

**PHD HANDBOOK**  
**DOCTORATE IN COMMUNICATION**  
**2019-2020 ACADEMIC YEAR**

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## Introduction

The Graduate Program Handbook describes requirements for earning advanced degrees 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 graduate students. Graduate students in the department are responsible for knowing about and complying with all of the requirements, policies, and procedures described herein, 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 Ph.D. Program 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 department's Graduate Directors.

### ***About the Department of Communication***

The Graduate Program in Communication offers students a multi-disciplinary curriculum leading to the Ph.D. degree. The program is designed to prepare students for research and teaching in **two main research areas: *Media & Society and Rhetoric & Politics***. Core courses in each of these areas are designed to provide students with in-depth training in communication pedagogy and the professional expectations of the discipline, as well as mentored experiences in both teaching and research.

The Media & Society emphasis draws theoretical perspectives from journalism and mass communication research. It prepares students to investigate the relationship between media and its audiences, with specific emphasis on international communication, media effects and stereotypes, new media, and health communication.

The Rhetoric & Politics emphasis draws theoretical perspectives from rhetorical and philosophical traditions to illuminate public discourse and persuasion. It prepares students to investigate rhetoric and public address with specific emphasis on how communities are constructed and maintained.

These programs of study each connect to other significant interdisciplinary initiatives, including faculty working groups on new and emerging media, transcultural conflict resolution, international communication, health communication, and media industries research.

Both prospective and newly admitted students are strongly encouraged to visit the Department of Communication website at [communication.gsu.edu](http://communication.gsu.edu). There, you can peruse extensive faculty biographies and learn more about various aspects of our doctoral programs, their areas of emphasis, and ongoing departmental initiatives. In addition, particular information about each research area can be accessed through the main departmental website. More information about the College of Arts & Sciences graduate policies and procedures is available at [the college's website](#).

## **Department Doctoral Faculty**

A list of the department's doctoral faculty appears at the [end of this handbook](#). Faculty biographies and descriptions of current research and teaching can be found at the departmental website.

## **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 faxes to a specific person) Mailing address: P.O. Box 5060, Atlanta, GA, 30302-5060	404-413-5600
Dr. Greg Lisby, Professor and Department Chair	Suite 818, 404-413-5639, <a href="mailto:glisby@gsu.edu">glisby@gsu.edu</a>
Dr. Patricia Davis, Graduate Director	404-413-5670 <a href="mailto:pdavis20@gsu.edu">pdavis20@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>
Mr. Gary Brown, Business Manager	Suite 820, 404- 413-5662, <a href="mailto:gbrown40@gsu.edu">gbrown40@gsu.edu</a>
Ms. Kristin Brown, Digital Media Coordinator	Suite 823, 404-413-5643 <a href="mailto:Kbrown182@gsu.edu">Kbrown182@gsu.edu</a>
Ms. Faith LeFebvre, Web Manager, GTA Scheduling	Suite 816, 404-413-5669 <a href="mailto:tfebvre@gsu.edu">tfebvre@gsu.edu</a>
Ms. Carmela Pattillo, Undergrad Administrator, Travel Authorizations and Reimbursements	Suite 826, 404-413-5676_ <a href="mailto:cpattillo@gsu.edu">cpattillo@gsu.edu</a>
Ms. Marilyn Stiggers, Operations Manager	Suite 826, 404-413-5634 <a href="mailto:mstiggers@gsu.edu">mstiggers@gsu.edu</a>

## **Funding Opportunities**

The Department of Communication offers Ph.D. student's graduate assistantships that offer teaching and research responsibilities. Graduate assistants are expected to teach or be assigned as an assistant to the equivalent of three 3-hour undergraduate courses per year and assist an appointed faculty member in his or her research endeavors. Assistantships are renewable annually

for a four-year period. Students on assistantship receive a full tuition waiver; a stipend (currently \$18,000); up to \$800 (as available) to support travel for the presentation of conference papers. Note: Requests for travel funds must be sent by email to Dr. Greg Lisby, Chair, at [glisby@gsu.edu](mailto:glisby@gsu.edu) and must include 1) a full description of the student's travel plans and 2) evidence that the student's travel plans will include the presentation of a blind-refereed paper at a scholarly conference; and 10% discount at the university bookstore. Graduate teaching and research assistants also receive access to subsidized health insurance. Graduate students may apply for an assistantship by filling out an application available on the department website ([communication.gsu.edu](http://communication.gsu.edu)) or by seeing the Graduate Administrator. *To be considered for an assistantship, complete applications are due by Dec. 1 of the year prior to admission/start of assistantship. Please note: Travel funds may vary year to year, based on any budget constraints.* **Assuming satisfactory performance and progress toward degree, there is an intention to provide a maximum of 4-years of funding (July – June).**

### ***Applying to the Department of Communication Graduate Program***

Information about applying to the Department of Communication graduate programs — including deadlines, application requirements, and recommended GRE scores — and the online application itself can be found at <http://cas.gsu.edu/graduate-studies/admissions/>.

The Department of Communication reviews applications to the doctoral program for fall semester admission only. *In order to be assured of consideration for assistantships, complete applications must be received no later than December 1*

### **Degree Requirements**

General Ph.D. requirements are included here. Specifics about requirements for each program follow.

The Ph.D. requires 68 credit hours—at least 47 hours of graduate coursework and 21 hours of dissertation research.

A student must earn a grade of “B” or better in all required coursework. In the Georgia State University plus-minus grading system, a grade of “B-” does not satisfy this requirement. Thus, grades of “B-” or lower count as part of the cumulative GPA, but not toward degree requirements.

Only courses numbered 6000 and above may be counted toward fulfilling a student's coursework requirements. However, Ph.D. students are expected to take almost all of their courses at the 8000-level. Students may petition the Graduate Director to have a 6000-level course credited to their degree; the petition requires a copy of the syllabus, a compelling rationale, and the written approval of the student's plan of study chair or dissertation chair. No more than two (2) such courses will be approved.

Rarely, some students may be required by the department to complete preparatory courses (which may include courses numbered below 6000) as a condition of admittance into the Ph.D. program. These courses cannot be counted toward fulfilling a student's 68-hour coursework requirement.

No more than sixteen (16) hours of coursework outside the Department of Communication may be counted toward fulfilling a student's minimum coursework requirements without approval from the student's area Graduate Director, but students may take more than the minimum number of courses.

No more than six (6) credits — two courses maximum — of independent study may be counted toward fulfilling a student's coursework requirements. All independent studies require a [COMM 8980 Authorization Form](#) (available on the department and graduate studies pages) that includes a description of the course of study and a detailed reading list. 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.

## **Here are requirements for the specific areas:**

### **For students in the Media & Society track:**

#### 1. Responsible Conduct of Research requirement

- a) ethics training seminar during fall orientation, and
- b) score of 80 or better on the online CITI ethics test. Documentation must be submitted before one may enroll in dissertation hours.

#### 2. At least 47 hours of graduate coursework in communication and allied fields:

##### A. Core theory and required methods coursework

- COMM 8120 (*Media, Individuals and Society*)
- COMM 8130 (*Communication in a Global Context*)
- COMM 8015 (*Quantitative Research Methods*)
- COMM 8410 (*Qualitative Research Methods*)

##### B. Two (2) hours of Introduction to Graduate Studies

##### C. Three (3) hours of COMM 8035 (*Communication Pedagogy*).

##### D. 24 additional hours in communication courses in the area of emphasis (Media & Society courses); or courses in allied disciplines as approved by the student's advisory committee and consistent with departmental policy.

##### E. At least six (6) additional hours in research tools courses, as recommended and approved by the student's advisory committee.

3. At least 21 hours of COMM 9999 (Dissertation Research). The typical full-time student can complete these hours in three to five semesters.
4. Written comprehensive examination with successful oral defense.
5. A successful prospectus defense.
6. A dissertation with successful oral defense.

**For students in the Rhetoric & Politics track:**

1) Responsible Conduct of Research requirement

- a) ethics training seminar during fall orientation, and
- b) score of 80+ on the online CITI ethics test. Documentation must be submitted before one may enroll in dissertation hours.

2) At least 47 hours of graduate coursework in communication and allied fields:

A. Core coursework

- *COMM 8530 (Advanced Rhetorical Theory I)*
- *COMM 8535 (Advanced Rhetorical Theory II)*
- *COMM 8385 (Critical Visual Culture Theory) OR COMM 8100 (Publics and Politics)*  
(choose one)

B. Two (2) hours of Introduction of Graduate Studies.

C. Three (3) hours of COMM 8035 (*Communication Pedagogy*).

D. 24 additional hours in communication courses in the area of emphasis (Rhetoric & Politics courses); or courses in allied disciplines as approved by the student's advisory committee and consistent with departmental policy).

E. At least nine (9) additional hours in research tools courses, as recommended and approved by the student's advisory committee, and which must include *Rhetorical Criticism I* and *Rhetorical Criticism II* (both are offered at doctoral level in the department).

- 2) At least 21 hours of COMM 9999 (Dissertation Research). The typical full-time student can complete these hours in three to five semesters.
- 3) Written comprehensive examination with successful oral defense.
- 4) A successful prospectus defense.
- 5) A dissertation with successful oral defense.

## Performance Expectations

### Milestones: Expected Progress Guidelines for First Year

#### I. First Year in the Doctoral Program

##### *First-year Checklist*

June - August prior to fall semester

- 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](#)
- Inform the department of your GSU email address when you get it and check it regularly throughout the summer.
- Sign up for COMM-GRADS listserv (see page 8)
- Register for first-semester courses (see page 9)
  
- Additional first steps for students on departmental graduate assistantships
  - Sign contract in early June (sent via email address) and return materials to Ms. Tawanna Tookes, Graduate Administrator
  - Purchase mandatory health insurance or apply for waiver
  - By August 1, register for 18 hours
  - August: your first weeks on campus
- Check your GSU student e-mail, and/or have it forwarded to your preferred e-mail address
- Attend College of Arts and Sciences Orientation for new graduate students
- Attend International Student Orientation, if applicable
- Attend Dept. of Communication Grad Student Orientation and Required Ethics Seminar (need to sign in for that to “count” as part of your ethics requirements!)
- Familiarize yourself with the university library
- Additional steps for students on departmental graduate assistantships
  - GLAs: Meet with lab supervisor, prior to the first day of dept. orientation. Ask about your duties, your responsibilities, your supervisor’s expectations, and establish a work schedule and plan for regular communication.
  - GTAs: Attend the teaching orientation and meet your teaching supervisor. Ask about your responsibilities, expectations, and establish a plan for weekly communication. Get course syllabus and textbooks if applicable. Find out your assigned classroom, and get keys from Key Control to your classroom. Get access to the course on iCollege, the GSU online course management system. Must be “instructor of record” to get access to iCollege, so have patience but be in regular communication with Ms. Faith LeFebvre Download the [Fair Use Checklist](#) and read it carefully prior to putting materials on reserve or on iCollege for your students. Finally, visit your classroom and get acclimated, familiarize yourself with the technology and make sure everything works.
  - GRAs: Meet personally with your research supervisor during first week of classes. Ask about your responsibilities, expectations, and establish a work schedule and plan for regular communication.

Late August to mid-June, your first year in the program

- Maintain good standing and active status
- Orient yourself to graduate study and to the field
- Meet with area Graduate Director at least once during the semester: this is your advisor until you choose a PhD advisory (plan of study) committee chair
- Choose a PhD advisory (plan of study) committee chair by end of first year
- Meet with PhD advisory (plan of study) committee by end of year
- Develop your plan of study
- Submit transfer credits by end of first year
- Submit RCR-required online ethics test scores by end of year
- End of year evaluation meeting
- GRA, GLA, and GTAs: fill out assistantship application/renewal form in January

Registration and tuition deadlines

**Fall 2019**

- August 26: Classes Begin
- August 30 Last Day of Regular Registration/Grad Assistant
- August 6: Tuition Waiver Deadline
- September 5: Tuition and Fee Payment Deadline

**Spring 2020**

- Jan.13: Classes Begin
- Jan. 17: Last Day of Regular Registration/Grad Assistant Tuition Waiver Deadline
- Jan.19: Fee Payment Deadline

**Summer 2020** (note: GTAs/GRAs/Research Fellows are required to sign up for summer hours)

- June 8: Classes Begin
- June 12: Last Day of Regular Registration/Grad Assistant
- June 15 Fee Payment Deadline

## ***GSU.edu student e-mail***

Upon first registration, the university assigns each student an official e-mail address, to which important information about a student's status is regularly sent. Students are responsible for regularly accessing that e-mail account, thereby staying aware of important, time-sensitive policy announcements and requirements. If you prefer to use a private e-mail address, you **MUST** have your [GSU.edu](mailto:gsu.edu) e-mail forwarded to your preferred address. All official university correspondence will be sent via the GSU.edu address, and students are responsible for all deadlines, requirements, and policies thus communicated.

**Note:** During your transition to the program, the department must be able to contact you via e-mail with time-sensitive information. Until you have established your GSU.edu address, keep your preferred e-mail address up to date in the online system where you originally submitted your graduate application, as this is the only contact information the department has for you during this period. When you activate your campus ID and student e-mail, inform Graduate Administrator, Ms. Tawanna Tookes of your GSU.edu address so that you don't miss important information prior to your arrival on campus.

## ***Comm-grads listserv***

Comm-grads is an Internet mailing list for in the Department of Communication. All graduate students must subscribe. Comm-grads is the primary way that the Graduate Directors and the Chair communicate policy to Communication graduate students. Faculty and graduates also use this to communicate calls for papers, conference announcements, funding opportunities, job opportunities, and so forth. To subscribe, please contact the Ms. Tawanna Tookes, Graduate Administrator.

## ***Registering for Courses***

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. You should register for the Intro to Graduate Studies (2 credits) and, if teaching your first semester, the Communication Pedagogy class. When choosing electives at this time, choose what interests you most. You may make changes to your schedule during orientation sessions in August, when the Graduate Directors will advise you regarding specific seminars. Spaces will be reserved for incoming students in doctoral 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 (available in the department's main office or from the Graduate Administrator) prior to August 1 to admit a new doctoral student.

To view course listings:

- Log in to your PAWS account (<https://paws.gsu.edu/cp/home/displaylogin>)
- 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 COMM 8780 (*Directed Research*) under the name of the Department Chair. Sign up for enough research hours to get you to the 18-hour minimum every semester. You can adjust the number of credit hours for COMM 8780 using the “Change Variable Hours” link in PAWS.

Holds on your account:

- Most holds can be resolved online by following the links given in PAWS.
- 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.

More [registration forms and information](#) are available on the department’s website.

### ***Responsible Conduct of Research Requirement***

All Georgia State University graduate students are required to undertake Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) education and training as part of their requirements for graduation or employment. No student may register for the required COMM 9999 (*Dissertation Research*) without having completed this requirement. It is imperative that you complete this requirement within your first year in the program.

This requirement has two parts:

1) Five (5) hours of face-to-face ethical training. To satisfy this component of the requirement, the Department of Communication provides an annual in-person training session that all students must complete. This training seminar is offered only one day each year, during fall semester orientation for new graduate students, which takes place in mid-August.

2) Web-based training program (the “CITI test”)

Before logging onto the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training program, read carefully the “GSU Instructions for RCR Learners”: <http://ursa.research.gsu.edu/ursa/responsible-conduct-in-research>. Additional detailed instructions are available via a link on that page as well.

Then, create a free account at <http://www.citiprogram.org/>, and 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 Media & Society, or “Arts and Humanities” for those studying Rhetoric & Politics), click “submit,” and begin the test.

Once you have completed the RCR test with a score of 80 or above, submit a copy (hard copy or a .pdf) to the Graduate Administrator to be recorded and filed for future reference. Again, any student who has not completed both parts of this requirement will be unable to register for the required COMM 9999 (*Dissertation Research*). Thus, falling to complete this in the first year will have negative implications for graduate assistantship financial support and progress toward the degree.

## **Graduate Assistantships**

The Department of Communication offers Ph.D. students graduate assistantships that offer teaching and research responsibilities. Graduate assistants are expected to teach or be assigned as an assistant to the equivalent of three 3-hour undergraduate courses per year and assist an appointed faculty member in his or her research endeavors. Assistantships are renewable annually for a four-year period. Students on assistantship receive a full tuition waiver; a stipend (currently \$18,000); up to \$800 (as available this academic year 2019-2020) to support travel for conference presentations. Note: Travel requests must be sent by email to Dr. Greg Lisby, Chair, at [glisby@gsu.edu](mailto:glisby@gsu.edu) and must include 1) a full description of the student’s travel plans and 2) evidence that the student’s travel plans will include the presentation of a blind-refereed paper at a scholarly conference; and 10% discount at the university bookstore. Assistantships do not cover student fees. Graduate teaching and research assistants also receive access to subsidized health insurance. See the graduate studies site for [Graduate Assistant Resources](#) and forms.

### **Graduate Assistantship Responsibilities**

The details of each graduate assistantship are outlined in a contract letter, usually mailed out in June. An assistantship generally has two parts: a teaching component and a research component. The total annual appointment workload is 520 hours. The standard doctoral assistantship teaching assignment is an annual three-course load, with two (2) courses/sections assigned during the fall semester and one (1) course/section during the spring semester. The total annual workload commitment of hours we attach to the teaching component of the assignment is 340 total hours. The doctoral assistantship research assignment involves assisting a designated member of the faculty with current research projects. This faculty member may also serve as a research mentor for the duration of the year’s assignment, but he or she is not necessarily or automatically a member of your plan of study committee, unless you ask him or her to serve in that capacity. The required annual workload commitment of hours for the research component of the assistantship is 180 total hours.

Graduate assistants are expected to do the following:

- 1) maintain a grade point average in graduate coursework of 3.5 or above;

- 2) consistently achieve an average student response score of 4.0 or above on teaching evaluations, if they have assigned teaching duties;
- 3) consistently receive a grade of satisfactory for their performance in COMM 8780 (*Directed Research*) if they are assigned research and/or lab duties;
- 4) submit all student grades correctly and completely, prior to leaving campus at the end of any given semester, if assigned teaching duties. Grade submission includes having those grades verified and approved, in writing, by Ms. Carmela Pattillo, Undergraduate Administrator, or a department staff member designated by the Department Chair. Failure to do so creates severe difficulties for undergraduates, including the suspension of financial aid, and will result in the graduate assistantship being immediately put on probation;
- 5) an incomplete grade that subsequently turn into an F could result in assistantship being revoked;
- 6) all absences from GTA, GRA and GLA assignments must be approved in advance by the Chair or Graduate Program Administrator and student's faculty supervisor. **In addition, GTAs must inform the front office and Graduate Administrator when classes are being cancelled for whatever reason. Further more, all GTAs are expected to post final grades and to turn in grade roster to Ms. Carmela Pattillo by the deadline posted. GTAs should not leave campus until these details have been fulfilled. Failure to meet deadlines could result in the revocation of the assistantship.**

Students are also expected to show progress in professional development each year: this normally means submitting papers to conferences in year one, presenting conference papers in year two, submitting a publication for review in year three, and publishing at least one article or otherwise having made some demonstrable public contribution to the field by year four). These are general expectations, and individual cases may vary.

Funding for graduate students beyond four years in the program is not available except in the event of a budget surplus. When available, fifth-year funding is highly competitive and not guaranteed. Applicants are expected to have passed their comprehensive exams and to have successfully defended the prospectus by the time of application. Again, there is no guarantee for fifth-year funding. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to complete the degree within one (1) year. To apply, submit a request via e-mail to the Graduate Coordinator by no later than February 1 of the fourth year of your assistantship. Include a current C.V., the date of comprehensive exam and prospectus defense, a statement of need, and a detailed plan for successful completion of the degree in the fifth academic year. The dissertation advisor must e-mail a detailed letter of support. The Graduate Committee will review the request and make a recommendation to the Chair.

At any time, a student's assistantship may be placed on probation or be terminated altogether based on a failure to perform assigned duties. See "Evaluation, Renewal, and Probation" on the following page for details.

Students on doctoral assistantship may not be employed in any capacity with other University System of Georgia schools or with the State of Georgia. GTAs are required to inform the Department Chair or Administrator prior to taking employment outside of the USG system.

## **Mandatory Health Insurance**

All graduate assistants receiving a full tuition waiver must be enrolled in one of two (2) university-sponsored, heavily subsidized health insurance packages OR have applied for a waiver and taking the necessary steps to demonstrate they have comparable health insurance coverage. For enrollment periods, insurance premiums, waiver information, waiver application form, and premium contributions please visit the university's Health Insurance page: <http://sfs.gsu.edu/tuition-fees/student-health-insurance/>. To apply for a waiver, visit this page: <http://sfs.gsu.edu/tuition-fees/student-health-insurance/waiving-ship/>.

Please note that this page includes only one of the possible plans, the one being offered by United Health Care (UHC). The College of Arts and Sciences has announced that, effective January 1, 2015, there is a new healthcare insurance option available to Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) through United Health Care. The University System of Georgia (USG) is sponsoring the plan, which means the institution pays for part of the premium. Please note that this plan does not meet the Federal Guidelines for international students holding F-1 or J-1 visas. Additional information about student health insurance can be found on the College graduate studies site under [Student Health Insurance](https://sfs.gsu.edu/resources/student-health-insurance/) (see link <https://sfs.gsu.edu/resources/student-health-insurance/>)

## **Assistantship Enrollment Requirements**

Graduate assistants 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 hours, students must register for at least three (3) courses in both fall and spring that have announced days and times in the course schedule. Students register for the remaining hours under the variable-credit COMM 8780 (*Directed Research*) under the Department Chair's name. Students earn a pass/fail grade in COMM 8780 based on their performance as research assistants. These hours of COMM 8780 do not count toward the minimum credit hours required for the doctoral degree. Graduate assistants must receive permission from the Graduate Director to take fewer than three (3) courses that have announced days and times in the course schedule in their fall and spring semesters, with the exception of Comm 8900 (*Internship*) and Comm 9999 (*Dissertation Research*), which are acceptable despite not having announced days and times.

*Students who receive full tuition waivers from another college or area of the university also must enroll according to the College of Arts and Sciences standards listed above.*

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 eighteen (18) credit hours in the summer sessions connecting their years of funding. This may include graduate seminars, but students not in local residence over the summer may take all 18 hours as COMM 8780 (*Directed Research*).

## **Assistantship Evaluation, Renewal, and Probation**

Renewal of assistantship depends on a successful annual performance review with the Graduate Director and Department Chair. Continuing students must fill out an Assistantship Application / Renewal Form (available on the graduate studies site under "[Handbooks and Forms](#)") and submit

that to the Graduate Administrator in January of the semester prior to desired renewal of the assistantship.

Students will be notified at the year-end evaluation if their assistantship is put on probation or terminated. In probationary cases, the Department Chair and Graduate Director will indicate what steps are needed to improve performance and restore good standing. The student will have a period of time designated by the chair (normally one year) to accomplish these.

A student may lose funding if, after a poor performance review and a probationary period, the student performance fails to meet expectations, and/or if the student is not satisfactorily progressing to degree completion. 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 four years contingent upon performance; students who lose funding because of performance may or may not receive a total of four years of support.

### **Support for Conference Travel**

Ph.D. graduate assistantships include up to \$800 (as available for this academic year 2019-2020) to support travel directly related to professional development, such as conference presentations. To receive these funds, students must complete the following forms, available on the graduate studies blog/site. For more information on travel policies and reimbursement procedures, contact **Ms. Carmela Pattillo at 404-413-5676 or [cpattillo@gsu.edu](mailto:cpattillo@gsu.edu)**.

- [Travel Authorization Form](#), to be submitted to the Department Chair at least ten (10) weekdays in advance of the planned travel, and by no later than April 1 of the current year, even when the travel will take place later than that date. Note: Requests must be sent by email to Dr. Greg Lisby, Chair, at [glsby@gsu.edu](mailto:glsby@gsu.edu) and must include 1) a full description of the student's travel plans and 2) evidence that the student's travel plans will include the presentation of a blind-refereed paper at a scholarly conference.
- [Travel Expense Form](#), to be submitted to the Ms. Carmela Pattillo within 20 days of travel to allow for processing within the university's 30-day deadline. Note that meal and other expenses must be equal to or less than the per diem for the destination, must be itemized, and must be recorded by original receipts when submitting.

In the event that a graduate assistant exceeds the travel fund allotted by the assistantship, the student may request travel funding from the Communication Graduate Student Association. If funds are not available from the CGSA, the student may request assistance from the Executive Committee. When available, these limited funds will be awarded on a competitive basis, and are given as reimbursement for completed travel, not advance funding. Preference is given to those who are presenting papers, and who are in residence with active student status. No requests will be considered after March 15 for any given academic year.

**Note:** Students not currently on a graduate assistantship, but who have had a paper accepted for a conference, may apply for travel funding from the Communication Graduate Student Association. If funds are not available from the CGSA, the student may petition the Executive Committee for assistance with travel expenses in excess of the assistantship's limit. When available, these limited funds will be awarded on a competitive basis and are given as reimbursement for completed travel, not advance funding. Preference is given to those who are presenting papers, and who are in

residence, with active student status. No petitions will be considered after March 15 for any given academic year. If awarded, a student must meet immediately with Ms. Carmela Pattillo for guidance through the strict university regulations and procedures for reporting travel expenses in order to receive funds.

**Note:** Students are not allowed to share his/her travel funds with another student. A student may not pay for another student's expense and expect to be reimbursed for them. If approved, any funds allotted to you must only be used for your travel expenses.

### ***Getting to Know the Field***

Several additional resources are available to help students orient themselves to doctoral graduate study and to the field of communication. Students should be in frequent contact with members of their advisory committees about conference attendance and presentation, publication, and so on. In addition, familiarize yourself with the professional associations in your area of the field. Several of the major professional associations have mentorship resources available that our faculty recommends you review. These include a volume available for sale at the National Communication Association website authored by Arenson and Morreale, [Getting the Most from Your Graduate Education: A Student's Handbook](#). In addition, a website organized by Dr. Jonathan Sterne, chair of the department of art history and communication at McGill University (<http://sterneworks.org/Academe/>) also makes available a number of quality resources that assist students as they orient their professional lives in the allied fields of communication. First-year students may want to become regular readers of academic news sources such as [Inside Higher Education](#) and [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#), both of which are free or have subscription-free segments and offer news, community forums, and other resources specifically for graduate study.

### ***Communication Graduate Student Association***

All current graduate students in the Department of Communication at Georgia State University are members of the Communication Graduate Student Association. The CGSA programs events are designed to further the academic, social, and professional goals of Communication graduate students. It provides opportunities for social interaction and academic growth through coffee hours, study groups, peer review of papers, professional development, and colloquiums. CGSA also acts as the contact group for voicing student input and concerns to members of the faculty and administration regarding issues that affect the group as a whole. Representing a diverse set of students, CGSA seeks to improve the experience of all graduate students in the department.

### ***Doctoral Plan of Study***

#### **Area of Emphasis**

Students in the Department of Communication have been accepted into one of two research area tracks: Media & Society or Rhetoric & Politics. Working closely with their Ph.D. advisory (plan of study) committee, students will choose courses from the Department of Communication or allied disciplines, and will plan a program of conference attendance and presentations as well as independent reading, etc., to build a coherent program of study in his or her specific area of emphasis within those two tracks.

All students must complete the general degree requirements, core courses specific to their track, and courses in an area of emphasis as agreed upon by their plan of study committee.

### **First-year Advisement**

All graduate students in the Department of Communication should seek advisement in their first semester of attendance at Georgia State University from the Graduate Director. Graduate Directors in the Department have scheduled office hours each semester. In order to obtain these hours, the student should contact the Graduate Director.

### **Plan of Study Tracking Forms**

Students should use the Plan of Study form (at the end of this handbook) designated for their chosen area of emphasis to track their progress through degree requirements across the first three years of the program. When meeting with the Graduate Director and the Plan of Study Committee (see below), bring a completed (and recently updated) copy of this form.

### **Ph.D. Advisory (Plan of Study) Committees**

All Ph.D. students will choose a three (3)-member advisory (“plan of study”) committee by the end of the first year in the program, or after having taken eighteen (18) hours, whichever comes first. First, in consultation with the faculty concerned and the Graduate Director, where appropriate, the student first selects a committee chair, who must be a member of the Department of Communication doctoral faculty (consult the list at the back of this handbook). Then, in consultation with that committee chair and with the consent of all faculty concerned, the student selects the remaining two committee members. All three (3) committee members must be doctoral faculty, and two (2) members including the committee chair must be from the Department of Communication.

**Students should be aware, when considering committee composition and likely timetables for their program, that faculty are not obligated to be available and may not be available during sabbaticals, certain leaves, or summers in which they receive no support from the department. Recognizing the limits of long-range planning and the likelihood that unexpected exigencies will arise, students should, as they create their committees, discuss possible timelines and contingencies with prospective committee members in order to have a basic idea of each prospective member’s availability and flexibility. If a student wishes or needs to schedule a defense or other critical meeting at a time when one or more committee members is unavailable, regular committee members can often be replaced on an ad hoc basis in consultation with the committee chair. Committee chairs are difficult if not impossible to replace, however, as they provide continuity for the student’s plan of study or dissertation project, ensuring both that the student conforms to the committee’s expectations set in plan-of-study meetings, the prospectus defense, and any other meetings the committee may have had with the student and that the student is not held to account to standards and expectations introduced at the last minute.**

The composition of the committee can be changed with the agreement of the committee chair.

## **Plan of Study Meetings**

The advisory (plan of study) committee must meet by the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year or after six (6) classes to evaluate the student's progress, discuss research interests and the development of a dissertation topic, and plan the student's remaining coursework. All Ph.D. students with active status who have not yet passed their comprehensive exams are required to participate in such a meeting. Students are responsible for scheduling these meetings, which should occur by no later than early April.

In these meetings, the committee gives feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the student's performance in the program. The student (in consultation with the committee) will decide upon specific areas of research/teaching concentration and a plan designed to achieve expertise in each area. This plan may include a combination of course work, conference activity, independent reading, and so on. The committee may require additional courses beyond the minimum requirements to prepare the student for their research.

The student will bring to these meetings a copy of the Plan of Study Form for the student's area of emphasis (in the back of this handbook), which the student and committee will fill out and the committee chair will sign. The student will submit this form to the Graduate Administrator immediately following this meeting, keeping a personal copy for reference. This form remains in the student's file with the Graduate Administrator and is consulted during the annual evaluation meeting with the Chair and relevant area Graduate Director or Graduate Administrator.

**Any subsequent changes in the plan must be approved by the chair of the committee.**

Toward the end of the student's coursework, the committee makes certain that the student has taken the appropriate courses to satisfy requirements and to prepare the student for the comprehensive exams. (See "Comprehensive Exams," for details.) The committee also works with the student on bibliographies for comprehensive exam questions.

After the comprehensive examination has been successfully completed, the advisory ("plan of study") committee dissolves. The student then, in consultation with the advisor, appoints a four (4)-member dissertation committee, which may or may not include all the members of the original advisory committee. The student should maintain regular contact with this committee throughout the dissertation process, but annual plan-of-study meetings and submission of the Plan of Study Form are not required by the department beyond this point.

## ***Doctoral Curriculum***

### **Introduction to Graduate Studies (2 hours)**

**COMM 8111: Introduction to Graduate Studies** is two-credit-hour course that meets on Friday, 12:30pm-2:10pm, and is designed to acquaint the student with expectations of the doctoral program and of the communication discipline as a whole. It serves two basic purposes. First, it is intended to provide a regular opportunity for the full doctoral community to convene so important community building can occur. Second, and most important, it is intended to provide a venue for the presentation of the highest level scholarship spanning the range of communication-

related fields – both by providing an audience for student presentations and to facilitate interaction with visiting and departmental scholars.

### **Communication Pedagogy (3 hours)**

Once during the doctoral program in the first semester, students should enroll in COMM 8035 (*Communication Pedagogy*). This course introduces the student to the teaching expectations of the academy, familiarizes the student with the legal and ethical requirements of teaching, and begins a teaching portfolio for each student.

All students who currently hold Graduate Teaching Assistantships (or who wish to apply for one in the future) must complete the Communication Pedagogy course before they begin their teaching assignments, or in the same semester in which they begin their teaching assignments. In other words, this course is a pre- or co-requisite for students who will teach course sections or stand-alone courses, as Instructor of Record or as Section Leader, in the Department of Communication.

### **Research Tools (9-12 hours, at minimum)**

Students will complete a minimum of nine to twelve approved credit hours of courses that build their research skills (often referred to as methods courses). Courses both inside and outside the department may count toward the research requirement, although students should remember that they can apply a total of no more than 16 credits completed outside the department toward their 68-hour coursework requirements. Classes chosen to fulfill this requirement must be approved by the student's advisory committee and the Graduate Director.

Students in the Media & Society track within the Public Communication area must complete a two (2)-course sequence that includes a seminar in COMM 8015 (*Quantitative Research Methods*) and COMM 8410 (*Qualitative Research Methods*) and a minimum of two other research methods courses.

Students in the Rhetoric & Politics track must complete a required course sequence that includes *Rhetorical Criticism I* and *Rhetorical Criticism II* and at least one other methods course.

In addition to the required research methods courses listed above, students are usually required to take additional methods courses necessary for their research. Additional methods courses must be agreed to by the advisory (plan of study) committee or dissertation committee chair. Students should work closely with their committees to develop a plan for completing research courses that provide the skills and expertise necessary to conduct advanced research in communication studies. Only courses deemed capable of building research competencies directly relevant to the students' program of study will be approved by the committee. Courses may be selected from across the university. Courses should cover research methods per se. Courses in computer programming, foreign languages, and other areas relevant to the student's program of study may also be appropriate. Appropriate courses will vary from student to student, since appropriate programs of study may vary from student to student. These courses must be reflected in the annual Plan of Study Form submitted to the Graduate Coordinator following the annual meeting with the advisory (plan of study) committee.

### **Dissertation Research (21 hours)**

Each student will complete a minimum of 21 hours of COMM 9999 (*Dissertation Research*). Under the direction of the dissertation advisor and the dissertation committee, students will complete the exit project for the program. Students must register for at least one (1) credit hour of dissertation research each semester the student requires access to university facilities, equipment, resources, or faculty. Students on assistantship usually sign up for nine (9) hours of dissertation credit per semester.

### **Internship (up to 3 hours, optional)**

Doctoral students are also eligible, but not required, 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. Applications are located in the Department of Communication, 8th floor, 25 Park Place NE and on the graduate studies site.

### **Courses Outside the University (ARCHE)**

Students may take courses from any department in the university. In addition, the Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education ([ARCHE cross registration program](#)) gives access to courses offered by other area schools. The plan of study committee chair and Graduate Director must approve this course the student's application to register. Application deadlines are very early each semester.

### **Transfer Credit**

According to college regulations, a Ph.D. student's master's degree is transferred to the Ph.D. program. In addition, a maximum of six (6) hours of graduate credit in an area related to the student's program of study *earned beyond the master's degree* at another accredited institution may be applied toward the Ph.D. degree. (In unique circumstances a student may request additional transfer credit hours with permission of the Graduate Director.) In order to transfer graduate credits, the student should submit a request in writing to the Graduate Director during the student's first two (2) semesters, listing the student's date of admission into the Ph.D. program, the specific courses he/she wishes to count toward the Ph.D. program with copies of appropriate syllabi and/or catalog copy, and a short justification as to why the request should be approved. The Graduate Program Coordinator will notify the student when a decision has been reached. Application for transfer credit 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 and the Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences.

### **Waiving or Substituting Required Courses**

Students who believe that any of the core/required courses should be waived for any reason, or who wish to substitute a course requirement with a course other than the designated to fulfill that requirement, must obtain written approval from their plan of study or dissertation committee chair,

and submit that with a formal petition in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Committee will consider the petition and forward its recommendation to the Chair for approval.

## **II. Maintaining Good Standing throughout the Degree Program**

### ***Annual evaluations***

In addition to the required annual meetings with their Plan of Study committee (see above), all students meet with the Graduate Director and Chair every spring. These meetings are brief and designed to provide students and the department with ongoing feedback relating to progress in program, the pace of professional development, and if applicable, performance as graduate assistant to the department. Students who must attend such a meeting include any Ph.D. students who have not yet successfully defended a prospectus AND any Ph.D. student currently on a graduate assistantship funded by any program or department in the College of Arts and Sciences. The Graduate Coordinator will schedule these meetings.

Prior to this annual meeting, the department collects evaluations of the student's assigned work from the student's teaching/lab and research assistantship supervisor. The Chair and Graduate Director determine at this meeting whether the student is making satisfactory academic progress and, if applicable, whether the student is performing satisfactorily in the role as graduate assistant (see [Assistantship Evaluation, Renewal, and Probation](#) section). In the case of academic probation and/or the probation or termination of a student's graduate assistantship, the Chair and Graduate Director will advise the student how to remedy problems and restore good standing. The student will have a designated amount of time (normally one year) to restore good standing.

In addition to (and prior to) these end-of-year meetings, all Ph.D. students with "active" student status participate in a yearly survey. 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. Finally, all students with "active" student status will submit a .PDF of their current C.V. to the Graduate Coordinator to be kept on file in the department.

### ***GPA minimum***

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 eighteen (18) semester hours of enrollment in letter-graded courses after the student's GPA has fallen below a 3.0. No course in which a B- or below was earned will count toward the degree.

These are minimum expectations, however, and the faculty expects doctoral students to exceed this minimum. Please note: An F grade in the program is unacceptable and it may be required that the student retake the course.

## ***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. Students are required to read and abide by the university's complete Policy on Academic Honesty, available here: <http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/files/2013/03/2014-2015-Section-II-Academic-Conduct-Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>. A selection from that policy follows:

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, which 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.

### ***Changing Degree Programs***

Students are accepted for graduate study in the Department of Communication. Courses throughout the department appropriate to their areas of emphasis (Media & Society and Rhetoric & Politics) may be taken for credit with the approval of their advisory committee. Changing from the Ph.D. program in the Department of Communication to another program in another department or from another department's program to the Department of Communication requires application through the admissions process for the new program and adherence to published application deadlines. Changing research tracks within the Department of Communication requires a formal petition to the Graduate Committee.

### ***Degree Time Limits***

All requirements for the Ph.D. degree must be completed within ten (10) years of the student's first semester in the program. 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. While students may petition for an extension from the [Graduate Petitions Committee](#) of the College of Arts & Sciences, such extensions are not automatically granted. Students should therefore be mindful of their timely progress through the program. The program is designed for full time students to complete in four (4) years.

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 Directors and the Chair are asked to make recommendations for or against the proposed extensions. Factors considered in those recommendations include: successful defense of the dissertation proposal, demonstrated progress toward the completion of

the dissertation, level of support from the student's committee advisor, relevance of courses taken beyond the term limit to the student's dissertation, and whether a previous extension has been granted. Students must provide a convincing argument that includes a discussion of these factors. The Graduate Directors and Chair may require a student to retake core classes (or classes that are particularly crucial to the student's dissertation) if the student took those classes more than 10 years before the semester of petition and/or if the content of those courses has changed significantly. Students should also be aware that the Graduate Council of the Arts and Sciences, the body that ultimately grants or denies petitions, only meets once each semester.

## ***Active student status and enrollment requirements***

### **Continuous Enrollment Requirement and active/inactive student status**

As part of the university's continuous enrollment policy, students in all graduate programs must maintain enrollment totaling six (6) hours or more over all consecutive three (3)-semester periods (including summers). In other words, the total enrollment of the current term plus the two (2) terms preceding it must add to six (6) hours or more at all times.

Not all six (6) credit hours can be taken in the summer semester.

The status of all students will be checked by the midpoint of each term for compliance with the continuous enrollment requirement. Any student whose enrollment is out of compliance will be placed on inactive status effective at the end of the current term and all pre-registration for subsequent terms will be canceled. Those students will be notified by an e-mail message sent to their official Georgia State University e-mail account.

To resume their programs, inactive students must file for re-entry by the published deadline and must enroll at a level sufficient to satisfy the continuous enrollment criterion. That is, their enrollment in the re-entry term plus the two (2) terms preceding it must add to six (6) hours or more. The maximum required enrollment level for the re-entry term is six (6) hours. Before reentry will be approved, the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts & Sciences will seek approval from their area's Graduate Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair. For more information on this policy, see <http://cas.gsu.edu/continuous-enrollment/>. For details regarding the re-entry process, see section 1100 of the Graduate Catalog or visit the Reentry page: <http://cas.gsu.edu/graduate-studies/admissions/reentry/>.

### **Residency Requirement**

Four (4) semesters of residence are required, two (2) of which must be consecutive. During all four (4) semesters of residence the student must register for at least six (6) hours of coursework. On the recommendation of the department and with the approval of their area's Graduate Director, up to one-half of the residence requirement may be waived on the basis of competence obtained through coursework completed elsewhere. Students must petition the Graduate Committee to request consideration for such a waiver.

### **Completion-term Enrollment Requirement**

Additionally, all students must be enrolled in the term in which they complete the requirements for their degree. Normally, this is the term in which they will graduate. However, if the requirements are completed after the deadline for graduation in a term, but before the first day of classes in the subsequent term, then it is not necessary to enroll in the subsequent term. If the continuous enrollment criterion is not met in the term in which degree requirements are completed, then it must be met in the term of graduation. Students who have enrolled for a total of six (6) or more hours in the two (2) terms preceding the term of completion may register for one (1) hour in that term..

### **Academic Program Leave**

Students seeking an Academic Program Leave for one (1) to three (3) semesters must first contact the Graduate Administrator to inform the department of their plans. Then the student would formally apply through the Graduate Office.

Graduate Assistants must, at the same time, submit a formal petition to the Graduate Committee to **give up** their assistantship for the duration of the intended leave. Students must continue to perform their assigned duties until and unless the Graduate Office formally approves the Academic Program Leave. During an approved leave, all parts of the graduate assistantship — workload, tuition waiver, and stipend — would be suspended, and the terms of renewal will be determined by the Chair, informed by the recommendation of the Graduate Committee. **The ten (10)- year deadline for completing all degree requirements will nevertheless remain the same.**

### **Re-entry into Program**

Re-entry into the graduate program does not constitute a reset of the degree time limit clock. It is important to note that any courses older than the 10-year limit may not be counted towards the program without first making a petition to the Chair. It may be necessary that the student re-take a course past 10 years, especially if it is a core course.

### **Emergency Withdrawal Policy**

Students may request an emergency withdrawal when a nonacademic emergency situation occurs, which prevents them from completing their coursework (e.g. severe medical problems, traumatic events) and when the timing or nature of the emergency prevents them from voluntarily withdrawing from their classes. Please see the GSU Dean of Students Emergency Withdrawal Page for further details: <http://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/student-assistance/emergency-withdrawal/>. View the complete Emergency Withdrawal Policy here: [http://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/files/2013/03/2015\\_Emergency\\_Withdrawal\\_Information.pdf](http://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/files/2013/03/2015_Emergency_Withdrawal_Information.pdf). Application Forms are available in the Office of the Dean of Students. In the event of an emergency withdrawal, any graduate assistant tuition waiver may be retracted. If possible and appropriate, student would meet with the Chair to discuss a plan and timeline for withdrawing and perhaps returning to the program.

## Scholastic Termination

A student whose grade point average falls below the 3.0 required to receive a degree will have eighteen (18) semester hours in which to raise the GPA before being subject to termination from the graduate program. Students who twice fail the Ph.D. comprehensive examination will also be terminated from the graduate program. (See page 29 for details.)

## Performance Expectations

### Milestones: Expected Progress Guidelines for Second Year

## III. Second Year in the Doctoral Program

### *Second-year Checklist*

- Submit Responsible Conduct of Research [CITI test](#) score if not already submitted.
- Attend Responsible Conduct of Research ethics seminar if unable to attend the prior year
- Maintain good standing and active student status (refer back to [part II of this handbook](#))
- Graduate assistants: maintain the minimum required registration for 18 credit hours (see [Assistantship section](#))
- Meet at least once with PhD Advisory (Plan of Study) Committee
- Submit one or more papers to a conference in your research area

### *Support for Conference Presentations*

It is expected that doctoral students will begin to submit papers to conferences in their research area in the second year of the program. Usually this means further developing and polishing a particularly strong paper written originally for a graduate seminar, with the support and advice of the instructor for whom it was originally written.

Graduate assistants have an allotted amount for travel funds to present at conferences in their area.

## Performance Expectations

### Milestones: Expected Progress Guidelines for Third Year

#### IV. Third Year in the Doctoral Program

##### *Third-year Checklist*

- Maintain good standing and active student status (refer back to [part II of this handbook](#))
- Graduate assistants: maintain the minimum required registration for 18 credit hours (see [Assistantship section](#))
- Recommended to submit your best essay for publication.
- Present one or more conference paper (see page 14 for information about conference travel)
- Meet with PhD Advisory (Plan of Study) Committee to prepare comprehensive exam areas and bibliographies
- Schedule, complete, and pass comprehensive exams
- Select a dissertation chair and committee immediately following comprehensive exams
- Write the prospectus
- Successfully defend the prospectus

##### *Comprehensive Exams*

Revised: Effective 2019

Each student must pass a departmentally administered comprehensive examination that tests the student's knowledge of theory and research. The test is designed and evaluated by the student's Ph.D. advisory (plan of study) committee. The comprehensive examination will typically be passed at least one academic year prior to the conferral of the doctoral degree.

Students are eligible to take the comprehensive examination only after completing all coursework, with the exception of required **COMM 9999** (*Dissertation Research*) hours. In the semester in which a student takes the comprehensive exam, she or he will usually be permitted to enroll in a combination of **COMM 9999** (*Dissertation Research*) and **COMM 8780** (*Directed Research*) hours in order to meet assistantship registration requirements), even though actual work on the dissertation may not have commenced by this time. Permission to do this should be obtained from the Ph.D. advisory (plan of study) committee and the Graduate Director.

Although a student should have completed all coursework before scheduling the exam, the department may make an exception if only one elective class remains. Any student wishing to enroll in one (1) elective class during the semester that comprehensive exams occur must obtain written permission from the Department Chair, to be conveyed via e-mail to the Graduate Administrator before the exam may be scheduled. **Note:** All core courses must be completed prior to taking comps and cannot be enrolled in during the semester that comprehensive exams occur.

The comprehensive examination process serves many important purposes, including the following: (a) It provides the student an opportunity to demonstrate her or his general competence in one or more allied communication disciplines or areas of specialization; (b) It affords the graduate faculty an opportunity to certify a student's written and oral advocacy skills in communicating complex ideas and literatures; (c) It provides the student an opportunity to integrate his or her educational experiences in the doctoral program, and offers evidence that s/he is able to evaluate and communicate research in a way that does justice to the larger traditions of the chosen field; and (d) It assures that a student is prepared to undertake the major research demanded by the dissertation requirement.

### **Preparing and Scheduling of the Examination**

Students must submit to the advisory (plan of study) committee suggested research areas for questions in each of the four examination areas, along with a bibliography for each area. These materials are often, and ideally, organized with the advisory (plan of study) committee months before the exam. Examination areas and bibliographies must thus be specifically approved by the advisory (plan of study) committee, who will create the questions to be asked...

The student is responsible for scheduling his/her examination, working with the Graduate Administrator and advisory (plan of study) committee. Comprehensive examinations (both written and oral) will be scheduled only during the spring semester, the third week of April; and in the fall semester during the first two weeks of November.

### **Collaboration Statement for Comprehensive Exams**

Collaboration during the comprehensive exam is prohibited. Collaboration includes but is not limited to preparing, organizing, writing responses and feedback with or from other students, staff, friends, and/or faculty. Failure to comply with this non-collaborative policy could result in the failure of the comprehensive exam or at the maximum, expulsion from the program.

### **Academic Honesty**

Comprehensive exams, like all work undertaken toward the graduate degree, are subject to the University's Policy on **Academic Honesty**. Read and be familiar with this policy, available here in full: <http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/files/2013/03/2014-2015-Section-II-Academic-Conduct-Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>.

### **Nature of the Comprehensive Examination**

The examination includes two parts: a written examination which involves four full days of writing, and an oral examination which should occur between two and three weeks following completion of the written exam and will typically involve approximately two hours of questioning. The written exam will start on Monday morning for four consecutive business days, ending on Friday morning. The exam will be "open book" take-home, 24 hours to work on each area. The completed response for each area must be submitted electronically the following morning by 10:00am to the Administrator, where the final answer must be submitted by Friday morning at 10am. Upon receipt of all four answers, the Department will use Turnitin Software to determine originality/similarity

scores for each written answer. Student answers will be submitted electronically to the Advisory Committee, who will assess answers and determine if a student's readiness to proceed to an oral defense of examination answers, which would follow the written exam 2-3 weeks later. **Students are encouraged to manage their time wisely during this process in order to adhere to the set timetable.**

The Department expects a minimum of 10-page, double-spaced responses for each of the four areas, followed by a complete Works Cited for each response. There should be a cover page for each response to include the student's name and the area.

Both parts must be passed by the student, and a failing performance on one part of the examination cannot be redeemed with a strong performance on the other.

### **Make-Up of the Comprehensive Examination**

The comprehensive examination is one examination in two parts sub-divided by content areas. The written portion of the comprehensive examination always precedes the oral exam, and a student is only permitted to proceed to the oral examination upon the Ph.D. Advisory (plan of study) committee's assessment that the written portion of the exam is defensible. In other words, a student may have, in some cases, provided controversial or relatively weak answers to some questions, but overall, the committee's judgment is that the written answers could be defended in oral argument. In order to proceed to the oral exam, all four content areas must be judged to be defensible.

Each student will answer questions in four (4) examination areas. One area must deal with the foundations for the student's track (for Media & Society the content covered in Media, Individuals & Society and Communication in a Global Context; for Rhetoric & Politics these foundations are the required theory seminars). One area must concern the student's research approach/method. One area must concern a subject of specialization that is strongly relevant to the student's intended dissertation topic. One subject must deal with another subject of specialization, presumably emerging from some or all of the student's other elective coursework.

Each student will have a four consecutive business day period - to complete the written portion of the comprehensive examination. Students will be allotted twenty-four hours to answer each of their four examination areas. The response to each area must be submitted to the Administrator the following morning, no later than 10:00am. The examination will be open-book, take-home. Students must schedule their examination in consultation with their committee chair and the departmental Graduate Administrator. In the oral examination, the student will be questioned area-by-area by the entire committee. Because questions will often connect to the written examination, the student will be provided with an electronic copy of their written answers in advance of the oral examination. Questions will also range more widely than the written responses, and students will be expected to articulate responses showing a detailed understanding of their designated areas of expertise.

### **Evaluation of the Comprehensive Examination**

The comprehensive exam is evaluated at two points in time. The first portion of the exam is the written exam, and the second portion is the oral defense. The written portion must be successful in

order to move on to the oral defense, and both portions of the exam (written and oral) must be successful in order to pass the overall comprehensive exam.

A “passing” exam is one that has successfully passed through both the written and the oral defense stages. A “failing” exam is one that has failed at EITHER the written stage or the oral stage. A single failure results in a second chance; a second failure results in dismissal from the program.

### I. Written Exam

The first evaluation is of the written exam. The committee members individually evaluate all four areas of the written exam. The committee chair collects evaluations of the committee members, collates them and communicates the results to the committee members. The chair will then communicate to the student the outcome of the overall assessment, including whether particular sections of the written exam were considered to be weak and/or deemed indefensible.

The written exam is considered defensible (not “passing,” because only an overall exam can “pass”) and the student may proceed to the oral defense in either of the following cases:

Case 1) All four (4) areas of the written exam are deemed defensible by the majority of committee members. At that point, the student may work with the committee to schedule the oral defense. Note: an overall exam has not “passed” until after a successful oral defense.

Case 2) Only three (3) areas of the written exam are deemed defensible by the majority of committee members, AND the student satisfactorily (and within a timeframe designated by the committee) completes work that the committee assigns to improve or otherwise redeem the student’s performance in the one area deemed indefensible. The committee may require, in writing, that the student do one of the following:

- a) retest on that one area, OR
- b) submit other specified written work that certifies intellectual competence in the area, OR
- c) take additional coursework to bring the student up to a level of demonstrable competency.

For all these options, the specification of a completion timetable rests with the faculty committee, although new work should typically occur within six (6) months of the written examination. If the student completes the assigned task within the designated timetable AND the majority of the committee deems this improved response to be defensible (or the assigned work to be satisfactory), the student may work with the committee to schedule the oral defense. At this point, no part of the written portion of the exam may be attempted again; the student must pass the overall exam at the oral defense stage or be dismissed from the program.

The written exam is considered failing (and must be retaken again in its entirety) either of the following two (2) cases:

Case 1) Two (2) or more areas are indefensible. At this point, the student must retake the written exam again in its entirety, within six (6) months of the first exam. Once s/he does so, no part of the written exam may be attempted a third time.

Case 2) Three (3) areas are defensible, and the student does NOT satisfactorily (and within a timeframe designated by the committee) complete work that the committee assigns to improve or otherwise redeem the student's performance in the one area deemed indefensible. In this case, the student must take the written exam again, in its entirety, within six months of the re-tested area or replacement work having been deemed indefensible. Once s/he does so, no part of the written exam may be attempted again.

If, following the student's second attempt at the written exam in its entirety, all four (4) areas are deemed defensible, the student may schedule the oral defense.

If, following the student's second attempt at the written exam in its entirety, fewer than all four (4) areas are deemed defensible, the student will be dismissed from the program.

## II. Oral Defense

The oral defense may not be scheduled until the committee has deemed the written exam defensible. During the oral defense, committee members will ask the student to defend the written exam in its entirety by asking pointed questions about any or all of the written responses. After completing the oral exam portion of the examination to the satisfaction of all committee members, the student will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates.

The committee will decide if the student's combined performance on the written and oral portions of the exam constitute a pass or a failure. At this point, the student is not evaluated on an area-by-area basis; rather, the committee will make an overall assessment of the student's demonstrated competence in the oral defense (including emendation) of his/her written arguments. After the committee has deliberated and reached its conclusion, the student will be called back into the examination room and immediately notified of their examination results.

## III. Overall Exam

The overall exam is considered "passing" in either of the following cases:

Case 1) A majority of committee members (i.e., 2 of the 3) deems the student's overall exam (both written exam and oral defense) to be satisfactory. In this case, the comprehensive examination has concluded successfully, and the student may now begin the work of forming a dissertation committee and writing a prospectus. The chair of the advisory (plan of study) committee should notify the Graduate Director and the department's Graduate Coordinator of the examination's outcome.

Case 2) A majority of committee members does NOT deem the student's overall exam (both written exam and oral defense) to be satisfactory. However, if the student's written exam was deemed defensible upon the student's first attempt (that is, the student has not already re-taken any portion of the written exam), the committee may assign work to improve or otherwise redeem

the student's performance on the overall exam. The committee may require, in writing, that the student do one of the following:

- retake only the oral portion of the exam (in which case, this second oral examination will normally occur within six (6) months of the first, at the discretion of the committee), OR
- retake the overall exam (both written and oral portions)

In addition, the committee may require the student to complete additional work to prepare for a second attempt at the oral or overall exam. This may include, for example, extra course work or other forms of study, public presentations such as presentation at academic conferences or departmental seminars, participation in mock examinations, or training to better handle communication apprehension.

If, following this second oral examination or overall exam and the timely completion of any additional assigned work (depending on what the committee required of the student), the committee deems the overall exam to be passing, the comprehensive examination will have concluded successfully. The student may now begin the work of forming a dissertation committee and a prospectus. The chair of the advisory (plan of study) committee should notify the relevant Graduate Director and the department's Graduate Administrator of the examination's outcome, with appropriate assessment forms completed

The overall exam is considered failing if:

A) A majority of committee members (i.e., 2 of the 3) deems the student's overall exam (both written exam and oral defense) to be failing, AND the student has already failed the overall exam once before. (That is, a first attempt at the written exam was deemed indefensible, thus preventing it from getting to a successful oral defense and passing as an overall exam. A student may only attempt any given part of the exam twice.)

B) A majority of committee members (i.e., 2 of the 3) deems the student's overall exam (both written exam and oral defense) to be unsatisfactory, AND the student does NOT satisfactorily (and within a timeframe designated by the committee) complete work that the committee assigns to improve or otherwise redeem the student's performance on the overall exam (written and oral).

—

Below is an outline of possible exam results, offered here simply to distill the procedures and policies outlined in detail above:

Trajectory One: Written exam is defensible in the first attempt, and the first attempt at the oral defense is satisfactory, thus the overall exam passes. The student moves on to doctoral dissertation research. This is the norm.

Trajectory Two: Written exam is defensible only after a second attempt at one area or remedial/substitute work, and the first attempt at the oral defense is satisfactory, thus the overall exam passes. The student moves on to doctoral dissertation research.

Trajectory Three: Written exam is defensible in the first attempt, but the first attempt at the oral defense is unsatisfactory, thus the overall exam is deemed failing. A second attempt at the oral examination or the overall exam (this choice is at committee's discretion) is deemed satisfactory, thus the overall exam passes. The student moves on to doctoral dissertation research.

Trajectory Four: Written exam is defensible in the first attempt, but the first attempt at the oral defense is unsatisfactory, thus the overall exam is deemed failing. A second attempt at the oral examination or the overall exam (this choice is at committee's discretion) is deemed unsatisfactory, thus the overall exam fails. The student is dismissed from the program.

Trajectory Five: Written exam is defensible only after a second attempt at one area or remedial/substitute work, and following the oral examination, the overall exam fails. The student is dismissed from the program.

### ***Undertaking Dissertation Research***

Dissertations must be the product of the graduate student to whom the degree is awarded. Approval by the student's committee of his/her dissertation is not only an approval of the manuscript and of the research described in it but also a certification that the student is qualified to conduct research on his/her own. Basic to that certification is the knowledge that the student is primarily responsible for designing the project or study, synthesizing the material examined, analyzing the data, and discussing the results, with guidance from his/her advisor, committee members, and others, and through the process, is able to conduct publishable research projects independently.

Enrolling in COMM 9999 (*Dissertation Research*) hours is an important exit requirement for students seeking the Ph.D. in Communication. Students must register for a minimum of twenty (21) credit hours of dissertation research and will continue to receive a grade of "IP" (in progress) in COMM 9999 until the dissertation is completed.

Students must register for at least one (1) credit hour of dissertation research in each semester in which the student requires access to university facilities, equipment, resources, or faculty, and six (6) credit hours in any given year, without all credits in the summer.

### ***Selection of Dissertation Chair***

Prior to enrollment in COMM 9999 (Doctoral Dissertation Research), the student must take the appropriate coursework to prepare him/her for dissertation research and must fulfill the Responsible Conduct of Research requirement.

The student must identify a faculty member who is willing and able to serve as the Dissertation Advisor. The advisor must be a member of the department doctoral faculty (see list of doctoral faculty at the end of this document). The advisor must also be knowledgeable about the student's area of research. The student will nominate an advisor, who must be appointed by the Chair of the Department of Communication by use of [Dissertation Advisor Agreement Form](#) at the back of this handbook. That form is submitted first to the intended committee chair for a signature, then to Department Chair for approval, then to the Graduate Coordinator for filing.

## ***Enrollment in COMM 9999 (Dissertation Research)***

Once the student's selection of an advisor has been approved and filed, the Graduate Coordinator may will authorize the student's enrollment in COMM 9999. The student must then enroll in COMM 9999.

## ***Dissertation Committee Selection***

After selection of the committee chair, the student should nominate three (3) additional faculty members to serve on the dissertation committee. (More are allowable but not recommended.) Thus, the typical dissertation committee is comprised of four (4) faculty: the committee chair, two other Department of Communication doctoral faculty, and one outside member. In total, three (3) of the four (4) committee members must be appointed to the Department of Communication's doctoral faculty, and one of the four members must be a doctoral faculty from an allied department and must be from a research-based institution. In the event that more than four (total) faculty are on the committee, the additional member(s) may hold the rank of graduate and/or doctoral faculty in the Department of Communication. All dissertation committee members must possess special expertise in the area of the student's proposed dissertation topic or research method.

In the interest of continuity and timely progress toward degree completion, the department discourages students from making changes to the dissertation committee at any time beyond a successful prospectus defense. If the student deems a change absolutely necessary, the student may petition the Graduate Committee to make a change. The petition must include a substantive justification/rationale for the proposed move. If the change is approved, the student will be required to defend the prospectus again to the satisfaction of the new committee. The new committee must sign/date a new prospectus title page, coupled with a complete prospectus, to be submitted for the signature of area Graduate Director, for the student's files.

## ***Developing the Prospectus***

The first step of dissertation research is to develop a complete prospectus that the student will orally defend before his/her dissertation committee. These documents are usually more than 40 pages in length. The prospectus is developed in consultation with the dissertation advisor and committee members. Below is a list of common prospectus elements, but each research area and each dissertation committee will have its own standards and expectations. Prior to developing the prospectus, students must consult the dissertation advisor to discuss requirements specific to the student's own research.

1. Title: the first sign to the reader as to topic and methodology, the title should be concise and suggestive.
2. Abstract: 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.
3. Research question/Hypothesis/Thesis statement: identification of the problem or question the dissertation will seek to answer, along with an outline of the proposed answer(s) for the research question(s).
4. Object of Study. A clear delineation of which primary text(s) will be examined in order to answer the research question or support the proposed dissertation, including a justification

of why these text(s) have been chosen. Where appropriate, this could include a discussion of the method for obtaining and analyzing the text(s). Any use of students or others as research subjects but be described in detail and must be accompanied by advance permissions from the GSU Research Office.

5. Literature review: critical discussion of relevant literature, situating the proposed dissertation within a current academic debate and/or detailing an absence in the literature. Here the writer shows readers a broad awareness of the literature relevant to the chosen topic.
6. Methodological/theoretical frameworks: justification for the theoretical and methodological framework chosen to pursue the stated thesis or research question. This includes an organized explanation of how the proposed project engages the existing academic debate and describes the specific procedures, theories, strategies for data collection and analysis, and selection of participants that will ensure the completion of the project (including permissions from the GSU Research Office if necessary).
7. Contribution to the field(s): description of the project's significance to the field, i.e., why or how the project will extend the current body of knowledge in an important way. This section necessitates a clear indication of the nature of this contribution: theoretical, methodological, analytical, historical, and so on.
8. Chapter outline: brief summary outlining the step(s) that each chapter will make toward answering the research question or supporting the stated thesis (one or two paragraphs per chapter).
9. Conclusion: A summation or brief re-statement of the nature, scope and rationale of the project.
10. Bibliography: The prospectus will include a comprehensive bibliography, which will contain all cited references.

### ***Defending the Prospectus***

At least two (2) weeks after the student presents the committee with the prospectus acceptable to the dissertation advisor, he/she must set up an oral defense meeting time that is agreeable to all committee members. The student is responsible for arranging a room for this meeting and for communicating meeting details with committee members.

All members should be in attendance. In the event that one committee member is unable to attend, the defense can move forward with a minimum of three (3) members. At this meeting, the student will answer questions from the faculty about the prospectus and receive recommendations for any revisions required by committee members. Possible outcomes for the prospectus defense include: passing the prospectus; passing the prospectus with specified conditions; not passing. If the prospectus does not pass the defense, the student must rewrite and re-defend the prospectus.

Students should bring to the meeting a properly formatted copy of the [Prospectus Title Page/Signature Sheet](#), available on the graduate studies site, which the Ph.D. advisory (plan of study) committee chair will sign upon successful completion of the defense. The student then submits this form to Graduate Administrator. In the event that the successful completion of the prospectus is contingent upon revisions, the Ph.D. advisory (plan of study) committee chair will submit the form after those revisions have been completed satisfactorily.

## ***Advancement to Candidacy***

In order for a student to be advanced to candidacy, the student must have passed the comprehensive examination, and must have successfully defended a dissertation prospectus.

This four-year plan is expected of full-time students. Students who are “ABD” (“all but dissertation”) should remain acutely [aware of the 10-year degree time limit](#) AND the [continuous enrollment requirement](#), and the negative consequences of neglecting those, as they progress through the dissertation. ABD students must also continue to check their GSU e-mail account in order to receive timely information that may affect their student status and progress toward degree.

## **Performance Expectations**

### **Milestones: Expected Progress Guidelines for Fourth & Final Year**

## **V. Fourth and Final Year(s) in the Doctoral Program**

### ***Fourth and Final Year Checklist***

- Maintain good standing and active student status (refer back to [part II of this handbook](#))
- Graduate assistants: maintain the minimum required registration for 18 credit hours (see [Assistantship section](#))
- Register for dissertation hours COMM 9999 (*Dissertation Research*) each semester you require university resources
- Participate in the annual graduate recruitment conference.
- Maintain regular contact with dissertation advisor, checking in on progress
- Apply to graduate two (2) semesters prior to graduation and know the filing deadlines
- Register for at least one (1) credit hour in the semester you intend to graduate
- Format your dissertation according to CAS requirements (easiest if you do it as you write).
- Defend your dissertation
- Choose whether to embargo your dissertation or not
- File your dissertation
- Complete survey of earned doctorates

### ***Application to Graduate***

As degree completion nears, students should consult the College of Arts & Sciences [graduation webpage](#) and be cognizant of these deadlines:  
<http://cas.gsu.edu/undergraduate/graduation/graduation-requirements/>.

- Initial Dissertation Format Review Deadline
- Recommended Thesis/Dissertation Defense Deadline
- Embargo Request for Manuscripts Deadline
- Approved Formatting for Manuscripts Deadline

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.

Any questions regarding the process of applying to graduation may be addressed to the Graduate Administrator or to the university's Graduation Office at 404-413-5040.

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 area's Graduate Director.

### ***Time Limits and Completion-Term Enrollment Requirement***

Additionally, recall that all students have ten (10) years to complete the degree, and that all students must be enrolled for at least one (1) credit hour in the term in which they complete the requirements for their degree.

### ***Formatting the Dissertation***

Georgia State University requires that each student assume full responsibility for the correctness in content and form of the dissertation. Explicit guidelines for the dissertation ("Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines") are available from the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences; these guidelines specify standards with respect to composition, format, and certain policies and requirements.

Dissertations must conform to a standard bibliographic format, such as Chicago, MLA, APA, and so forth. The student's committee must approve the specific style manual as appropriate for the project. Deviations from this requirement must be approved in writing by the relevant Graduate Director.

### ***Defending the Dissertation***

A student must provide his/her dissertation committee members with the completed dissertation 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 dissertation committee must attend. Ideally, all members will be physically present, but a conference or Skype call for one member may be acceptable (pending the approval of the committee chair) if absolutely necessary. The student must bring to that meeting a properly formatted Dissertation Title Page/Signature Sheet, available on the graduate studies site.

At the meeting, the student will present and defend the research project. At the conclusion of the defense, the committee will deliberate in closed session. If more than one member of the committee does not recommend that the dissertation be accepted, then the dissertation will not be accepted as a fulfillment of the degree requirements. If the dissertation is accepted, the dissertation committee will sign the Dissertation Signature Sheet/Title Page, and then the student will submit this to the Graduate Coordinator.

A student who fails a dissertation defense will be allowed to attempt a second dissertation defense, with a significantly revised dissertation. The student who has failed an initial dissertation defense will be provided with detailed comments for revision by the committee chair, as gathered from the members of the dissertation committee. The student may, if the chair is amenable, decide also to confer directly with members of the committee for specific comments and feedback on the shortcomings of the work presented. When the committee chair believes the dissertation revision is sufficient to warrant a second defense, such a defense will be scheduled according to the protocols above. If more than one committee member judges the dissertation as failing in the second defense, then the student cannot continue and will be terminated from the program.

### ***Embargoing the Dissertation***

Following the successful filing of the dissertation, the dissertation will be uploaded to the university's ScholarWorks database. By default, any thesis or dissertation that is uploaded to the ScholarWorks database is made publically available on the internet, immediately upon upload. However, in certain circumstances, a student may wish to delay or limit access to the document. The following examples describe scenarios in which students may want to consider limiting or restricting access to their document:

- The student's work is based on data generated through research that will support other publications from people on the research team and those data may need to be delayed in their release;
- There is a plan to apply for a patent based on research discussed in the thesis/dissertation;
- The thesis/dissertation contains data or material that was generated pursuant to a grant or contract and the thesis/dissertation is subject to review by the sponsor or grantor prior to publication;
- The student plans to publish all or part of the document and knows that the publishers in the relevant field consider open access theses/dissertations to be a prior publication.

Embargoing Requirements: Students who wish to delay or limit access to their dissertation can choose from one of two options. The first option is a closed dissertation, 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.

Students who wish to restrict access to the dissertation using one of the embargo options described above, submit an [embargo request form](https://asgrad.wufoo.com/forms/embargo-request-form/) (https://asgrad.wufoo.com/forms/embargo-request-form/) prior to uploading your thesis to the Scholarworks ETD. The Office of Graduate Services will ensure that the request also has the support of your area Graduate Director, as well as the college's Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. For any questions concerning the embargo policy or procedures, contact the CAS [Graduate Studies Office](#).

### ***Filing the dissertation***

When the signed copy of the student's dissertation title page is presented to the department's chair and a correctly formatted final copy of the approved dissertation 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 dissertation ("Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines") are available from the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences. The dissertation title page, signed by the dissertation committee and department chair, is then submitted to Graduate Administrator.

### ***Graduation***

Students should complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates, found at the end of the College of Arts & Sciences Graduate Studies graduation webpage.

Every successful Ph.D. graduate from the Department of Communication should take the opportunity to be hooded by his or her dissertation chair at the College of Arts and Sciences Recognition Celebrations!

## Doctoral Faculty

Atkinson, Jaye L. (Ph.D., University of Kansas, 1996). Associate Professor. Areas of research include interpersonal communication, patronizing speech, aging stereotypes and communication, and sport communication. (Media & Society)

Bloom, Mia (Ph.D., Columbia University). Professor. Areas of research include ethnic conflict, suicide terrorism, women and children in terrorism groups. (Rhetoric & Politics)

Cheshier, David (PhD, University of Iowa, 1996). Associate Professor. Areas of research include rhetorical theory and criticism, argumentation and public deliberation, contemporary social theory, and American public address.

Davis, Patricia (Ph.D., University of California – San Diego, 2009). Associate Professor. Areas of research include cultural studies, mass communication, memory and heritage studies, critical gender studies. (Rhetoric & Politics)

Freeman, Carrie (Ph.D., Oregon, 2008). Associate Professor. Areas of research include mass communication studies, media ethics, journalism studies, and media coverage of social movements. (Media & Society)

Hoffner, Cynthia (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, 1988). Professor. Areas of research include media effects, television and children, emotional responses to media. (Media & Society)

Lemieux, Anthony (Ph.D. University of Connecticut, 2006). Professor. Areas of research include the social psychology of extremism, research methods, and health communication. (Media & Society)

Lisby, Gregory C. (Ph.D., University of Tennessee, 1988). Professor. Areas of research include communication law, legal history, censorship, ethics, and communication technologies. (Media & Society)

Meyers, Marian J. (Ph.D., University of Iowa, 1989). Associate Professor. Areas of research include women and media, social production of news, media criticism, and cultural studies. (Media & Society)

Romski, Mary Ann (Ph.D., University of Kansas, 1981). Regents Professor. Areas of research include child language and communication impairments, augmentative communication, mental retardation, and child language acquisition. (Media & Society)

Russell, Tillman (Ph.D., Purdue University, 2015). Areas of research include strategic communication, cognition & behavior. (Media & Society)

Wade, Patrick Walter (Ph.D., Northwestern University, 2013). Areas of research include rhetorical studies, historical and contemporary visual media, with a focus on 20<sup>th</sup> century photojournalism depicting war and conflict. (Rhetoric & Politics)

Walter, Dror (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 2018). Areas of research include intersection between classic media effects theories, and novel computational social sciences 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. (Media & Society)

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

Winkler, Carol K. (Ph.D., University of Maryland, 1987). Professor. Areas of research include presidential rhetoric, political debates, terrorism rhetoric, and visual communication. (Rhetoric & Politics)

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# Library Proxy Authorization

Georgia State University

University Library

100 Decatur Street, Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3202

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Access Services Department  
William Russell Pullen Library

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Member's name (type or print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department

SUBJECT: **Authorization of assistant for University Library proxy access**

The assistant will be using their own Panthercard to charge items out to the faculty member's library account\*. The assistant must identify to which account the library materials will be charged. The faculty member is responsible for all materials charged out to their account by proxy. This privilege also gives the assistant access to viewing the faculty member's account.

\*Faculty members must already have an established account with the library before this form can be processed. Please contact the Circulation Desk at (404) 413-2820 if you have any questions.

### This form is to authorize my assistant

\_\_\_\_\_

**to check out library materials to my account by proxy. I understand that this privilege also gives the assistant access to viewing the items I have currently charged out.**

This authorization is to expire on \_\_\_\_\_ or at the end of the current fiscal year (6/30).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Faculty Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Patron Library ID \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Assistant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Patron Library ID \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 7/29/2004

## Plan of Study Tracking Form: Media & Society (Public Communication)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sem/Year of admission to the program: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Total hours completed thus far (of 68 required): \_\_\_\_\_

Required Courses (6 hours)

Course No. and Title/Subtitle	Sem/Year	Hours	Grade	Professor
COMM 8120 Media, Individuals & Society				
COMM 8130 Communication in a Global Context				

Introduction to Graduate Studies (2 hours)

Course No.	Sem/Year	Hours	Grade	Instructor
COMM 8111 Introduction to Graduate Studies				

Communication Pedagogy (3 hours)

Course No.	Sem./Year	Hours	Grade	Professor
COMM 8035				

Research Tools Courses (minimum 12 hours, selected from the following):

- COMM 8015 Quantitative Methods
- COMM 8410 Qualitative Methods
- Other courses as approved/ required by advisory committee

Course No. and Title/Subtitle	Sem./Year	Hours	Grade	Professor

Electives (24 hours--courses must be approved by the area director and the advisory committee and must be consistent with departmental policy)

Course No. and Title/Subtitle	Sem./Year	Hours	Grade	Professor

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

Ethics seminar completed?	Sem./Year	CITI test scored $\geq 80$ ?	Date CITI score filed

Dissertation Research (21 hours)

	Sem./Year	Hours		Sem./Year	Hours
COMM 9999			COMM 9999		
COMM 9999			COMM 9999		
COMM 9999			COMM 9999		
COMM 9999					

Comprehensive Exams

Date written exam passed	Date oral defense passed	Committee Chair Name	Committee Member #2	Committee Member #3

Prospectus and Dissertation

Date of Prospectus Defense:
Dissertation Committee Chair:
Dissertation Committee Members:
Dissertation Title:
Date of Dissertation Defense:

Plan for coming semesters to achieve required credits and complete degree:

**Your Advisory Committee:**

Chair \_\_\_\_\_  
 Members: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Dissertation Committee:**

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Member: \_\_\_\_\_

## Plan of Study Tracking Form: Rhetoric & Politics (Public Communication)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sem/Year of admission to the program: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Total hours completed thus far (of 68 required): \_\_\_\_\_

### Required Courses (9 hours)

Course No. and Title/Subtitle	Sem/Year	Hours	Grade	Professor
Advanced Rhetorical Theory 1				
Advanced Rhetorical Theory 2				
One of the following (circle the one you took): Critical Visual Culture Theory or Publics & Politics				

### Introduction to Graduate Studies (2 hours)

Course No.	Sem/Year	Hours	Grade	Instructor
COMM 8111 Introduction to Graduate Studies				

### Communication Pedagogy (3 Hours)

Course No.	Sem./Year	Hours	Grade	Professor
COMM 8035				

### Research Tools Courses (minimum 9 hours, selected from the following):

- Rhetorical Criticism 1
- Rhetorical Criticism 2
- Other courses as approved/ required by advisory committee

Course No. and Title/Subtitle	Sem/Year	Hours	Grade	Professor

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Electives (24 hours--courses must be approved by the area director and the advisory committee and must be consistent with departmental policy)

Course No. and Title/Subtitle	Sem./Year	Hours	Grade	Professor

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

Ethics seminar completed?	Sem./Year	CITI test scored $\geq 80$ ?	Date CITI score filed

Dissertation Research (21 hours)

	Sem./Year	Hours		Sem./Year	Hours
COMM 9999			COMM 9999		
COMM 9999			COMM 9999		
COMM 9999			COMM 9999		
COMM 9999					

Comprehensive Exams

Date written exam passed	Date oral exam passed	Committee Chair Name	Committee Member #2	Committee Member #3

Prospectus and Dissertation

Date of Prospectus Defense:
Dissertation Committee Chair:
Dissertation Committee Members:
Dissertation Title:
Date of Dissertation Defense:

Plan for coming semesters to achieve required credits and complete degree:

**Your Advisory Committee:**

Chair \_\_\_\_\_  
Members: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Your Dissertation Committee:**

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
Member: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Dissertation Chair/Advisor Agreement and COMM 9999 (*Dissertation Research*) Authorization Form**

I agree to serve as dissertation advisor for

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name | Student PantherID number

My signature below authorizes the Graduate Coordinator to approve the above named student to enroll in COMM 9999 and to begin dissertation 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 Coordinator for both:

- (a) the 5-hour ethics seminar, and
- (b) successful completion of the online CITI ethics course.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dissertation Chair/Advisor's Member Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dissertation Chair/Advisor's Faculty Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approval:

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

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

*Submit form to Tawanna Tookes prior to enrolling in COMM 9999.*

Application for  
COMM 6910: Special Project  
or  
COMM 8980: Special Project  
Or  
Comm 6915: Special Production Project

I wish to make this application for COMM 6910 (MA) \_\_\_\_\_ or COMM 6915 \_\_\_\_\_ COMM 8980 (PhD) \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ semester, 20\_\_\_\_. This course is for three hours credit. I understand that completion of this application does not constitute registration, and that I must register for the course in the usual manner at the time of regular registration for the semester for which credit is to be earned.

*Program of Study*

(To be completed by the student and faculty member under who work is to be done)

\*Note: a bibliography or reading list must accompany this form in order to be approved by Chair.

Description of Course or Study Plan

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Frequency of Meeting between Student and Faculty member

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Tangible outcome or product of course (e.g., written and or/oral presentation, examination, research project, etc.)

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Identify the basis of evaluation for grade (e.g., examination, paper, project, etc.)

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Student Panther Number \_\_\_\_\_ Student name \_\_\_\_\_

Student E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Student  
signature \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Chair  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed form with your bibliography to Tawanna Tookes,  
Office 822.

Sample Prospectus or Dissertation  
Title Page

**PERSISTENCE OF VISION:  
THE CENSORSHIP OF MOTION PICTURES IN GEORGIA**

by  
Sara Anne Mendelsohn

A Dissertation Prospectus  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment for the  
Degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in Communication  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Georgia State University

**Committee**

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Chair

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Member

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Member

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Member

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Member

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Date

Chair, Department of Communication