetorical theory and criticism. Recent studies include the rhetoric of seduction, presidential photo opportunities, travel, and news leaks. (601) 266-4273. keith.erickson@usm.edu.

Lawrence A. Hosman (Ph.D., University of Iowa). Teaching and research focus on the role of language in social influence and persuasion, with particular attention to how messages can be constructed to better influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of audiences. (601) 266-4279. lawrence.hosman@usm.edu.

Eura Jung (Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University). Teaching and research focus on intercultural communication and communication research methods. (601) 266-4276. aura.jung@usm.edu.

John C. Meyer (Ph.D., University of Kansas). Teaches and researches organizational communication, conflict management, and humor. Currently studying how children's communication strategies in day care centers enact organizational values. (601) 266-4280. john.meyer@usm.edu.

Susan Mallon Ross (Ph.D., Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute). Teaches courses in a variety of areas on the Gulf Park campus. Research interest in freedom of speech and history of women's public address. (228) 214-3360. susan.m.ross@usm.edu.

Susan A. Siltanen (Ph.D., Ohio State University). Teaches courses in persuasion, freedom of speech, content analysis, communication theory, and gender studies. Research focuses on powerful and powerless speech styles, metaphor theory, and persuasive effects of metaphor. (601) 266-5140. Susan.Siltanen@usm.edu.

Charles H. Tardy (Ph.D., University of Iowa). Teaches courses on interpersonal communication, nonverbal communication, and intercultural communication. Research interests center on how social interaction affects health and illness, especially cardiovascular diseases. Department Chair. (601) 266-4278. charles.tardy@usm.edu.

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12. Support for Graduate Student Research.

The department encourages graduate students to engage in research and participate in professional activities. Students normally receive assistance with copying and travel. Special funds are available also to help in the conduct of dissertation research. Students needing additional assistance should contact the department chair.

13. List of Recent Changes

April 9, 2005.

Application for admission deadline dates were changed.

Policies concerning doctoral requirements were changed significantly.

August 1, 2005.

Hypertext links were corrected.

A “List of Recent Changes” section was added.

Characterization of continuous enrollment requirements were changed on pages 4 and 7.

Dates for taking comprehensive exam was added on pages 9 and 10.

Added “12. Support for Graduate Student Research” starting on page 19.

August 30, 2006

Master’s of Science degree reduced from 33 to 30 hours (page 4).

Steven J. Venette added to faculty list (p. 17).

August 29, 2007

Correction to faculty list (p. 17).

Hypertext links were corrected.

Wendy Atkins-Sayre added to faculty list (p. 16).

Requirement for graduate assistants to enroll in SCM 697 or 797 (p. 11).

Residence requirement statement updated (p. 8).

Appendices listing removed from title page (p. 1).

November 16, 2007

Removed non-thesis option from description of M.A. and corrected the hour total for M.S. degrees (pp. 3-4).

May 22, 2008

Changed years for completion of M. A. and M. S. degrees for 6 to 4 (p. 3).

Corrected error in the non-thesis hours requirement (p. 3).

Changed “chair” to “Director of Graduate Studies” throughout the document.

Hypertext links were corrected throughout the document.

Statement clarifying times available to take comprehensive exams (p. 8).

Requirement for public presentation of the dissertation (p. 8).

Statement clarifying the status of SCM 697 and SCM 797 credit hours (pp. 9-10).