

COMMUNICATIONS (COM)

COM-180: Introduction to Public Relations (3 Credits)

This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the theory, principles, techniques and practices of public relations. It is designed for those with little or no previous experience or course in public relations. Emphasis is divided between a conceptual understanding of theory and philosophy and applications of theory through specific tools and techniques. Key topics include: defining public relations, careers in public relations, the history and growth of the profession, the organization of PR firms, research and measurement in PR, message strategies, etc.

COM-195: Media and Culture (3 Credits)

This course provides students with an overview of the role the media play in an increasingly complex global society and with an introduction to media theory and history. Over the course of the semester, students explore the role and power of media in influencing social values, political beliefs, identities, and behaviors. Media discussed include newspapers, magazines, film, radio, television and the digital platforms such as video games and social media. Foundation Course required of all English Communications Majors and Minors.

Theme: Defining the American Experience.

COM-238: Podcasting (3 Credits)

Podcasting, building on an ancient tradition of oral storytelling, brings listeners tales that vary from the personal to the political. Students will study various types of popular podcasts to learn how they are constructed from concept and research to recording and editing. With a significant hands-on component, students will gain experience producing audio stories.

COM-256: Writing for Public Relations (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-180 or COM-180 and ENG-271 or COM-271 or permission of instructor is required.

This course provides students with a comprehensive writing experience in the field of public relations. Students learn the role of communication and media specialists, especially on social media and they will learn how to write a fact sheet, a biography, a media list, a press release, a pitch, a blog, and how to create a social media plan for a client of their choice.

COM-261: Exploring American Diversity Through (3 Credits)

This course introduces students to strategies for interrogating the issues of race, ethnicity, class, gender and other cultural identities presented in-and excluded from-popular media narratives in film and television. What factors shape whether audiences are offered diverse and nuanced visions of American society? By studying historical and contemporary examples and sharpening our critical viewing skills, we'll seek a better understanding of American life on-screen and off.

COM-267: Introduction to Television Studies (3 Credits)

Television in American culture is an art form, a commercial industry, a social force, and a source of entertainment. In this course, students will learn the vocabulary needed to analyze television forms and apply this knowledge to programs and practices from television's early years to its contemporary digital transition. Additional topics may include the role of the audience, television's role in social change, and the impact of television's commercial structure.

COM-271: Introduction to Media Writing (3 Credits)

In this introduction to the basic skills involved in recognizing, gathering, and writing news, students learn the fundamentals of interviewing, researching, and writing for print, broadcast, and online delivery. The course is excellent preparation for work in newspapers, magazines, public relations, and online media. Foundation Course required of all Communications Majors and Minors.

COM-273: Multimedia Storytelling (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-271 or COM-271 is required.

Students in this course will learn to use a variety of digital tools to gather and edit audio and video in the service of skillful storytelling and reporting. The emphasis of the course is on storytelling rather than technology. The skills developed in the course will be of use to those who contemplate careers in print, broadcast, and online news and information as well as in public relations. Foundation Course required of all Communications Majors and Minors.

COM-291: Internship (1-3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-195 or COM-195 and ENG-271 or COM-271 for Communications majors or permission of instructor is required.

Interns work under supervision at local and area newspapers and magazines, public relation firms, non-profit agencies, advertising agencies, and television and radio stations. Literature or Creative Writing and Publishing majors may take this course once for credit toward the major. Does not substitute for required COM-491: Internship course required of senior Communications majors.

COM-355: Case Studies in Public Relations (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-256 or COM-256 or permission of instructor is required.

This advanced public relations course uses a case studies approach to examine critical issues and developments in the field of public relations. Topics could include crisis communications, identity and reputation management, public relations for nonprofit groups, corporate communications challenges, and others. Students will learn to apply advanced public relations theories and techniques.

COM-357: Editing and Publishing (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-271 or COM-271 and ENG-250 or CWP-250 or permission of instructor is required.

From online content curation and copyediting to publication design and story selection, today's editors take on any number of tasks. This course provides students with the foundation skills in editing needed for work in public relations, online and print news, magazines, and book publishing. The course covers both the macro issues (such as working with authors, commissioning articles, navigating legal and ethical issues) and micro issues (proofreading and copyediting, line editing, fact-checking, using AP style) facing editors today.

COM-358: Global Media (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-195 or COM-195 or junior academic standing is required.

This course takes as its subject the globalization of media production, distribution, and reception, and the development of global media systems. The focus of the course may change from semester to semester with possible topics including global media and social justice, women's issues in global media, the global film industry, media and migration, and media and cultural identities.

Theme: Building Global Awareness.

COM-360: Social Media Strategies (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-195 or COM-195 or junior academic standing or permission of instructor is required.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok are changing the way journalists, editors, public relations specialists, and other communications professionals are doing business. Social media also plays a key role in campaigns and the daily work of public relations professionals. This class will integrate the growing research in the area with the social media practices in public relations in particular. It will focus on the three underpinnings of successful social media activity: Analytics, Listening and Engagement. Emphasis is also on communications strategies and theories of social networking as they pertain to real-world challenges in publishing and public relations and on writing for both established and niche platforms.

COM-365: Women's Magazines and the Construction of Gender (3 Credits)

With their glossy advertisements and their personal tone, women's magazines have long played a role in influencing the ways in which gender is performed. This class looks at some of the most influential women's magazines in media history-including Cosmopolitan, Ms., Godey's Lady's Book, and Vogue-to explore the ways in which such publications defined new gender roles, reinforced traditional norms, and otherwise became forums for discussions of changing ideas of gender, sexuality and social rights. This course will also consider 21st century changes in the women's magazine industry and the ways in which the pressures of online publishing and social media have affected representations of women and the position of women in the industry.

COM-367: Reality Television (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-195 or COM-195 or junior academic standing or permission of instructor is required.

Often derided as just trash television, reality TV deserves serious study for what it can tell us about contemporary media industries and for how it may shape our society. This course considers the ethics, economics and educational potential of the popular genre. Our analysis of contemporary and "classic" reality programs will draw on readings exploring key issues in media studies including political economy, ideology, and genre theory.

COM-368: Media and Gender (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-195 or COM-195 or junior academic standing or permission of instructor is required.

Understanding gender as a continuum of performed identities, this course examines how mainstream media texts circulate powerful (and often harmful) ideas about masculinity and femininity. Students will employ close reading strategies drawn from semiotics, feminist criticism, and cultural studies to analyze representations in print and visual media and explore media's potential for challenging restrictive gender norms.

COM-369: Media and Social Change (3 Credits)

This course looks at the ways marginalized people, including women, racial and ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ individuals, have used media to challenge the status quo and fight for social change. We also consider how mainstream news media have covered protest movements and how new digital technologies may be affording activists more power in shaping media agendas.

COM-371: Feature Writing (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-273 or COM-273 or permission of instructor is required.

Magazine feature writing is a craft that involves creativity, imagination, style and substance. Students in this class become familiar with the magazine industry and the current market for feature articles while developing their own writing and reporting skills. Projects for the class may include how-to stories, list articles, personality profiles, and trend pieces.

COM-372: Fan Culture (3 Credits)

Cult films, TV series and novels can inspire fierce devotion among audiences. Fans unite around media texts and fictional characters they love and often produce their own fan fiction, mash-up videos, blogs and other artistic creations. This course will introduce students to key scholars and theories in the field of fan studies to explore questions such as these: How do fans form virtual communities? How has the Internet aided the spread of fan cultures? How does fandom complicate our understanding of media producers and consumers as distinct groups?

COM-373: Advanced Multimedia Reporting (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-273 or COM-273 is required.

Building on foundational skills in audio and video storytelling, this course teaches students strategies for in-depth reporting for multimedia. Projects will emphasize field reporting, interviewing, and editing for story structure. Through analysis of online video and broadcast news, we'll explore how the pros make complex stories accessible and engaging for viewing audiences and then apply these techniques to independent projects packaged for the web.

COM-374: Advertising and Consumer Culture (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-195 or COM-195 or junior academic standing or permission of instructor is required.

Madison Avenue does more than sell products: It sells lifestyles and dreams, values and beliefs. Using a cultural studies approach to media, students will learn critical approaches to analyzing advertisements and will be introduced to the history of the modern advertising industry in relation to the expanding media landscape. Advertising controversies and methods, developments in social media advertising, and international advertising campaigns will also be studied.

COM-399: Special Topics in Communications (3 Credits)

This seminar will provide the advanced student the opportunity to do intensive study of a major issue in communications and media. Topics may include, but are not limited to, media and social justice; women's magazines; television studies; censorship; media and politics; wartime journalism; crisis communications; and media research methods.

COM-480: Public Relations Campaigns (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-256 or COM-256 or permission of instructor is required.

This course gives students the opportunity to apply the foundation skills learned in other communications courses to the development and implementation of a real-world public relations campaign. Working with a local client, students will research, set objectives, and identify strategies and tactics for a short-term campaign that they will then implement.

COM-489: Critical Writing and Research (3 Credits)

An intensive preparation for research-based and in-depth writing projects, this course provides students with opportunities to improve their skills in research methods and to refine their writing style. Senior Communication majors only. Foundation Course required of all Communications Majors.

COM-490: Senior Seminar Capstone (3 Credits)

Pre-requisite(s): ENG-489 or COM-489 is required.

Each student will select a topic for study and research. The seminar sessions will meet regularly for the presentation and critique of students' progress. Each student is expected to produce a significant research paper and make an oral presentation and defense. Foundation Course required of all Communications Majors.

COM-491: Internship (3 Credits)

Interns work under supervision at local and area newspapers and magazines, public relation firms, non-profit agencies, advertising agencies, and television and radio stations. Creative Writing and Publishing or Literature majors may take this course once for credit toward the major. Senior academic standing or permission of department chair is required. Foundation Course required of all Communications Majors.

COM-499: Independent Study (3 Credits)

Students with compelling reasons may participate in independent study under the direction of a faculty member in the Department of English, Communications and Media. Permission of department chair is required.