

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

“New Graduate Curriculum Proposal for the Department of Communication Studies”

Revise Required Courses for Communication Studies M.A. Degree

A. Proposal Summary and Catalog Copy

1. Summary

The Communication Studies Graduate Program proposes to add three new required courses to the M.A. curriculum: COMM 6011, COMM 6102 and COMM 6103.

2. Proposed Catalog Copy

Degree Requirements

The Master of Arts degree program requires the completion of thirty (30) credit hours of graduate work. All students, regardless of orientation and area of study, must complete five core courses: COMM 6100 Communication Research Methods, COMM 6101 Contemporary Viewpoints in Communication Theory, COMM 6102 Professional Seminar in Communication Studies, COMM 6103 Communication Ethics, and COMM 6011 Topics in Communication Research Methods. Students must also complete an additional 15 hours of COMM credit hours. Students writing a thesis or doing a directed project earn their final six (6) credit hours with these research-based activities. Students electing to sit for the comprehensive examination instead of writing a thesis or conducting a directed project finish up their final six (6) hours with two more elective classes, as the comprehensive examination carries no credit with it. No more than six (6) credit hours may be taken at 5000 level. Successful completion of the degree requires a minimum GPA of 3.0.

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Core Courses

COMM 6100 Communication Research Methods
COMM 6101 Contemporary Viewpoints in Communication Theory
COMM 6102 Professional Seminar in Communication Studies
COMM 6103 Communication Ethics
COMM 6011 Topics in Communication Research Methods

B. Justification

1. In addition to our current two required courses, students earning a M.A. in Communication Studies will be required to take courses in Professional Seminar in Communication Studies, Communication

Ethics and an additional graduate research methods course. Students earning an M.A. degree in Communication Studies should acquire a comprehensive theoretical and methodological foundation that builds disciplinary mastery. The Professional Seminar in Communication Studies course will better introduce students to graduate study in Communication. Currently, instructors attempt to incorporate Professional Seminar material into the COMM 6101 Contemporary Viewpoints in Communication Theory. The result is that both the introduction to graduate study and the discussion of communication theories are diluted. Specific coursework in communication ethics will strengthen graduates of the program by systematically investigating the relationship between the practice of communication and ethical decision-making. The issue of communication ethics transcends contextual boundaries within the discipline, and the specific study of communication ethics will provide students with a stronger introduction to the graduate study of the field. Finally, the discipline of Communication Studies is marked by the use of a wide array of research methodologies. Requiring an additional, focused course in research methods will better prepare students for further academic or professional research in the field.

2. Graduate standing.
3. The proposed curriculum change will improve the scope and quality of the offerings in the Communication Studies M.A. program by providing a more comprehensive curriculum that has greater theoretical and methodological breadth and depth. The courses proposed are of interest to Communication Studies students representing a range of specializations. Additionally, this curriculum change aligns our graduate program more competitively with our aspirant, as well as peer, programs.
4. By increasing the number of required courses, we are streamlining our curriculum to reflect greater immersion in the Communication Studies discipline

C. Impact.

1. The proposed curriculum change will regularly serve graduate students enrolled in the M.A. in Communication Studies program.
2. All newly admitted students in the M.A. program will follow these additional requirements.

3. This proposal eliminates the current six hour cognate requirement for M.A. students in Communication Studies.
4. This proposal will increase the number of required courses M.A. in Communication students must take and eliminate the cognate courses they are now required to take.
 - a. The additional courses will be taught every academic year on a regular basis.
 - b. Contemporary Viewpoints in Communication Theory (current offering) and Professional Seminar in Communication Studies will be offered each fall semester.
 - c. Communication Ethics and Communication Research Methods (current offering) will be offered each spring semester.
 - d. Topics in Research Methods will be offered annually .
 - e. We will eliminate the six hours of cognate courses currently required. This will not affect the content and/or frequency of courses currently offered in Communication Studies.
 - f. We anticipate 10-17 students to be enrolled in each course.
 - g. The enrollment in other courses will not be affected. By eliminating the cognate course requirements outside of the department and replacing it with required courses in the Department, this proposal will increase enrollments in COMM graduate elective courses. Adding core required courses will slightly decrease the number of COMM graduate elective courses that can be offered. The effect on students' choice of elective classes will be modest.
 - h. The cognate requirement will be eliminated from our program.

D. Resources Required to Support Proposal

1. Personnel
 - a. No new faculty positions are needed.

b. Relevant faculty needed for the required courses are listed in each course proposal, as appropriate.

2. Physical Facility.

The current facility is adequate for the proposed curriculum.

3. Equipment and Supplies.

Current equipment and supplies are adequate for the proposed curriculum.

4. Computer.

Current computer resources are adequate for the proposed curriculum.

5. Audio-Visual.

Current audio-visual resources are adequate for the proposed curriculum.

6. Other resources.

No additional resources are required.

E. Consultation with the Library and Other Departments or Units

1. Library Consultation: Library Holdings are adequate.
Initiation of Library Consultation: April 2, 2008

2. Consultation with other departments or units: Other departments or units are not directly affected by this proposal.

F. Initiation and consideration of the proposal

1. Originating Unit: Communication Studies
 1. In a graduate faculty meeting on December 6, 2007 the Department of Communication Studies graduate faculty endorsed this proposal.
2. Other considering units.
 1. None
3. Council on General Education
 1. Not applicable.