

The background image shows a modern, multi-story building with a light-colored facade and large windows. The building is illuminated from within, and the sky is a deep blue. A large tree is in the foreground on the left, and a bus stop is visible in the lower right. The text is overlaid in white serif font.

MA Handbook

AY 2020-2021

Department of  
Communication

**M. A. Handbook  
Academic Year 2020-2021**

**Department of Communication  
Georgia State University**

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# Introduction

This handbook describes requirements for earning the masters degree in the Department of Communication, College of Arts and Sciences, Georgia State University. It details departmental and program curricula along with departmental policies and procedures that govern master students. Students in the department are expected to be familiar with all of the requirements, policies, and procedures described herein.

Students are responsible for knowing about and complying with the Department of Communication policies and requirements described in this handbook as well as the policies and requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences detailed in the Graduate Catalogue.

In general, students must adhere to the course and other requirements in effect when they enroll, as described in the edition of the MA Handbook that corresponds to the year they entered. However, students may elect to be governed by a later edition of the handbook (in its entirety). To do so, submit a request in writing to the Graduate Directors.

## About the Department of Communication

The Graduate Program in Communication offers its students a multi-disciplinary curriculum leading to the Master of Arts degree. The program is designed to prepare students for professional activities in all areas of Communication in which the Department has emphases (“human communication and social influence”, “mass communication”, and “Digital Media Strategies”), as well as for continued advanced graduate work on the Ph.D. level.

### *Departmental Emphases*

**Human Communication and Social Influence:** The Human Communication and Social Influence track fosters the advanced study of Rhetoric and Interpersonal Communication. Our faculty in Interpersonal Communication are interested in media portrayals of interpersonal relationships, particularly those involving older Americans. Our faculty in Rhetoric are interested in the intersection of public persuasion and issues of national identity. The Masters in Human Communication and Social Influence can be pursued as an end in itself and is also a stepping stone for pursuing the doctorate.

**Mass Communication:** The Mass Communication track fosters the advanced study of audience studies, health communication, international media, journalism, media and culture, media effects, and strategic communication. Our faculty examines elements of the mass media from both critical/cultural studies and social scientific vantage points, and study media in a variety of contexts across a number of nations. The M.A. in Mass Communication can be pursued as an end in itself and is also a stepping-stone for pursuing the doctorate.

Digital Media Strategies: The Digital Media Strategies track is designed to enhance the current expertise of professionals in Public Relations, Television and cross-platform Journalism, and other digital media-focused fields. The coursework is designed to create an advanced communications practitioner.

## **Location**

The Main Office of the Department of Communication is located on the 8th floor of Twenty- Five Park Place (25PP), a Georgia State University office building that overlooks Woodruff Park and is situated on Park Place between Auburn Ave. and Edgewood Ave. The main office is the location for departmental, business, technology support, scheduling (facilities and courses) and human resources operations. Faculty and staff mailboxes are also located on the 8th floor of 25PP.

### Physical Address:

Department of Communication  
Georgia State University  
P.O. Box 5060  
Atlanta, GA, 30302-5060

### Mailing Address for Federal Express, UPS, and Other Ground Courier Delivery:

Department of Communication  
25 Park Place NE, Suite 800  
Georgia State University  
Atlanta, GA 30303

### Department Phone Numbers

Main Office: 404-413-5600  
Fax: 404-413-5634 (Please address faxes to a specific person.)

## **Graduate Administrative Staff**

The following is a partial list of department faculty and staff directly connected to the operations of the department's graduate programs. For a full list of staff members, office locations, areas of responsibility and expertise, and biographies, visit <http://communication.gsu.edu/role/staff/>.

Main Office, 25 Park Place NE, Suite 800 Fax: 404-413-5634 (address fax to a specific person) P.O. Box 5060, Atlanta, GA, 30302-5060	404-413-5600
Dr. Greg Lisby, Professor and Department Chair	Suite 8818, 404-413-5639, <a href="mailto:glisby@gsu.edu">glisby@gsu.edu</a>
Dr. Jaye Atkinson, Associate Chair - Scheduling	Suite 809, 404-413-5668, <a href="mailto:jla@gsu.edu">jla@gsu.edu</a>
Ms. Tawanna Tookes, Graduate Programs Administrator	Suite 822, 404-413-5652, <a href="mailto:ttookes1@gsu.edu">ttookes1@gsu.edu</a>
Dr. Carrie Freeman, Graduate Director	Suite 939, 404-413-5736 <a href="mailto:cpfreeman@gsu.edu">cpfreeman@gsu.edu</a>
Ms. Donna Krache, Associate Director, Digital Media Strategies	Suite 936, 404-413-5599 <a href="mailto:dkrache@gsu.edu">dkrache@gsu.edu</a>
Ms. Marilyn Stiggers, Operations Manager	Suite 828, 404-413-5634, <a href="mailto:mstiggers@gsu.edu">mstiggers@gsu.edu</a>
Ms. Faith LeFebvre, PR Manager/Scheduler	Suite 816, 404-413-5669 <a href="mailto:tlefebvre@gsu.edu">tlefebvre@gsu.edu</a>
Ms. Kristen Brown, Digital Media Coordinator	Suite 823, 404-413-5643 <a href="mailto:kbrown186@gsu.edu">kbrown186@gsu.edu</a>

## Applying to the Department of Communication

The department accepts applications to the M. A. programs in fall semester and spring semester. Deadlines for fall admission are generally around March; and for spring in late October. See the [graduate studies site](#) for current deadlines.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the Georgia State University College of Arts & Sciences, the Department of Communication has the following requirements:

The Human Communication and Mass Communication Tracks are research-oriented and designed for students considering applying to a PhD program. See below for the Digital Media Strategies requirements for those who would like a professional focus.

### Human Communication/Mass Communication Tracks:

- 1) A statement of educational and career goals.
  - | Faculty reviewers are interested to see the student connect their own interests with a broad area of communication scholarship and articulate a connection to the specific strengths of the GSU faculty and research facilities.
  - | A person interested in graduate studies is passionate about the field, and so that point need not be extensively elaborated. The goals statement can also be used to draw reviewers' attention to areas of strength in the application that might otherwise be overlooked, or to explain apparent weaknesses that might impair the odds of acceptance.
  - | A statement of educational and career goals are reasons for pursuing the degree. The statement is generally 1 to 2 pages (single spaced) in essay form.
- 2) Two (2) letters of recommendation from individuals who can evaluate the applicant's past experiences and potential to do graduate work in communication.
- 3) Acceptable GRE scores on the verbal and quantitative sections. Currently the typical minimum verbal score is around **153**, with a minimum quantitative score of **144**, and a minimum combined total score of **300**. Our applicants typically average higher than these minimums.
- 4) An undergraduate cumulative **grade point average** of 3.0 or higher. (In cases where the cumulative GPA falls slightly below 3.0, but the GPA in the major or in the last two years is above 3.0, the applicant should indicate this in the personal statement.)
- 5) Official transcripts from all colleges/universities the applicant has attended.
- 6) Writing or creative samples are optional but strongly recommended. Instructions are provided

on the online application for submitting writing samples..

Because Communication is an interdisciplinary major, we accept students with undergraduate degrees in all areas. We do not require applicants to have an undergraduate major in Communication. However, if an accepted applicant lacks any background in the field, she or he may be required to take supplementary coursework so that more advanced studies can be undertaken.

A record of professional experience in communication is not required for program admission, and its absence does not undermine a case for admission, but if such a record exists, departmental reviewers endeavor to take it into account.

For international applicants, review the additional requirements needed for your application to be processed <https://iss.gsu.edu/future-students/admissions/>

### **Digital Media Strategies Track:**

- 1) An error-free, well-written statement of educational and career goals.
  - | Faculty reviewers are interested to see the student connect their own interests with a broad area of communication scholarship and articulate a connection to the specific strengths of the GSU faculty and research facilities.
  - | A person interested in graduate studies is passionate about the field, and so that point need not be extensively elaborated. The goals statement can also be used to draw reviewers' attention to areas of strength in the application that might otherwise be overlooked, or to explain apparent weaknesses that might impair the odds of acceptance.
- 2) Three (3) letters of recommendation from individuals who can evaluate the applicant's potential for advanced professional growth through graduate study in Communication.
- 3) Official transcripts from all colleges/universities the applicant has attended.
- 4) A minimum 3.0 overall undergraduate grade point average and a baccalaureate degree.
- 5) Portfolio/sample work which demonstrates evidence of professional competence. This can include writing samples, video samples, professional reels, or any other similar work.
- 6) \*GRE NOT required.

All materials should be submitted online at the College of Arts and Sciences website: <https://gradapply.gsu.edu/apply/>

## ***Non-Degree Seeking Students***

Non-degree applications are considered only in very limited circumstances, which usually fall into one of three categories:

- if the applicant has been authorized by another accredited graduate program to accept the courses as transfer credit;
- if the applicant can document that specific courses will fulfill a teaching certification requirement; or
- if an applicant will be in the Atlanta area for a specifically bounded amount of time that precludes them from pursuing a full degree at GSU.

Grades earned in approved non-degree courses are typically not credited to GSU degree programs unless a petition is approved by the Graduate Director and Chair. Non-degree applicants may take no more than three courses, which must be specified in the application statement.

## **Newly Admitted Students: First Steps**

Welcome to the Department of Communication!

### ***Connect with the university***

- Complete the [first steps for newly admitted students](#) on the College of Arts & Sciences webpage
- Register for College of Arts & Sciences [graduate orientation](#)
- Register, if applicable, for the [international student orientation](#)
- Be sure to check your GSU email address regularly throughout the summer.

## **Know your Graduate Administrators**

The Department of Communication has a designated-faculty Graduate Director for the M.A. program.

The Graduate Director is:

Dr. Carrie Freeman (Human Comm/Mass Comm). Best option to reach her is by email [cpfreeman@gsu.edu](mailto:cpfreeman@gsu.edu) Office: 939

The Associate Director for the Digital Media Strategies track is: Ms.

Donna Krache. Best option to reach her is by email: [dkrache@gsu.edu](mailto:dkrache@gsu.edu), Office: 936.

Ms. Tawanna Tookes is the Graduate Program Administrator. She can be reached at [ttookes1@gsu.edu](mailto:ttookes1@gsu.edu), 404-413-5652, Office 822.

## ***Get Advised***

All graduate students in the Department of Communication should seek advisement from the Graduate Directors in their first semester of attendance at Georgia State University.

## ***Register for COMM-Grads Listserv***

Comm–grads is an Internet mailing list for news and announcements regarding graduate study in the Department of Communication. Comm–grads is the primary way that the Graduate Director and the Chair communicate information to Communication graduate students, and so all graduate students must subscribe. You will be automatically subscribed to the listserv by the Graduate Administrator.

## ***Apply for a Graduate Assistantship***

Graduate students may apply for an assistantship by filling out an application available from the Administrative Specialist or online at the Department of Communication website.

If you are awarded a graduate assistantship, follow these steps:

- Sign contract in early June, emailed to your student email account and return materials to the department as directed
- Purchase mandatory health insurance or apply for waiver

## ***Consider Getting Involved in a Student Organization***

The Department has several student organizations that graduate students can join. These extracurricular opportunities can help you build community in the department as well as network for your future career.

Atlanta Association of Black Journalists Student Consortium  
Communication Graduate Student Association (CGSA) Public  
Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) Rhetoric Society  
of America

## ***Get Registered***

Newly admitted students should register for courses as soon as possible, and not later than August 1. This allows us to ensure that courses fill and that graduate teaching assistants will not be assigned sections that conflict with their own preferred courses. When choosing electives at this time, choose what interests you most. You may make changes to your schedule during orientation sessions in August, when graduate directors and area faculty will advise you and provide details regarding elective seminars. If there is a seminar you're particularly interested in, but the course is filled, feel free to contact the instructor to express your interest. The instructor may be willing to

sign a Special Authorization form to admit new students in specific cases.

To view course listings:

- Log in to your PAWS account [PAWS](#)
- Click “Enrollment (One Stop Shop)” tab
- Click “Lookup classes to add”—this will take you to GoSolar
- Select semester and department.
- To enroll, you will need the 5-digit CRN number for each class.

To register:

- Click on “Add/Drop/Withdraw Classes” and select term
- Enter CRN numbers for each class in the worksheet
- Graduate students on assistantship must register for a total of 18 credit hours every semester, including summer semesters, in order to maintain the assistantship.
- Graduate students on assistantship will register for Directed Research in Comm (COMM 8780) under the name of the Department Chair. You should be signed up for enough research hours to get you to the 18-hour minimum every semester. You can adjust the number of credit hours for Directed Research using the “Change Variable Hours” link in PAWS.

Holds on your account:

- Most holds can be resolved online by following the links.
- For issues that cannot be resolved online, you will need to visit the One Stop Shop on the first floor of Sparks Hall.

Add/drop period

- You can register through the first week of classes without penalty. At the close of the add/drop period you will be charged for the credit hours even if you withdraw from the class.
- If you have not paid for tuition hours and student fees by the end of the add/drop period, you will be automatically dropped from the class roster.

## M. A. Degree Requirements

The department offers three options for the Human Comm and Mass Comm Track: coursework-intensive, research thesis, and creative thesis. Degree requirements for each are as follows.

### Human Communication or Mass Communication Track (minimum of 36 hours required\*)

#### ***\*Coursework-intensive Option (min. 36-hour non-thesis program\*) (Mass Comm/ Human Comm)***

The Department's M.A. program includes a coursework-intensive option, where in lieu of a creative or research thesis, the student takes additional courses closely related to the area of interest and submits a research paper/project prior to graduation. The parameters of this paper/project are to be determined by the student and the graduate director. This option is not recommended for students who anticipate continuing their education in pursuit of the doctorate, but it may be a good choice for students who anticipate working in the media industries and want a final product that demonstrates expertise in their area of professional interest.

1. 36 hours of graduate coursework in communication and allied fields\*:
  - a. 6 hours of core courses: **COMM 6010** (*Issues and Perspectives in Communication*) and **COMM 6030** (*Research Methods in Communication*).
  - b. 24-30 additional hours in communication courses designated by the area of emphasis (Human Communication & Social Influence or Mass Communication).
    - All students with teaching responsibilities are required to take **COMM 8035** (*Communication Pedagogy*) prior to or during their first semester of teaching.
  - c. Optional 0–6 hours of allied coursework in another area of emphasis or outside the department as approved by the advisor or graduate director.
2. Responsible Conduct of Research Requirement (CITI).
3. Proficiency in an approved research skill or relevant foreign language. (Note: Credit hours earned to fulfill this requirement *may not be applied to the 36-hour coursework minimum* in #1 above.)\* **\*NOTE:** For students who elect to take a research skill/method course to meet the Foreign Language or Equivalent Research Skill Requirement, that additional course will make this a **39-hour degree program**
4. Submission of the final non-thesis research paper. In lieu of the thesis, research competence must be demonstrated by a research paper or project, to be submitted prior to graduation. This paper/project should be exemplary of the research and writing skills

the student acquired and refined during the degree program.

**Note:** The paper must be submitted to an advisor or the faculty who taught the course for evaluating, by no later than the first month of the semester you plan to graduate. *Students are encouraged to reach out to faculty at the beginning of the semester prior to graduation, giving them ample enough time to review and approve.* Then a clean copy goes to the Graduate Director with a signature cover page along with the version that was evaluated and final approval will be made by the Chair of the department.

Please follow *carefully* the instructions below in *The Guidelines for the Non-Thesis Research Paper* area.

### **\*Research or Creative Thesis Option (a minimum 36–hour program\*) (Mass Comm /Human Comm)**

The Creative Thesis is a non - traditional research project involving some theoretical and critical analysis. This option requires that the student conduct a creative project in some dimension of his or her area of study, under the direction of a committee chair and two committee members. This option is suggested for those students who may not be interested in pursuing a Ph.D. program. The creative thesis option is less frequently used than the research thesis option.

The Research Thesis is a traditional research project involving theoretical and critical analysis. This option requires that the student conduct a large-scale research project in some dimension of his or her area of study, under the direction of a committee chair and two committee members. This large-scale research project should take between one and two semesters of work. This option is suggested for those students wishing to pursue a Ph.D. program or students who will later conduct research projects outside of an academic setting

1. 30 - 33 hours of graduate coursework in communication and allied fields (note: 30 hours for Research Thesis track and 33 hours for Creative Research track:
  - d. 6 hours of core courses: 6 hours of core courses: **COMM 6010** (*Issues and Perspectives in Communication*) and **COMM 6030** (*Research Methods in Communication*).
  - e. 18–27 hours of courses designated by the area of emphasis)
    - All students with teaching responsibilities are required to take **COMM 8035** (*Communication Pedagogy*) prior to or during their first semester of teaching.
  - a. Optional 0–9 hours of courses outside area of emphasis or outside of the department

as approved by advisor.

2. Responsible Conduct of Research Requirement (CITI).

Proficiency in an approved research skill or relevant foreign language. (Note: Credit hours earned to fulfill this requirement *may not be applied to the 33-hour coursework minimum* in #1 above.\*). \*NOTE: For students who elect to take a research skill/method course to meet the Foreign Language or Equivalent Research Skill Requirement, that additional course will make this a **39-hour degree program**.

3. A successful Research or Creative Thesis prospectus defense.

4. At least 3 - 6 hours of COMM 6990 (*Thesis Research*) (note: 3 hours for Creative Thesis and 6 hours for Research Thesis).

5. A Research or Creative Thesis project.

6. A successful Research or Creative Thesis defense.

### Digital Media Strategies Track (a minimum of 36 hours required\*)

1. 36 hours of graduate coursework in communication:

- a. 9 hours of core courses: 3 hours of Comm 6009 (Advanced Digital Journalism); 3 hours of selected Conceptual Courses; and 3 hours of selected Operational Courses;
- b. 12 hours of selected Applied Media Skills Courses
- c. 9 hours of selected Media Studies Courses
- d. 6 hours of selected Capstone Digital Media Experiences courses

2. Submit a non-thesis research paper. In lieu of a thesis, it is required that research competence must be demonstrated for all MA students regardless of concentration. For *Digital Media Strategies* students, this on the basis of a research paper completed in one of the courses taken in the required Media Studies area of the Plan of Study. This paper should be exemplary of the research and writing skills the student acquired and refined during the degree program. The paper must be submitted by no later than the first month of the semester you plan to graduate to the faculty who will evaluate. ***Students are encouraged to reach out to faculty at the beginning of the semester prior to graduation, giving them ample time to review and approve.*** The faculty reviewer will pass on the acceptability of the paper, then student provides a clean copy to the Associate Graduate Director along with the signed form located in the back of this handbook, which serves as the signature page, and the version that was evaluated. Once the signature cover page is signed by the Associate Graduate Director, it goes to the Chair for approval and then to the Graduate Administrator, who will provide the Office of Graduate Studies a copy. Please Note: Videos or any other type presentations may not be used as a substitute for the non-thesis research paper criteria.

NOTE: Please follow *carefully* the instructions below in *The Guidelines for the Non-Thesis Research Paper* (Pay special attention to Timeline/Action section).

## ***Guidelines on the Non-Thesis Research Paper***

The 2020-2021 GSU graduate catalog (section #3110, College of Arts & Sciences, Degree Requirements, subtopic: Master of Arts/Master of Science) states --

“Non-thesis: A non-thesis option is available in some departments. In lieu of the thesis, research competence must be demonstrated on the basis of a research paper or a creative project. A committee of at least three members of the faculty, of which the student’s adviser will serve as chair, will pass on the acceptability of the paper or project. Two-thirds of the committee must indicate approval. This approval must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Services by the appropriate deadline (see: <https://cas.gsu.edu/current-grad-student-resources/> ).”

A coursework-intensive (non-thesis) degree option is available in the Department of Communication Master’s program. In lieu of the thesis, research competence must be demonstrated on the basis of a research paper. This paper should be exemplary of the research and writing skills the student acquired during the degree program. For students on the Digital Media Strategies track, this is on the basis of a research paper completed in one of the courses taken in the required Media Studies area of the Plan of Study. Those in the Mass Communication or Human Communication areas may use a research paper (with a fitting research assignment) from any graduate-level or cross-listed (B.A./M.A., M.A./Ph.D., B.A./M.A./Ph.D.) course in the Department of Communication. All such courses must be taught by a permanent member of the faculty who is either a tenured or tenure-track faculty member.

If a student wishes to use a paper assigned in one of their courses as their non-thesis research paper, the student must consult with their course instructor in advance of writing the paper to determine if the paper will satisfy the university’s requirement for this paper. Once that determination is made, the instructor will be able to focus special attention on the paper and provide the necessary feedback for the student to be able to expand upon the paper. The student will follow the instructor’s recommendations and re-submit the paper to the instructor prior to the pre-arranged deadline. Sufficient time must be given to allow the instructor to review the paper a second time.

In terms of content requirements, the research paper must meet the requirements set forth by the course instructor.

Acceptable papers must be approved by a 3-person committee, which will include:

1. the instructor of the course where the paper was originally written and revised;
2. the Graduate Director of your program area;
3. the Chair of the Department of Communication.

Each member of your research committee must sign off on the Approval Form for the non-thesis research paper (obtain the form in the Handbook). To satisfy the requirement, all components are due to the Graduate Administrator, Tawanna Tookes, no later than the end of the second month of the semester you plan to graduate (ex: end of October for Fall, or end of February for Spring). Therefore, it is the student's responsibility to plan ahead accordingly once you have applied for graduation. Failure to do so could result in a delay of the graduation date. *The safest plan is to finalize this research paper the semester before the semester you plan to graduate.*

### **COMM 6910 (Special Projects)**

Graduate students are eligible to enroll in supervised independent study for up to three (3) hours of course credit. A special project is arranged with a faculty member willing to supervise it, and whose research expertise is related to the subject matter of the course. A form is available in the 8th floor offices of the Department of Communication (25 Park Place NE) that details the assignments, meeting times, and grading criteria for such studies. This form is also located online at the department website. The negotiated workload for a three (3)-credit hour independent study must be fully equal to the workload normally expected in a standard 3-credit hour seminar. In addition, students must receive advance approval from the Department Chair for any independent study involving more than two (2) students on a related topic in the same academic year with the same instructor.

Students are expected to take the vast majority of their coursework in regularly scheduled classes. Normally, no more than two (2) independent studies will count toward the degree. Students must petition the Graduate Committee to count more than two.

Faculty are under no obligation to offer independent study access given their other responsibilities. Independent studies must be approved by the Department Chair, and they will not be approved if their content duplicates courses already in the catalog, whether those courses are offered at a time convenient to the student or not. Students interested in arranging an independent study should plan as far ahead of time as possible, and should include the Graduate Director in their planning to assure it will count toward degree requirements.

## **COMM 6970 (Internship)**

Graduate students are also eligible to enroll in internships for up to three (3) hours of course credit. An internship provides students with both observational and hands-on learning experiences that enhance their academic preparation and increase their ability to perform on a professional level after graduation. Students must have completed 12 hours of coursework in the department, have at least a 3.0 GPA, and have a full-time faculty member from their area of concentration sponsor them. Students should apply for an internship one (1) semester prior to the semester of actual enrollment. Internships must be approved by the Graduate Committee prior to show relevancy to the program.

Applications for internship credit are available the Communication Dept. main office.

## **Performance Expectations**

Students are expected to adhere to the progress guidelines and performance standards of both the College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Communication. This section of the handbook describes these milestones and guidelines.

## **Milestones: Expected Progress Guidelines for Human Communication and Mass Communication Track**

### **Checklist: Your First Semester in the Program**

By the end of your first semester in the program, you should have completed the following things:

1. Become familiar with the university and department policies and procedures.
2. Link your university email address to the email address that you check most frequently. All official university correspondence will come to your GSU address.
3. Meet with your Graduate Director at least once. This is your first-year advisor, until you choose a thesis chair/advisor and committee.
4. Choose an advisor for your thesis
5. If you are an M.A. student on teaching assistantship support, take COMM 8035 (Communication Pedagogy) prior to or during your first semester of teaching.

Details and specifications for each step are given below.

## Your First Semester in the Program: Details

- Become familiar with the university and department policies and procedures. It is the student's responsibility to be thoroughly familiar with the University's requirements, as published in the Graduate Bulletin of the College of Arts & Sciences and the requirements of the Department of Communication as set forth in this document.
- Create a plan of study with the Graduate Director or your advisor. When planning his/her program of study, the student should remember the following:
  - First, the Department offers a Master of Arts degree program in Communication. The student's overall program should reflect a balance of general Communication courses and courses in the student's area of emphasis (human communication and social influence, or mass communication).
  - Second, the student should attempt to balance more "practical" courses with more conceptual and research-based ones in his/her overall program of study. Questions regarding specific courses may be directed to your chosen advisor or the Graduate Directors.
  - Third, the student should try not to duplicate prior undergraduate experiences or limit the courses he/she takes to those offered by a few professors.

## Checklist: Your First Year in the Program

By the completion of your second semester / first year in the program, you should have completed the following things:

1. Meet with the Graduate Director and your advisor.
2. Keep your GPA above or at a 3.0.
3. Complete the federally mandated ethics requirement
4. Decide whether you are going to do the creative thesis, research thesis, or coursework intensive option.
5. Choose a thesis advisor for your thesis if you plan to do one.
6. In consultation with your advisor, select your thesis committee if you decide to do a thesis. (This step is not necessary if you choose to the coursework-intensive option, which requires a seminar paper, project, or portfolio instead of a thesis)
7. Complete the core requirements.
8. If applicable, apply for transfer credits.
9. Determine (with your advisor) if you are going to take the research skill class or take the foreign language exam. Decide if you want to change program emphases with the Department of Communication.

Details and specifications for each step are given below.

## Your First Year in the Program: Details

- Meet with your advisor to discuss your plan of study and progress.
- Keep your GPA at or above 3.0.

Students must earn a grade of *B or above in all required coursework*. If a grade lower than B is earned in a required course, it must be retaken (and grades earned in all attempts are calculated into the overall GSU grade point total). Given the plus-minus grading system in use at Georgia State University, a grade of “B-“ does not fulfill this requirement. No course in which a student receives a grade of “C-“ or below will credit to degree requirements.

In general, the College of Arts & Sciences and the Department of Communication expect students to maintain superior performance in coursework. The College requires that a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale be maintained and stipulates that a graduate student is subject to scholastic termination for failure to achieve a 3.0 cumulative grade point average by the end of the next twelve (12) semester hours of enrollment in letter-graded courses after the student’s GPA has fallen below a 3.0.

Graduate assistants must meet a higher standard: they are expected to maintain a GPA in graduate coursework that falls between 3.5 and 4.0. Graduate assistants will be notified at the year-end evaluation if their assistantship is put on probation or terminated, and the Chair and Graduate Director will advise the student how to remedy problems when they lead to probation.

- Complete the federally mandated ethics requirement
  1. 5-hour ethics seminar offered during the departmental orientation in August
  2. Responsible Research Conduct (RCR) module
    - Basic instructions for the test can be located here: <https://ursa.research.gsu.edu/rcr/>
    - After reading those instructions, create a free account at <http://www.citiprogram.org/>.
    - Then, log onto the training modules found there. Under “Select Curriculum,” there are five curricula available, but the only test required at this time is the “Responsible Conduct in Research” test for your area of research. (For all the other modules, respond with “no” or “not at this time.”) Select the RCR module, then choose your area of research (most likely “Social and Behavioral” for students interested in Human Communication and Social Influence, “Social and Behavioral” or “Arts and Humanities” for students interested in Human Communication and Social Influence).
    - Click “submit,” and begin the test.
    - Once you have completed the RCR test with a score of 80 or above, save a copy for yourself and give a copy to Ms. Tawanna Tookes).

- Decide if you are going to do the creative thesis, research thesis, or coursework intensive option.
- Choose an advisor for your thesis
- Meet as many faculty members in your area of interest as possible prior to choosing an advisor. Choose someone whose research is closely related to what you want to do and with whom you work well. The advisor must be a member of the Graduate Faculty. You and your thesis advisor must sign the Advisor Agreement Form (see Appendix B), which you will submit to the Graduate Administrator for your file.
- Select your thesis committee if you decide to do a thesis.  
The student should nominate (in consultation with the Research Thesis advisor) a minimum of two additional faculty members to serve on the thesis committee. Both must be members of the Department of Communication faculty. All thesis committee members must also be members of the Graduate Faculty and possess special expertise in the area of the student’s proposed research thesis topic or research method.
- Arranging a thesis committee is the student’s responsibility, and this is conducted with the advice of the student’s advisor. The advisor signs an “Authorization for COMM 6990” form, signifying his or her willingness to serve on the student’s committee. The form is then submitted to the Graduate Director. After the Graduate Director signs the form, the Graduate Administrator will authorize the student’s enrollment in COMM 6990. Students are strongly encouraged to choose a thesis advisor before taking their seventh course.
- Complete the core requirements: **COMM 6010 and COMM 6030 for Mass Comm and Human Comm tracks and Comm 6009 for Digital Media Strategies Track.** Required core courses for the M.A. are designed to give coherence to the multi-disciplinary offerings of the program by providing an overview of the field and by introducing concepts that are common and applicable to all the areas of emphasis.
- If you are an M. A. student on teaching assistantship support, take COMM 8035 (Communication Pedagogy).
- Apply for transfer credit if applicable.
  - A maximum of six (6) hours of graduate courses in Communication or in an area related to the student’s program of study from another accredited institution may be applied toward the M.A. degree.
  - Application for transfer must be made during the student’s first two (2) semesters at Georgia State University.

- Transfer credit is subject to evaluation and approval by the Department’s Graduate Committee, the chair, and the Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences.
  - To apply for transfer credit, the student should submit a request in writing to the Graduate Director, listing the student’s date of admission into the M.A. program, the specific courses taken that he/she wishes to count toward the M.A. degree with copies of appropriate syllabi and/or catalog copy, and a short justification as to why the request should be approved.
- Determine (with your advisor) if you are going to take the research skill course or learn a foreign language.

Some departments in the College of Arts and Sciences require students to demonstrate proficiency in either one or two foreign languages, in an alternative research skill, or in a combination of the two. An alternative research skill is a proficiency obtained in an adjunct area that is ordinarily not a degree requirement in the student’s degree program. All students pursuing the Master of Arts degree in the Department of Communication must demonstrate mastery of an appropriate research skill or pass a reading examination in a foreign language.

- Option 1: Foreign Language

- You may take a graduate foreign language reading course or take the Graduate Foreign Language Reading Examination.
- During the Fall and Spring semesters the Department of World Language and Cultures offers one of the following graduate foreign language reading courses:
  - German 7151: German for Reading
  - French 7151: French for Reading
  - Spanish 7151: Spanish for Reading

If you receive a B or higher in any of these courses you are exempt from taking the *Graduate Foreign Language Reading Proficiency Exam*. For more information on the graduate foreign language reading course, see <https://wlc.gsu.edu/home/graduate/graduate-world-language-requirement/>

- The *Graduate Foreign Language Reading Examination* is offered in the following languages:
  - French, German, & Spanish – offered Fall, Spring, & Summer semesters
  - Italian, Latin, Russian, & Portuguese – offered Fall & Spring semesters only
  - The examination will be given in 25 Park Place, Room 1934 during the following days & times:
    - 1st Friday of September for the fall semester from 2 to 4 p.m.
    - 1st Friday of February for the spring semester from 2 to 4 p.m.
    - 2nd Friday of June for the summer semester from 12 to 2 p.m.
  - For more details on the Graduate Foreign Language Reading Exam, visit this page: <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwmcl/8991.html>

- Option 2: Research Skill

- The research skill course must be selected in consultation with your advisor. Together, the two of you will decide upon a course that will impart to you a research skill/method specific to the completion of your thesis or portfolio. (This course might be offered in any department.) You CANNOT select your research skill course before you have determined who your advisor will be.
  - Once your advisor signs the “Research Skill Petition” form included in this handbook, submit this to the area Graduate Director for final approval. The purpose of the form is to assure that the method course chosen by a student will train her or him specifically for expected thesis research, for skill enhancement, or for expected job opportunities.
  - Research skills in the Department of Communication include computer proficiency, advanced qualitative research methods, advanced quantitative research methods, textual analysis, and advanced critical theory. The Ph.D. program in communication at Georgia State University regularly offers doctoral seminars in research methods. M.A. students may enroll for these courses and have them credit to the research skill requirement if they earn a letter grade of “B” or higher, assuming the advisor agrees.
  - Directed readings and/or independent studies may not be used to satisfy this requirement. Transfer credits may not be used to satisfy this requirement. To fulfill this requirement, the department requires that the student receive a letter grade of "B" or higher in the research methods course.
- Decide if you want to change program emphases within the department. Changing from the Master of Arts program in the Department of Communication to another program in another department or from another program to the Department of Communication requires application through the admissions process for the new program and adherence to published application deadlines.

Please note: Once you are admitted into the master’s in Communication Mass Comm/Human Comm or Digital Media Strategies track, you cannot switch programs, because the admission criteria for each are different.

## Checklist: Your Second Year (Research Thesis Option)

1. Complete the remaining credit hours required for your degree.
2. Successfully defend thesis prospectus.
3. Enroll in COMM 6990 (*Thesis Hours*).
4. Correctly format your thesis.
5. Obtain a copy of the Guide for Preparing Theses.
6. Apply for Graduation and pay graduation fee.
7. Successfully defend thesis.

8. Submit “Completed Defense” form.
9. Submit thesis as PDF file.

Details and specifications for each step are given below.

## **Your Second Year (Research Thesis Option): Details**

- Complete eight elective courses relevant to your track.
- Successfully defend thesis prospectus.
- The first step of thesis research is to develop a complete prospectus that the student will orally defend before his/her thesis committee. The prospectus, to be developed in consultation with the thesis advisor and committee members, should include the following:
  1. Abstract. A brief summary (usually limited to half a page) of the significance of the project, its research question/hypotheses, and the method planned to conduct the research.
  2. Significance of the Project. Justification of why the project will extend the current body of knowledge in an important way.
  3. Literature and Resource Review. A summary of the findings of relevant research in the proposed area of study.
  4. Research Question/Hypotheses. The general or specific questions that will be answered by the research project.
  5. Method. The specific procedures planned for conducting the research. Any use of students or others as research subjects (such as surveys, focus groups, or experiments) must be described in detail and must be accompanied by advance permissions from the GSU Research Office.
  6. Description of how final project will be organized (e.g., chapter divisions).

There are no firm requirements governing the length or specific form of the prospectus. A large portion of the original text produced for a prospectus typically ends up as a part of the fuller thesis text.

- Enroll in COMM 6990.

The student must take the appropriate coursework to prepare him/her for thesis research. If you have not taken the appropriate coursework, you will not be authorized for this class. You must complete this form as well as complete the advisor form.
- Correctly format your thesis.
  - Obtain a copy of the Guide for Preparing Theses.
  - The appropriate style requirements must conform to a standard bibliographic form, such as Turabian, MLA, APA, etc. The student’s committee must approve the specific style manual as appropriate for the thesis project. Deviations from this requirement must be approved in writing by the Graduate Director.

- Apply for Graduation, pay graduation fee and be aware of the College of Arts and Sciences [deadlines](#). Two (2) semesters before a student plans to have successfully completed the thesis he/she should file for graduation with the Graduation Office.
- Successfully defend thesis.  
A student must provide his/her thesis committee members with the completed Research Thesis at least two (2) weeks before the oral presentation and defense date. The presentation must be at a mutually agreeable time and should be scheduled no later than the midterm point of the semester the student expects to graduate. All members of the committee must attend. Ideally, all members will be physically present, but a conference or Skype call for one committee member may be acceptable (pending the approval of the committee chair) if absolutely necessary. The date, time, and location should be publicized and the meeting should be open to other interested faculty, students, and staff. At the meeting, the student will present the thesis and answer questions about it. At the conclusion of the presentation, the committee will deliberate in closed session.  
Unanimous agreement of the Department of Communication faculty serving on the committee is required to certify that the student successfully defended the thesis.

When the signed copy of the student's thesis title page is presented to the Department's Chair and a correctly formatted final copy of the approved thesis is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies as a PDF file, the department chair will submit a Change of Grade form, which will allow the student to graduate. Explicit guidelines for the thesis ("[Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines](#)") are available from the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Final Research Thesis Document form (toward the end of this handbook), once signed by the committee, must go to the Graduate Administrator.

- Submit thesis as PDF file to [ScholarWorks](#).
- If you want to embargo your thesis or creative projects, please select one of the following two options and complete the appropriate paperwork.
  - The first option is a closed thesis, which makes the document immediately available, but limited to the Georgia State community. This option is a permanent restriction, unless the student later requests to release the restriction.
  - The second option is a complete embargo of the document, which makes the document unavailable for download to anyone. The complete embargo is time limited, with options for six months, one year and two years. Once the time limit is reached, the document is automatically released, unless the student submits a request for an extension.
  - If you wish to restrict access to your thesis using one of the embargo options described above, you will need to submit an [embargo request form](#) prior to

uploading your dissertation to the Scholarworks ETD. The Office of Graduate Services will ensure that the request also has the support of your Graduate Director, as well as the college's Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.

## **Checklist: Your Second Year (Creative Thesis Option)**

1. Complete eight elective courses relevant to your sequence plus research tools.
2. Successfully defend thesis prospectus.
3. Enroll in COMM 6990.
4. Correctly format your thesis.
5. Obtain a copy of the College of Arts and Sciences [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#).
6. Apply for graduation and pay graduation fee.
7. Successfully defend thesis.
8. Submit "Completed Defense" form.
9. Submit thesis as PDF file.

Details and specifications for each step are given below.

## **Your Second Year (Creative Thesis Option): Details**

- Complete the remaining coursework required for your degree program.
- Successfully defend your thesis prospectus.  
The first step of the creative thesis is to develop a complete prospectus that the student will orally defend before his/her thesis committee. The prospectus is to be developed in consultation with the thesis advisor and committee members. There are no firm requirements governing the length or specific form of the prospectus.
- Enroll in COMM 6990 (Thesis Research)  
Students must take the appropriate coursework to prepare him/her for thesis research. If you have not taken the appropriate coursework, you will not be authorized to enroll in this. Additionally, if you have not completed the Responsible Conduct in Research requirement, you will not be authorized to enroll in this.

The Creative Thesis is the required exit project for students seeking the Creative Thesis option for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of Communication. The Creative Thesis is a creative/professional project that carries three (3) hours of course credit. The student will continue to receive a grade of "IP" (in progress) in COMM 6990 until the Creative Thesis project is approved.

Students must register for at least one (1) credit hour of thesis research each semester the student requires access to university facilities, equipment, resources, or faculty. Please keep in mind the Continuous Enrollment Policy.

- Correctly format your thesis.

The appropriate style requirements must conform to a standard bibliographic form, such as Turabian, MLA, APA, etc. The student's committee must approve the specific style manual as appropriate for the thesis project. Deviations from this requirement must be approved in writing by the Graduate Directors.

- Apply for Graduation and pay the graduation fee.

Two (2) semesters before a student plans to have successfully completed the thesis, he/she should file for graduation with the Graduation Office. Students should consult the College of Arts & Sciences graduation webpage <https://cas.gsu.edu/graduate-services/student-resources/#graduation> (and be aware of the deadline calendar posted there).

- Successfully defend creative thesis.

A student must provide his/her thesis committee members with the completed Research Thesis at least two (2) weeks before the oral presentation and defense date. The presentation must be at a mutually agreeable time and should be scheduled no later than the midterm point of the semester the student expects to graduate. All members of the committee must attend. Ideally, all members will be physically present, but a conference or Skype call for one committee member may be acceptable (pending the approval of the committee chair) if absolutely necessary. The date, time, and location should be publicized and the meeting should be open to other interested faculty, students, and staff. At the meeting, the student will present the thesis and answer questions about it. At the conclusion of the presentation, the committee will deliberate in closed session.

Unanimous agreement of the Department of Communication faculty serving on the committee is required to certify that the student successfully defended the thesis.

When the signed copy of the student's thesis title page is signed by the committee then presented to the Department's Chair, the signature/title page is then submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies as a Milestone PDF file by the Graduate Administrator.

## **Checklist: Your Second Year (Coursework Intensive Option)**

1. Complete foreign language (do not wait until your last semester) or alternative research method requirement.
2. Complete ten elective courses relevant to your track.
3. Complete two additional 3-credit hour graduate seminars.

4. Submit Application for Graduation and graduation fee to Student Accounts, Room 101 Sparks Hall, two (2) semesters before graduation (obtain from Graduation Office, Room 231 Sparks Hall).
5. Provide area Graduate Director with approved signed copy of the cover page of non-thesis research paper and a clean copy of the paper. Note: Please see the *Guidelines for Non-Thesis Research Paper* for detailed instructions.

Details and specifications for each step are given below.

## Your Second Year (Coursework Intensive Option): Details

- Complete foreign language or alternative research method requirement.
- Complete ten (10) elective courses relevant to your area of emphasis.
- Complete two (2) additional 3-credit hour graduate seminars relevant to your area of emphasis. You must take six (6) additional credit hours to substitute for the six-credit hour thesis project required by the other two degree options. These two additional 3-credit hour graduate seminars must be approved by the relevant area's graduate director.
- Satisfy the Non-Thesis Research Paper Requirement. (refer to the "Guidelines for the Non-Thesis Research Paper" in this Handbook for more details)
  - Provide your area's graduate director with your research paper and the appropriate signature page by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the semester you plan to graduate. Failure to adhere to this hard deadline could result in your graduation being delayed.
- Submit an application for graduation and graduation fee, 2 semesters in advance.

Students must apply for graduation two (2) semesters in advance of their expected date of graduation. Complete the application form by logging into [PAWS](#). To access the Graduation Application, select the Enrollment tab. The Application for Graduation link is located under the Updates/Requests Student Record section of the page. Once the link is selected, step-by-step instructions will be provided regarding the application process.

Submit the form online with the graduation fee.

The graduation fee is \$50 for all graduate and undergraduate students. Students must apply for each degree/major earned and pay a separate fee. The fee covers the cost of printing, packaging and mailing your diploma.

If a student is unable to finish by the semester originally specified, it is the student's responsibility to change the date by contacting the Graduation Office. Once a student has applied to graduate, an audit of the student's records will be completed by the Office of

Graduate Studies of the College of Arts & Sciences. It is the student's responsibility to discuss any discrepancies with their Graduate Director.

## **Milestones: Expected Progress Guidelines for Digital Media Strategies Track**

By the end of your first semester in the program, you should have completed the following things:

1. Become familiar with the university and department policies and procedures.
2. Link your university email address to the email address that you check most frequently. All official university correspondence will come to your GSU address.
3. Meet with your Graduate Director or advisor at least once.

Details and specifications for each step are given below.

### **Your First Semester in the Program: DMS Details**

- Become familiar with the university and department policies and procedures. It is the student's responsibility to be thoroughly familiar with the University's requirements, as published in the Graduate Bulletin of the College of Arts & Sciences and the requirements of the Department of Communication as set forth in this document.
- Create a plan of study with the Associate Graduate Director or your advisor. When planning his/her program of study, the student should remember the following:
  - First, the Department offers a Master of Arts degree program in Communication. The student's overall program should reflect a balance of general Communication courses and courses in the student's area of emphasis (Digital Media Strategies).
  - Second, the student should attempt to balance more "practical" courses with more conceptual and research-based ones in his/her overall program of study.
  - Third, the student should try not to duplicate prior undergraduate experiences or limit the courses he/she takes to those offered by a few professors.

### **Your First Year in the Program: DMS Details**

- Meet with your advisor or associate graduate director to discuss your plan of study and progress.

- Complete 9 hours of required core courses (3 hours of **Comm 6009: Digital Journalism**; 3 hours of selected **Conceptual Courses**; 3 hours of selected **Operational Courses**)
- Complete 9 – 12 hours of selected Applied Media Skills or Media Studies courses relevant to your area of emphasis
- Keep your GPA at or above 3.0.

Students must earn a grade of B or above in all required coursework, including in their advanced methods course/s. If a grade lower than B is earned in a required course, it must be retaken (and grades earned in all attempts are calculated into the overall GSU grade point total). Given the plus-minus grading system in use at Georgia State University, a grade of “B-” does not fulfill this requirement. No course in which a student receives a grade of “C-” or below will credit to degree requirements.

In general, the College of Arts & Sciences and the Department of Communication expect students to maintain superior performance in coursework. The College requires that a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale be maintained and stipulates that a graduate student is subject to scholastic termination for failure to achieve a 3.0 cumulative grade point average by the end of the next twelve (12) semester hours of enrollment in letter-graded courses after the student’s GPA has fallen below a 3.0.

Graduate assistants must meet a higher standard: They are expected to maintain a GPA in graduate coursework that falls between 3.5 and 4.0. Graduate assistants will be notified at the year-end evaluation if their assistantship is put on probation or terminated, and the Chair and Graduate Director will advise the student how to remedy problems when they lead to probation.

## Your Second Year: DMS Details

- Complete 9 – 12 hours of selected Applied Media Skills or Media Studies Courses relevant to your area of emphasis.
- Satisfy the Non-Thesis Research Paper Requirement. (refer to Plan of Study for Digital Media Strategies and the “Guidelines for the Non-Thesis Research Paper” in this Handbook for more details)
  - Provide your area’s graduate director with your research paper and the appropriate signature page by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the semester you plan to graduate. Failure to adhere to this hard deadline could result in your graduation being delayed.
- Complete two (2) Capstone Digital Media Experience courses, relevant to your area of emphasis. These two additional must be approved by the relevant area’s graduate director or advisor.
- Submit an application for graduation and graduation fee, two (2) semesters in advance.

Students must apply for graduation two (2) semesters in advance of their expected date of graduation. Complete the application form by logging into [PAWS](#). To access the Graduation Application, select the Enrollment tab. The Application for Graduation link is located under the Updates/Requests Student Record section of the page. Once the link is selected, step-by-step instructions will be provided regarding the application process. Submit the form online with the graduation fee.

The graduation fee is \$50 for all graduate and undergraduate students. Students must apply for each degree/major earned and pay a separate fee. The fee covers the cost of printing, packaging and mailing your diploma.

If a student is unable to finish by the semester originally specified, it is the student's responsibility to change the date by contacting the Graduation Office. Once a student has applied to graduate, an audit of the student's records will be completed by the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts & Sciences. It is the student's responsibility to discuss any discrepancies with their Graduate Director.

## **Maintaining Your Graduate Student Status**

It is the responsibility of students enrolled in the M.A. program to keep themselves informed of rules and policies governing their program of study. Upon first registration, the university assigns each student an official email address, to which important information about a student's status is regularly sent. Students are responsible for regularly accessing that email account, thereby staying aware of important policy announcements.

### Residency Requirement

At least one-half of all coursework-connected credit hours must be completed in residence.

### Grade Point Average

Students must earn a grade of B or above in all required coursework, including in their advanced methods course/s. If a grade lower than B is earned in a required course, it must be retaken (and grades earned in all attempts are calculated into the overall GSU grade point total). Given the plus-minus grading system in use at Georgia State University, a grade of "B-" does not fulfill this requirement.

### Continuous Enrollment Requirement

A student who has not registered for three (3) consecutive semesters is considered inactive and must apply for reentry. Students must take a minimum of six (6) hours in any consecutive three semester period, and not all of the six can be in the summer session.

#### Program Leave of Absence

Students seeking an Academic Program Leave for one to three semesters must formally apply through the Graduate Office. The seven (7) year deadline for completing all degree requirements will nevertheless remain the same. Before reentry will be approved, the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts & Sciences will seek approval from the student's area graduate director and department chair.

#### Time Limits

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed within seven (7) years of the student's first semester in the program. In other words, only credits earned within seven (7) years of the semester in which the degree is to be awarded will count toward the degree. Students should be aware of and plan their course of study in accord with the time limitations on completion of various aspects of the program.

Time limit extension: While students may request an extension from the Graduate Petitions Committee of the College of Arts & Sciences, such extensions are only granted under demonstrably exceptional circumstances. Students should therefore be mindful of their timely progress through the program.

For consideration of an extension beyond the published time limit for degree programs, students must petition through the Graduate Office, College of Arts and Sciences. Upon receipt of the petition, both the Graduate Director and the Chair are asked to make recommendations for or against the proposed extensions. Factors considered in those recommendations include: successful defense of the Research Thesis/Creative Thesis prospectus, demonstrated progress toward the completion of the exit project, level of support from the student's committee advisor, relevance of courses taken beyond the term limit to the student's exit project, and if a previous extension has been granted. Students should provide a convincing argument that includes a discussion of these factors. The Graduate Director and Chair may require a student to retake core classes (or classes that are particularly crucial to the student's exit project) if the student took those classes more than seven (7) years before the semester of petition and/or if the content of those courses has changed significantly.

Students should also be made aware that the Graduate Council of the Arts and Sciences, the body who ultimately grants or denies petitions, only meets once each semester.

#### Policy on Academic Honesty

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The University assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the

products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for practices that are fair require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable conduct in the course of their academic work.

The examples and definitions below are intended to clarify the standards by which honesty and academically dishonest conduct are judged. The list is merely illustrative of the kinds of infractions that may occur, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, the definitions suggest conditions under which unacceptable behavior of the indicated types normally occurs; however, there may be unusual cases that fall outside these conditions that will also be judged unacceptable by the academic community. If a student has any doubts about what constitutes proper ethical conduct, he or she should err on the side of caution, citing original sources even in apparently ambiguous situations, and seeking clarification from the course instructor. These standards govern all work submitted in the course of degree program work; for instance, students should avoid plagiarizing material even when they are using it for ungraded classroom presentations or handouts.

#### Definitions and Examples

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Furthermore, plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own.

Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects prepared by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the instructor. It is, for instance, plagiarism when an article abstract is copied without attribution into an annotated bibliography, or when images are copied into presentations without providing appropriate credit. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. The use of text copied from the World Wide Web, without specific attribution, is unethical and constitutes plagiarism. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly, or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

**Cheating on Examinations:** Cheating on exams involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, texts, or "crib sheets" during an examination (unless specifically approved by the instructor). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one's own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the instructor.

**Unauthorized Collaboration:** Submission for academic credit of any work product, or part thereof, represented as being one's own effort that has been developed in substantial

collaboration with or without assistance from another person or source is a violation of academic honesty. Collaborative work specifically authorized by an instructor is allowed.

**Falsification:** It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise or assignment (for example, false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of the results of experiment or of computer data).

**Multiple Submissions:** It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the instructor(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however, the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

### **Obligation to Report Suspected Violations**

Members of the academic community - students, faculty, and staff - are expected to report violations of these standards of academic conduct to the appropriate authorities. The procedures for such reporting are on file in the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts Sciences and in the Office of the Dean of Students.

## **Departmental Matters**

The graduate administrator is responsible for maintaining records relating to students' progress in the program and meeting milestones. This database contains dates when students met milestones, name of advisors, names of chairs and committee members, etc.

Each time milestones are met (thesis committee formed, thesis proposal accepted, non thesis research paper approved, etc), the student will provide the graduate administrator with the appropriate signature page, which then will be documented officially.

### **Faculty Advisor**

Graduate Directors and faculty advisors provide academic, professional and practical guidance to students during their graduate studies in the program. Students are expected to meet with their graduate director or advisor during their first semester to start the plan of study. Students are also expected to meet periodically throughout their tenure in the program for updates.

### **Changing Concentrations**

Students are accepted into one of the three tracks of the MA program (Human Comm, Mass Comm, or Digital Media Strategies). **Please note:** Once you are admitted into the master's in Communication Mass Comm/Human Comm or Digital Media Strategies track, you cannot switch programs, because the admissions criteria for each are different.

## Being a Graduate Teaching/Research/Lab Assistant

The Department of Communication has three options for assistantships:

- graduate laboratory assistantships (GLAs), who assist the department in carrying out its teaching responsibilities under the direct supervision of a faculty member;
- graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs), who have the independent responsibility for overseeing and teaching an undergraduate course; and
- graduate research assistantships (GRAs), who assist individual faculty members in their research endeavors.

In most cases students will have a combined assignment as GTA/GLA or as GRA/GLA.

**Assistantship Time Period:** Assistantships are normally awarded in the late spring, and the assistantship term is annual (i.e., running from July 1 – June 30) after the first year (first year student assistantships do not begin until the start of the first fall semester in which a student has enrolled. Students receiving support are *required to enroll in 18 credit hours* of coursework and/or COMM 8780 (Directed Research) in the summer sessions connecting their years of funding; Directed Research hours do not require a student to be in local residence.

**Graduate Assistant Absences:** Graduate Program Administrator and faculty supervisor must approve all absences from GTA, GLA, or GRA assignments, in advance.

**Assistantship Renewal:** Assistantships generally last for two (2) semesters unless problems arise with student performance, and are eligible for renewal for a second year pending satisfactory performance. To renew, continuing students must fill out an Assistantship Application Form and submit that to Ms. Tawanna Tookes in January of the semester prior to renewal.

**Assistantship Benefits:** Students receive a full tuition waiver, a stipend, and a 10% discount at the university bookstore. Assistantships do not cover the cost of student fees.

**Assistantship Requirements:** If awarded a graduate assistantship, students must be enrolled for a ***total of eighteen (18) hours each semester (fall, spring, and summer) for the duration of the assistantship.*** As part of those eighteen (18) hours, students must register for at least three courses in spring and fall that have announced days and times in the course schedule. Students generally register for their remaining hours by signing up for the variable credit Directed Research course

under the name of the research professor to whom they have been assigned (COMM 8780). Students receive a pass/fail grade in Directed Research based on their performance as assistants. These hours of Directed Research (COMM 8780) do not count toward the requirements for the master's degree. For example, in the fall or spring a typical full-time student with an assistantship would take 3 classes at 3 hours each plus 9 hours of COMM 8780. Graduate students on assistantships must receive permission from their area's graduate director to take fewer than three courses that have announced days and times in the course schedule in their fall and spring semesters, with the exception of Comm 6160 (*Special Project*), Comm 6990 (*Thesis Research*), and Comm 6970 (*Internship*), which are acceptable despite not having announced days and times.

**Assistantship Evaluation, Renewal, and Probation:** At the end of the academic year, each graduate assistant participates in an individual evaluation with the chair and the appropriate area graduate director. In this evaluation students receive feedback on their work as a teaching/research/lab assistant. The student, chair, and area graduate director discuss accomplishments, challenges, and plans for improvement. Students will be notified at the year-end evaluation if their assistantship is put on probation or terminated, and the chair and graduate director will advise the student how to remedy problems when they lead to probation.

Generally, a graduate assistant should strive to:

- 1) consistently receive a grade of satisfactory for their performance in COMM 8780 (Directed Research) if they are assigned research and/or lab duties;
- 2) maintain a grade point average in graduate coursework of 3.5 or above
- 3) if assigned teaching duties, submit all student grades correctly and completely, prior to leaving campus at the end of any given semester. Failure to do so creates severe difficulties for undergraduate students including the suspension of financial aid, and will result in the teaching assistant's graduate assistantship being immediately put on probation.

At any time, a student's assistantship may be placed on probation or be terminated altogether based on a failure to perform assigned duties. Years in which funding has been denied because of the outcome of a probation situation count against one's years of total eligibility.

That is, students are eligible for funding for two (2) years contingent upon performance; students who lose funding because of performance may or may not receive a total of two (2) years of support.

### **Annual evaluations for Graduate Assistants**

All graduate assistants (GLAs, GRAs, and GTAs) will meet in the spring semester with their area's Graduate Director and Associate Chair to discuss the student's performance the role as graduate assistant. The Graduate Coordinator will schedule these meetings. In the case of academic probation and/or the probation or termination of a student's graduate assistantship, the Associate Chair and Graduate Director will advise the student how to remedy problems and restore good standing.

In addition, all M.A. students currently active in the program will participate in a yearly survey and

submit a .PDF of their current C.V. to the Graduate Administrator to be kept on file in the department. The brief survey is a (mandatory) opportunity for students to update the department on their academic progress, professional activity, and, if applicable, graduate assistantship experience and preferences regarding teaching, lab, and research assignments. This survey is an invaluable resource in the department's ongoing efforts to communicate effectively with current students as well as to guide students' academic and professional development.

Based on departmental grade reports, faculty input, and student C.V.s and surveys, the Associate Chairs and Graduate Director may schedule a meeting with any M. A. student who they believe would benefit from additional academic encouragement.

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## Appendix A: Checklists

### Checklist: Your First Semester in the Program

By the completion of your first semester in the program, you should have completed the following things:

- Become familiar with the university and department policies and procedures.
- Meet with your advisor.
- Create a plan of study with your advisor.
- If you are an M. A. student on teaching assistantship support, take COMM 8035 (*Communication Pedagogy*).

### Checklist: Your First Year in the Program

- Keep your GPA above or at a 3.0.
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research requirement (5-hour orientation seminar and online test).
- Complete the eight-hour Human Subjects presentation and the Responsible Research Conduct module.
- Decide if you are going to do the creative thesis, research thesis, or coursework intensive option.
- Select a thesis advisor if you decide to do a thesis.
- Select your thesis committee if you decide to do a thesis.
- Complete the core requirements.
- Link your university email address to the email address that you check most frequently.
- If applicable, apply for transfer credits.
- Determine (with your advisor) if you are going to take the research skill class or learn a foreign language.
- Decide if you want to change program emphases with the Department of Communication.

### Checklist: Your Second Year (Research Thesis Option)

- Complete the remaining credit hours required for your degree.
- Complete foreign language or equivalent research method if not done already.
- Successfully defend thesis prospectus.
- Enroll in COMM 6990
- Correctly format your thesis.
- Obtain a copy of the [Guide for Preparing Theses](#).
- Submit Application for Graduation and graduation fee to Student Accounts, Room 101 Sparks Hall, **two (2) semesters before graduation** (obtain from Graduation Office,

- Room 231 Sparks Hall).
- Successfully defend thesis.
- Submit “Completed Defense” form.
- Submit thesis as PDF file.

#### Checklist: Your Second Year (Creative Thesis Option)

- Complete eight (8) elective courses relevant to your sequence.
- Complete foreign language or equivalent research method if not done already.
- Successfully defend thesis prospectus.
- Enroll in COMM 6990
- Correctly format your thesis.
- Obtain a copy of the [Guide for Preparing Theses](#).
- Submit Application for Graduation and graduation fee to Student Accounts, Room 101 Sparks Hall, **two (2) semesters before graduation** (obtain from Graduation Office, Room 231 Sparks Hall).
- Successfully defend thesis.
- Submit “Completed Defense” form.
- Submit thesis as PDF file.

#### Checklist: Your Second Year (Coursework-intensive Option)

- Complete foreign language or equivalent research method if not done already.
- Complete ten (10) elective courses relevant to your track.
- Complete two (2) additional graduate seminars totaling six (6) hours
- Submit Application for Graduation and graduation fee to Student Accounts, Room 101 Sparks Hall, **two (2) semesters before graduation** (obtain from Graduation Office, Room 231 Sparks Hall).
- Provide Graduate Director with a copy of the approved non-thesis research paper and cover sheet for final approval.

#### Checklist: Your Second Year (Digital Media Strategies)

- Complete 9 – 12 hours of selected Applied Media Skills or Media Studies Courses relevant to your area of emphasis.
- Complete two (2) Capstone Digital Media Experience courses, relevant to your area of emphasis. These two additional must be approved by the relevant area’s graduate director or advisor.
- Submit an application for graduation and graduation fee, 2 semesters in advance.
- Provide Associate Director with copy of approved non-thesis research paper and cover sheet for final approval.

Students must apply for graduation two (2) semesters in advance of their expected date of graduation. Complete the application form by logging into [PAWS](#). To access the Graduation Application, select the Enrollment tab. The Application for Graduation link is located under the Updates/Requests Student Record section of the page. Once the link is selected, step-by-step instructions will be provided regarding the application process. Submit the form online with the graduation fee

## Appendix B:

### GRADUATE FACULTY

This list may assist you in getting to know faculty and in selecting committee members. Remember that only Tenure Track faculty may serve as your Committee Chair / Advisor (i.e. Assistant, Associate, or Full Professors). Please confirm a faculty member's eligibility to serve as your Chair with the Graduate Administrator, Graduate Director, or Department Chair. Committees may be comprised of one Lecturer.

**Atkinson, Jaye L.** (Ph.D., University of Kansas, 1996). **Associate Professor.** Areas of research include interpersonal communication, age stereotypes, patronizing speech, communicating age, media portrayals of older adults, and intersections of age, race/ethnicity, health and communication. (Methodology: quantitative and qualitative). (Media & Society track)

**Barouch, Timothy** (J.D. Northwestern University, 1999; Ph.D., Northwestern University, 2014). **Assistant Professor.** Areas of research include public argument, rhetorical studies, legal communication. (Methodology: qualitative, rhetorical analysis) (Rhetoric & Politics track)

**Barthlow, Douglas** (Ph.D., University of Georgia, 1993). **Principal Senior Lecturer.** Areas of research include telecommunications, television and radio news production, sports journalism.

**Bellon, Joe** (Ph.D., University of Georgia, 1999). **Senior Lecturer.** Areas of research include communication pedagogy, debate practice and pedagogy, public argumentation, political campaign communication, popular culture, extremist discourse.

**Bloom, Mia** (Ph.D. Columbia University, 1999). **Professor.** Areas of research include ethnic conflict, suicide terrorism, women and children in terrorist groups. (Methodology: qualitative, political process tracing, interviewing, digital ethnography) (Media & Society track)

**Cheshier, David** (Ph.D., University of Iowa, 1996). **Associate Professor.** Areas of research include rhetorical theory and criticism, argumentation and public deliberation, contemporary social theory, especially as relating to populism, affect, and the creative industries. (Methodology: rhetorical and argumentation analysis) (Rhetoric & Politics track)

**Duong, Hue** (Ph.D., University of Georgia, 2020). **Assistant Professor.** Areas of research include advancing the understanding of how social norms are formed and, in turn, influence health behaviors; examining the influence of interpersonal and mass communication on health and development issues; and researching strategic communication in organizations to leverage healthy social changes. (Methodology: quantitative (experiment and survey) and qualitative (in-depth interview and focus group)). **(Media & Society)**

**Freeman, Carrie P.** (Ph.D., University of Oregon, 2008). **Associate Professor.** Areas of research include media ethics and social values, social movement advocacy strategies, and media representations of environmental and animal rights issues. (Methodology: critical/cultural studies, qualitative). (Media & Society track)

**Fujioka, Yuki** (Ph.D., Washington State University, 2000). **Associate Professor.** Areas of research include media stereotypes, minorities and media, and communication and health. (Methodology:

quantitative). (Media & Society track)

**Grindstaff, Davin** (Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University, 2000). **Senior Lecturer.** Areas of research include rhetorical studies, identity construction, and queer theory.

**Hoffner, Cynthia** (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, 1988). **Professor.** Areas of research include media effects / media psychology, media and mental health, and emotional responses to media. (Methodology: quantitative, social science) (Media & Society track)

**Donna Krache** (M.Ed., University of New Orleans, 1982). **Lecturer.** Areas of research include broadcast news, digital journalism, and media literacy.

**Lemieux, Anthony** (Ph.D., University of Connecticut, 2006). **Professor.** Areas of research include the social psychology of extremism; health communication; music, identity, and influence; intergroup relations; and research methods (Methodology: experimental, survey, mixed methods; interdisciplinary; augmented/virtual reality). (Media & Society track)

**Lisby, Gregory C.** (Ph.D., University of Tennessee, 1988). **Professor.** Areas of research include communication law, legal history, censorship, ethics, and communication technologies. (Methodology: legal, historical, quantitative, experimental, survey, qualitative) (Media & Society track)

**Meyers, Marian J.** (Ph.D., University of Iowa, 1989). **Professor.** Areas of research include feminist media studies, journalism, neoliberalism and the media, critical/cultural studies, and media representations involving gender, race, and class (Methodology: critical/cultural studies, qualitative). (Media & Society track)

**Pattillo, Linda** (M.A., Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, 1981). **Lecturer.** Areas of research include television news reporting, digital journalism, multimedia reporting, and conflict reporting.

**Ramzy, Rasha** (Ph.D., Georgia State University, 2006). **Senior Lecturer.** Areas of research include pedagogy, communication and diversity, intercultural communication, identity, and representation.

**Romski, Mary Ann** (Ph.D., University of Kansas, 1981). **Regents Professor.** Areas of research include disability policy, portrayal of disability in the media, intellectual and developmental disabilities, child communication acquisition and disorders, augmentative communication and mobile health applications. (Methodology: quantitative and qualitative). (Media & Society track)

**Repnikova, Maria** (Ph.D., University of Oxford, 2014). **Assistant Professor.** Areas of research include global communication, international media, media and politics in China and Russia. (Methodology: qualitative, ethnography, discourse analysis, elite interviewing). (Media & Society track).

**Russell, Tillman** (Ph.D., Purdue University, 2015). **Assistant Professor.** Areas of research include strategic communication, cognition & behavior, semantic networks, and persuasion. (Methodology: quantitative) (Media & Society track)

**Wade, Patrick Walter** (Ph.D., Northwestern University, 2013). **Assistant Professor.** Areas of research include rhetorical studies, historical and contemporary visual media, and 20th century photojournalism depicting war and conflict. (Methodology: rhetorical criticism, archival research) (Rhetoric & Politics track)

**Walter, Dror** (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 2018). **Assistant Professor.** Areas of research include intersection between classic media effects theories, and novel computational social sciences methods. (Methodology: machine learning, network analysis, quantitative, mixed methods). (Media & Society)

**Wilkin, Holley** (Ph.D., University of Southern California, 2005). **Associate Professor.** Areas of research include health communication, community-based intervention research, communication campaigns, and media effects. (Methodology: quantitative and qualitative) (Media & Society track)

**Whitney, Carrie** (Ph.D., Georgia State University, 2016). **Lecturer.** Areas of research include public relations, media history, media ethics, and social media.

**Williams, Ann** (Ph.D., University of Michigan, 2008). **Associate Professor.** Areas of research include digital and social media, political communication, public opinion and electoral behavior, media institutions and effects, and mass communication research methods. (Methodology: quantitative) (Media & Society track)

**Winkler, Carol K.** (Ph.D., University of Maryland, 1987). **Professor.** Areas of research include presidential rhetoric, political debates, terrorism rhetoric, and visual communication. (Methodology: rhetorical analysis, content analysis) (Rhetoric & Politics, and Media & Society tracks)

## M.A. Plan of Study Tracking Form: HComm/MComm

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sem/Year of admission: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours required (36 or 39)      Hours completed thus far \_\_\_\_\_

### Core Courses (6 Hours)

<b>Course No. and Title/Subtitle</b>	<i>Sem/Year</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Instructor</i>
COMM 6010: Issues and Perspectives				
COMM 6030: Research Methods				

### Area of Concentration, Including Pedagogy if needed (18-24 Hours)

<b>Course No. and Title/Subtitle</b>	<i>Sem/Year</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Instructor</i>

Related Field Courses (0-6 Hours)—optional courses in another area of emphasis or outside the department as approved by the advisor

<b>Course No. and Title/Subtitle</b>	<i>Sem/Year</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Instructor</i>

Ethics Requirement (completed prior to registering for Thesis Research hours)

<i>Ethics seminar completed?</i>	<i>CITI test completed online with score of 80 or better?</i>	<i>Sem/Year</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Date CITI score submitted to Tawanna Tookes</i>

Foreign Lang. or Research Skill Equivalent (hours do not count toward 36-hour minimum for the degree)

<i>Language reading course, language test, or research skills/methods course?</i>	<i>Petition form approved and submitted?</i>	<i>Course no. and title/subtitle of course taken with grade of B or better</i>	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Date of language test</i>

Research Thesis (6 hours) or Creative Thesis hours (3 hours)—note: completed thesis required.

	<i>Sem/Year</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Advisor</i>
COMM 6990				
COMM 6990				

For Non-thesis Option, 2 Additional Classes Taken (6 hours)—must be approved by advisor

<b><i>Course no. and title/subtitle</i></b>	<i>Sem/Year</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Instructor</i>

**Note:** In lieu of a thesis, it is required that research competence must be demonstrated for all MA students regardless of concentration. This paper should be exemplary of the research and writing skills the student acquired and refined during the degree program. **For Mass Comm/Human Comm, use a research paper (with fitting research assignment) from any graduate level or cross-listed (B.A./M.A., M.A./PhD., B.A./M.A./PhD.) course in the Department of Communication.** Each member of your non-thesis research paper committee must sign off on the Approval Form for the non-thesis research paper. To satisfy the requirement, all components are due to the Graduate Administrator, Ms. Tookes, by no later than the end of the second month of the semester you plan to graduate (ex: end of October for Fall, or end of February for Spring). Therefore, it is the student's responsibility to plan ahead accordingly once you have applied for graduation. Failure to do so could result in a delay of the graduation date. The safest plan is to finalize this research paper *the semester before* the semester you plan to graduate. The paper must be submitted by no later than the first month of the semester you plan to graduate to the faculty who will evaluate. The faculty reviewer will pass on the acceptability of the paper, then student provides a clean copy to the Graduate Director along with the signed form which serves as the signature page. Once the signature page is signed by the Graduate Director, it goes to the Chair for final approval, and then on to Graduate Administrator, who will provide the Office of Graduate Studies a copy. Please refer to the **Guidelines for Non-Thesis Research Paper** in the handbook for full details on this process.

## **Non-Thesis Research Paper Approval Form**

Georgia State University, College of  
Arts & Sciences  
Department of  
Communication

A course-intensive (non-thesis) option is available in some departments. In lieu of the thesis, research competence must be demonstrated on the basis of a research paper. This paper should be exemplary of the research and writing skills the student acquired and refined during the degree program. For students on the *Digital Media Strategies* track, this is on the basis of a research paper completed in one of the courses taken in the required **Media Studies** area only of the Plan of Study.

To satisfy the requirement, all components are due to the Graduate Administrator, Ms. Tawanna Tookes, by no later than the end of the second month of the semester you plan to graduate (ex: end of October for Fall, or end of February for Spring). The faculty reviewer will pass on the acceptability of the paper, then student provides a clean copy to the Graduate Director/Associate Graduate Director along with this form, and the version of the paper that was evaluated. To begin the approval process, your instructor determines the acceptability of the paper and then signs this form. Then the student provides a clean/final copy as a PDF or Word document via email to the Graduate Director, along with this signed form.

Please consult your departmental handbook regarding specific requirements for the course-intensive (non-thesis) or Digital Media Strategies track options.

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Panther Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Paper Title:**

**Faculty Signature Approval and Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Graduate Director/Associate Director Signature Approval and Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Department Chair Signature Approval and Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

Research Skill Petition Form  
GSU Department of Communication

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Only students enrolled in the GSU Department of Communication M.A. program are required to complete this form. Students are not permitted to complete and submit this form until after they have passed, with a grade of B or higher, both core courses **COMM 6010** (*Issues and Perspectives in Communication*) and **COMM 6030** (*Research Methods in Communication*).

**The form must be completed before** a student defends his/her prospectus or (for students doing the Coursework-Intensive Option) submitting the final research paper.

The purpose of this form is to help assure that the research methods coursework you select contributes to a coherent program of study, and provides you with the specific competency necessary to undertake your Research Thesis or Creative Thesis project or to complete your research essay in the coursework-intensive track. Once you have completed this form and secured the approval signature of your advisor, submit one copy to the relevant Graduate Director for approval and signature, and then submit to the Administrative Specialist for later reference, when the student's degree program is audited at graduation. Make sure you are familiar with the research requirements of your degree program – consult the relevant portions of the *M.A. Handbook*.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student name | Panther ID #.

\_\_\_\_\_  
M.A. Degree Track/Concentration

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address (please print clearly)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Phone Number

**Check one:**

- Research Thesis
- Creative Thesis
- Coursework-Intensive Option

**Course # and course title proposed to certify research competency:**

**Brief Rationale for This Choice: Explain how this/these course(s) specifically equip you to complete your envisioned Research Thesis/Creative Thesis project or (for those doing the Coursework-intensive Option), prepare you for your intended area of professional expertise.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved, Advisor of Research Thesis or Creative Thesis\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved, Graduate Director in student's area

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

*\*For students doing the coursework-intensive option, signature of the Graduate Director will suffice.*

**Submit form to Ms. Tawanna Tookes as soon as possible, and prior to registering for COMM 6990.**

# Plan of Study Tracking Form | MA Digital Media Strategy

Sem|Year of Admission: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours required (36) Hours completed thusfar: \_\_\_\_\_

Required Core Courses: (9 total hours)  
 (select at least 3 courses from the following list)

Course No. and Title/Subtitle	Sem/Year	Hours	Grade	Instructor
<a href="#"><u>Comm 6009 : Digital Journalism ( 3 hours)</u></a>				
<a href="#"><u>Conceptual Courses (3 hours)</u></a>  Choose 1 course from the following list:				
Comm 6010: Issues & Perspectives in Communication				
Comm 6050: Principles of Persuasion				
Comm 6090: Communication Ethics				
<a href="#"><u>Operational Courses (3 hours)</u></a>  Choose 1 course from the following list:				
Comm 6030: Research Methods in Communication				
Comm 6040: News Media				
Comm 6070: Communication Law				

## Elective Courses: (27 total hours)

*\*if not taken as part of core*

Course No. and Title/Subtitle	Sem/Year	Hours	Grade	Instructor
<u><a href="#">Applied Media Skills Courses (12 hours)</a></u>				
<u>Choose 4 courses from the following list:</u>				
Comm 6000: On Air Reporting				
Comm 6145: Digital Editing				
Comm 6185: Editorial & Critical Writing				
Comm 6520: Speech Writing				
Comm 6570: Social Media Strategies				
Comm 6610: Applied Graphic Communication				
Comm 6620: Problems in Public Relations				
Comm 6630: Public Relations Writing				
Comm 6660: Corporate Communication				
Comm 6670: Communication Consulting (can only be used in one area)				
Comm 6740: TV News				
Comm 6710: TV News Magazine				
Comm 6720: Radio News & Podcasting				
Comm 6850: TV Reporting – Downtown Atlanta				
Comm 6910/Comm 6850: TV Reporting of Downtown Atlanta				
Comm 6910/Comm 6720: Radio News & Podcasting				
<u><a href="#">Media Studies Courses (9 hours)</a></u>				
<u>Choose 3 courses from the following list:</u>				
*Comm 6040: News Media				
*Comm 6050: Principles of Persuasion				
Comm 6055: Theories of Media Uses & Effects				
*Comm 6070: Seminar in Communication Law				
Comm 6080: Strategic Communication				

*Comm 6090: Communication Ethics				
Comm 6450: Rhetorical Theory & Criticism				
Comm 6470: Nonverbal Communication				
Comm 6475: Communication & Aging				
Comm 6480: Political Communication				
Comm 6485: Health Communication				
Comm 6490: Communication & Gender				
Comm 6500: Visual Communication				
Comm 6510: Media & Politics				
Comm 6615: Entertainment Education				
Comm 6910: Mediation and Conflict Resolution				
Comm 6910: Neoliberalism and the Media				
Comm 6910: Media & Pop Culture				
<a href="#"><u>Capstone Digital Media Experiences (6 hours)</u></a>  Choose 2 courses from the following list:				
Comm 6156: Media Entrepreneurship				
Comm 6670: Communication Consulting (can only be used in one area)				
Comm 6915: Special Production Project				
Comm 6970: Internship				

**Note:** In lieu of a thesis, it is required that research competence must be demonstrated for all MA students regardless of concentration. This paper should be exemplary of the research and writing skills the student acquired and refined during the degree program. **For Digital Media Strategies, the research paper must come from a Media Studies course only in the Department of Communication.** Each member of your non-thesis research paper committee must sign off on the Approval Form for the non-thesis research paper. To satisfy the requirement, all components are due to the Graduate Administrator, Ms. Tookes, by no later than the end of the second month of the semester you plan to graduate (ex: end of October for Fall, or end of February for Spring). Therefore, it is the student's responsibility to plan ahead accordingly once you have applied for graduation. Failure to do so could result in a delay of the graduation date. The safest plan is to finalize this research paper *the semester before* the semester you plan to graduate. The paper must be submitted by no later than the first month of the semester you plan to graduate to the faculty who will evaluate. The faculty reviewer will pass on the acceptability of the paper, then student provides a clean copy to the Graduate Director along with the signed form which serves as the signature page. Once the signature page is signed by the Graduate Director, it goes to the Chair for final approval, and then on to Graduate Administrator, who will provide the Office of Graduate Studies a copy. Please refer to the *Guidelines for Non-Thesis Research Paper* in the handbook for full details on this process.

# COMM 6990 (Thesis Research) Authorization Form

GSU Department of Communication

I am the thesis advisor for

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Student Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Panther ID Number*

My signature below authorizes the Graduate Administrator to approve the above named student to enroll in COMM 6990 and to begin thesis research.

I have certified that the above named student has completed the Responsible Conduct of Research requirement and that documentation is on file with the Graduate Administrator for both:

\_\_\_\_ the 5-hour ethics seminar, and  
\_\_\_\_ successful completion of the online CITI ethics course.

I also certify that the student has completed coursework, with the possible exception of one (1) course remaining to take.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Faculty Member Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Faculty Member Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

Approval:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Graduate Director, GSU Department of Communication*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Chair, GSU Department of Communication*

**Submit form to Ms. Tawanna Tookes prior to enrolling in COMM 6990.**