

Program Assessment Plan for M.A./M.S. in Communication (March 20, 2017)

Identifying Information

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| <i>College:</i> | College of Arts and Sciences | <i>Graduate Coordinator:</i> | Kevin R. Meyer, Ph.D. |
| <i>Department:</i> | School of Communication | <i>Email:</i> | kmeyer@ilstu.edu |
| <i>Program:</i> | M.A./M.S. in Communication | <i>Phone:</i> | (309) 438-3277 |
| <i>Date:</i> | March 20, 2017 | <i>Mail Code:</i> | Campus Box 4480 |

Mission Statement

The Master's degree program in Communication at Illinois State University provides rigorous critical, theoretical and practical breadth and depth across the convergent fields of communication education, communication studies, journalism, media, and public relations. Through a culture of collaboration and collegiality, we strike a dynamic balance linking the scholarship and practice of communication. Our community of students and faculty develops relevant professional and scholarly skills, empowering us to be leaders in industry and academia, thriving in globally competitive and culturally diverse environments. We are a recognized leader in civic engagement, creative productivity, scholarship, and teacher training. The program develops professionals, scholars, and teachers, while promoting a passion for intellectual and theoretical discovery that transcends and heightens career objectives and program expectations. (revised and adopted by the Graduate Faculty in September 2013)

Program Assessment Plan for M.A./M.S. in Communication (March 20, 2017)

| Program Goal 1 | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Program will provide students with knowledge of general communication theory and the communication discipline. | | | | | | |
| Integration in Curriculum | All graduate students are required to take COM 422: Proseminar in Communication Philosophy and Theory. This course exposes students to (a) the nature of theory, (b) general communication theory, and (c) criteria for evaluating theories. Students' knowledge of general communication theory is reflected in the various position papers they write in COM 422 as well as selected papers in elective seminars, theses, and 39-hour projects. | | | | | |
| Outcome Measures | Data Needed | Data Already Available | Group(s) Assessed | Assessment Methods | Who will conduct assessment? | Timeline |
| Student knowledge of the communication discipline, reflecting on the notion of communication. | COM 422 Position Paper 1 | Yes | 1 st year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |
| Student knowledge of the main approaches (scientific, interpretivist, critical) to communication theory and research. | COM 422 Position Paper 2 | Yes | 1 st year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |
| Student creation of their own theory, reflecting knowledge of elements of a social scientific theory. | COM 422 Position Paper 3 | Yes | 1 st year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |
| Student ability to use theory to inform practice and application, in which students used theory to analysis and application in their paper. | Selected elective seminar papers, Theses, 39-hour projects | Yes | 2 nd year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |

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| Program Goal 2 | | | | | | |
| Program will provide students with knowledge of specific communication theories in selected areas of inquiry in the communication discipline. | | | | | | |
| Integration in Curriculum | Students read and evaluate specific communication theories in COM 422, in the various graduate (400-level) seminars that they complete as well as in theses and 39-hour projects. | | | | | |
| Outcome Measures | Data Needed | Data Already Available | Group(s) Assessed | Assessment Methods | Who will conduct assessment? | Timeline |
| Student knowledge of a single theory, demonstrated by summarizing a research article that pertains to a specific theory. | COM 422 Paper 4 | Yes | 1 st year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |
| Student demonstration of an understanding of the context of a single theory within the larger scholarly context, discussing current and historical research using the theory, and evaluating the theory according to accepted academic standards. | COM 422 Final Paper | Yes | 1 st year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |
| Student ability to use a specific communication theory effectively in their final graduate project. | Theses and 39-hour projects | Yes | 2 nd year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |

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Program Goal 3

Program will develop students' abilities to conduct communication research or produce scholarly creative works.

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|--|---|-------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Integration in Curriculum | All students are required to take COM 497: Seminar in Quantitative Communication Research Methods. This course introduces students to the nature of social research, the philosophy of science, and specific social research methods (e.g., surveys, experiments, content analyses). Students also take either COM 473: Seminar in Qualitative Communication Research Methods or COM 402: Seminar in Rhetorical Communication Research Methods. Students who complete COM 473 learn to design, execute, and report qualitative investigations of communication processes. Theses and 39-hour projects also demonstrate research or creative work. | | | | | |
| Outcome Measures | Data Needed | Data Already Available | Group(s) Assessed | Assessment Methods | Who will conduct assessment? | Timeline |
| Student ability to develop a review of literature that contains clearly specified research objectives (e.g., hypotheses and/or research questions, etc.) warranted by a review of relevant scholarly literature and logical reasoning. | COM 497 Research Proposals and COM 473 Final Papers | Yes | 1 st year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |
| Student ability to develop a research design that clearly specifies the sampling, measurement, procedures, and data analyses appropriate for specified research objectives. | COM 497 Research Proposals | Yes | 1 st year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |
| Student ability to perform statistical analyses on a data set using SPSS, interpret the results, and write-up the findings. | COM 497 SPSS Lab Assignments | No | 1 st year Graduate Students | Aggregate scores on SPSS data analysis exercises | Instructors of COM 497 | End of every academic year |
| Student ability to effectively design and execute communication research their final graduate project and/or scholarly creative work. | Theses and 39-hour projects | Yes | 2 nd year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |

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| Program Goal 4 | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Program will develop students' critical abilities to comprehend and evaluate published communication research. | | | | | | |
| Integration in Curriculum | Students read published research that employs various research methods in COM 497, COM 402 or 473, and various elective seminars, as well as in theses and 39-hour projects. | | | | | |
| Outcome Measures | Data Needed | Data Already Available | Group(s) Assessed | Assessment Methods | Who will conduct assessment? | Timeline |
| Student ability to critique the research methods used in an empirical, interpretive, critical, or rhetorical study, identifying threats to the validity of the project and suggesting ways to improve the research design. | Selected elective seminar papers and COM 497 Research Proposals | Yes | 1 st and 2 nd year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |
| Student ability to critique research methods, as critical consumers of communication research, in a final graduate project. | Theses and 39-hour projects | Yes | 2 nd year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |

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| Program Goal 5 | | | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Program will develop students' competencies in communicating the results of research in written and oral forms. | | | | | | |
| Integration in Curriculum | Students are required to write a research proposal or complete research report in COM 497, COM 473, COM 402, various elective seminars, theses, and 39-hour projects. Students typically provide oral reports of theses at oral defenses. Students typically present research orally to audiences outside the School in a variety of venues. | | | | | |
| Outcome Measures | Data Needed | Data Already Available | Group(s) Assessed | Assessment Methods | Who will conduct assessment? | Timeline |
| Student ability to effectively apply academic writing style, proper tone, grammar, punctuation, organization, and format following a style guide (i.e., APA, Chicago, or AP). | Selected elective seminar papers, COM 497 Research Proposals, COM 473 Final Papers, COM 402 papers, Theses, and 39-hour projects | Yes | 1 st and 2 nd year Graduate Students | Scores on the universal assessment rubric | Members of the COM Graduate Faculty | End of every other academic year |
| Student ability to orally communicate research results in a thesis defense or presentation of the 39-hour project. | Scores on a reporting rubric | No | 2 nd year Graduate Students | Aggregate scores on a reporting rubric | Thesis or 39-hour Chairs and Committee Members | End of every academic year |
| Student oral communication of research to an audience outside the School (i.e., University Research Symposium, 3-Minute Thesis competition, Professional Academic Conferences, etc.). | Various information about student participants and presentations, per event | No | 1 st and 2 nd year Graduate Students | Aggregate data about student participants and presentations, per event | Graduate Coordinator | End of every academic year |

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Collection, analysis/interpretation, discussion, and action based on student learning/development data.

| Goals | Who is responsible for collecting data? | What data are collected? | From whom and when are data collected? | When and where are data reviewed and discussed? | What changes planned and/or implemented based on the data? |
|--------------|--|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1 | Graduate Faculty Members | Student papers | Graduate Students, Fall semesters | Graduate Faculty Meetings, which are held monthly | Will inform next program review and any curriculum changes |
| 2 | Graduate Faculty Members | Student papers | Graduate Students, Fall and Spring semesters | Graduate Faculty Meetings, which are held monthly | Will inform next program review and any curriculum changes |
| 3 | Graduate Faculty Members | Student papers | Graduate Students, Fall and Spring semesters | Graduate Faculty Meetings, which are held monthly | Will inform next program review and any curriculum changes |
| 4 | Graduate Faculty Members | Student papers | Graduate Students, Fall and Spring semesters | Graduate Faculty Meetings, which are held monthly | Will inform next program review and any curriculum changes |
| 5 | Graduate Faculty Members | Student papers and presentations | Graduate Students, Fall and Spring semesters | Graduate Faculty Meetings, which are held monthly | Will inform next program review and any curriculum changes |

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Core courses and experiences that align with each goal/objective/outcome/standard/indicator.

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 | Goal 4 | Goal 5 |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| COM 422 | COM 422 | COM 497 | COM 497 | COM 497 |
| Elective seminars | Theses | COM 473 | Theses | COM 473 |
| Theses | 39-hour projects | Theses | 39-hour projects | COM 402 |
| 39-hour projects | | 39-hour projects | | Theses |
| | | | | 39-hour projects |
| | | | | Oral presentations |

Progression of student learning/development related to each goal/objective/outcome/standard/indicator, across the core courses and experiences.

| Common Courses/Experiences | Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 | Goal 4 | Goal 5 |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| COM 422 | Developing | Developing | | | |
| COM 497 | | | Developing | Developing | Developing |
| COM 402 | | | | | Developing |
| COM 473 | | | Developing | | Developing |
| Elective seminars | Established | | | | Established |
| Theses | Advanced | Advanced | Advanced | Advanced | Advanced |
| 39-hour projects | Advanced | Advanced | Advanced | Advanced | Advanced |
| Oral presentations | | | | | Established |

* Terms to indicate different levels can include 'Developing, Established, Advanced;' 'Introduced, Developed/Practiced, Mastered;' 'Novice, Proficient, Mastered;' etc. and prerequisite knowledge also should be considered.

Activities completed during the courses and experiences that align with each goal/objective/outcome/standard/indicator.

| Common Courses/Experiences | Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 | Goal 4 | Goal 5 |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| COM 422 | X | X | | | |
| COM 497 | | | X | X | X |
| COM 402 | | | | | X |
| COM 473 | | | X | | X |
| Elective seminars | X | | | | X |
| Theses | X | X | X | X | X |
| 39-hour projects | X | X | X | X | X |
| Oral presentations | | | | | X |

Universal Assessment Rubric

| | | Student Code #: _____ Paper Type: _____ | Absent | Poor | Good | Excellent | |
|-----------------|--|--|---|------|------|-----------|-----|
| | | Faculty Coder: _____ | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | N/A |
| CONTENT | | Theory is evaluated according to accepted academic standards | | | | | |
| | | Theory is summarized clearly and accurately | | | | | |
| | | Theory summary reflects a depth and breadth of understanding | | | | | |
| | | Literature review includes a variety of relevant scholarly sources | | | | | |
| | | Research objectives are clearly specified | | | | | |
| | | Research design is appropriate for the research objectives | | | | | |
| | | Appropriate research methods are applied to investigation | | | | | |
| | | Work represents a sound contribution to theory and practice | | | | | |
| | | Demonstrates relevance of chosen theory/method to the topic | | | | | |
| | | Accurately applies the theory/method in an analysis | | | | | |
| ANALYSIS | | Writing reflects logical reasoning | | | | | |
| | | Theory is analyzed sufficiently | | | | | |
| | | Academic sources are analyzed sufficiently | | | | | |
| | | Implications for future research are explored | | | | | |
| | | Limitations are reasonable and well-articulated | | | | | |
| | | Evaluation and critique of theory reflect depth of thought and breadth of aspects evaluated | | | | | |
| | | Analysis and conclusions are well supported by findings | | | | | |
| | | Answers relevant and appropriate research objectives | | | | | |
| | | Provides sufficient evidence for insights, interpretations, and conclusions | | | | | |
| | | Contributes knowledge to theory and practice | | | | | |
| FORMAT | | Follows proper style guide (such as APA, Chicago, AP), including level headings and References page | | | | | |
| | | Uses correctly formatted headers and a title (including running head, title page, and abstract) | | | | | |
| | | Is free of stylistic and/or formatting errors | | | | | |
| WRITING | | Is free of typos, grammatical, and spelling errors | | | | | |
| | | Uses proper punctuation, capitalization, and endmarks | | | | | |
| | | Sentence structure is varied | | | | | |
| | | Appropriate vocabulary is used | | | | | |
| | | Introduction, transitions, and conclusion are included | | | | | |
| | | Paragraphs are well organized and developed | | | | | |
| | | Ideas and/or claims flow logically together | | | | | |
| | | Presents the substance of the argument logically and in an easy-to-follow manner | | | | | |
| SUM | | Writing demonstrates maturity consistent with the expectations for graduate-level university courses | | | | | |
| | | <i>A balance between objective components and subjective impression of the writing as a whole</i> | Total Score (out of 3 points): _____ | | | | |