GRADUATE HANDBOOK

MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Department of Human Communication Studies
College of Communications
California State University, Fullerton

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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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ADMINISTRATION

Graduate Studies   http://www.fullerton.edu/graduate/

Admissions   http://admissions.fullerton.edu/

Registration & Records http://records.fullerton.edu/

Financial Aid   http://www.fullerton.edu/financialaid/

University Catalog   https://catalog.fullerton.edu/

USEFUL TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Department Graduate Committee. Two tenured or tenure-track communication studies faculty members plus the Graduate Program Director. Makes recommendations regarding program policy and admissions decisions. Hereafter called "Graduate Committee."

Graduate Program Director. Point person for the graduate program. The first person who processes your application and the last person who processes your exit paperwork. Your go-to resource for questions you have about the graduate program and your informal adviser until you pick a Master's Committee Chair. They are able to assist you throughout your Master's program. Please feel free to ask questions or get in touch with them. Hereafter called "Graduate Director."

Committee Chair. Tenured or tenure-track faculty member who serves as your adviser, helps you plan your coursework, and guides your selected exit option. You will pick your own Chair, provided they agree to work with you. Once you and your Chair agree to work together, they are your main adviser (as opposed to the Graduate Director, who would still be happy to see you if you have questions). Work on finding a Chair soon after you enter the program. Ask professors you have class with or the Graduate Director for advice on how to find a Chair. Usually, it should be someone with similar theoretical or methodological research interests as you, but it's not an absolute requirement. Hereafter called "Chair."

Master's Committee. Three to four tenured or tenure-track faculty members who decide whether you complete the requirements of the Master's program. They are led by and include your Chair. After you select a Chair, you and your Chair work on identifying two more department faculty members who are a good fit for your committee, based on your interests and goals. Most committees are two faculty plus the Chair, but there are cases where students may add an extra member. Generally, your committee members each have something to contribute to your exit option: theory, methods, or organization/writing/strategizing. Hereafter called "Committee."

Exit options. Called a "culminating experience" by the Graduate Studies Office, this is a final product you produce to demonstrate your mastery of communication studies and eligibility to graduate from the program. You can choose one of three: comprehensive exams, thesis, or project. None is easier; none is better. You should work towards one with your committee based on your interests and goals.

Comprehensive exams. Essay exams. Your committee provides you with a list of about eight questions. You have a few months to prepare your answers. Then, on two days scheduled approximately around the end of October and end of March, you sit in a room with a computer and type out your answers to four of these questions. You don't know which ones you get, so you have to study for all of them.

Thesis. A long research paper, often longer than the typical journal article you might read in class. Theses have lit reviews, methods, data collection, analysis, discussion, and more. Requires you to produce original research.

Project. A nontraditional genre for academic production that requires scholarly research. You have to read research but what you produce will not look like a traditional academic paper. This could be a handbook, training manual, lesson plans, instructional videos, online portfolio, etc. Note: this is not a happy medium between thesis and exams. It is its own artifact, with its own challenges and rewards.

Graduate Studies Office. Oversees graduate studies across CSUF. Their website has lots of useful info, including tutoring, forms, thesis requirements, workshops, and more! Check them out.

Andersen Room. Grad student study area and dept. conference room. Generally open 10am–4pm M–F.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

The Communication Studies MA is designed for students who have an interest in and background for advanced study of communication theories and processes. The degree is designed to provide broad exposure to the discipline and, at the same time, allow students to specialize in one area (e.g., argumentation and persuasion, critical-cultural studies, digital media, health, instructional, intercultural, interpersonal, organizational, rhetoric, etc.). The MA is an advanced degree and all students are expected to complete comprehensive exams, a thesis, or a research project. The objectives of the MA program include: improving students' academic and professional competence in communication studies, developing students' research capabilities, increasing students' knowledge in their area of specialization, preparing students for advanced work toward the doctoral degree, and for those students planning teaching careers, to improve their teaching skills.

Students in the program are expected to demonstrate a high degree of intellectual competence and scholarly discipline; to develop the ability to evaluate concepts, research, and theories critically; and to demonstrate mastery of an area of specialization. These goals are met through a variety of experiences. Similar to undergraduate work, graduate students are expected to complete a series of courses. Graduate education, however, is not limited to coursework. Graduate students are expected to read widely in their areas of specialization and integration and discuss their ideas with other graduate students and faculty outside the classroom context. A significant amount of graduate education comes from informal interaction outside the classroom.

The level of achievement required of graduate students is considerably higher than in undergraduate work. Students are expected to demonstrate qualities of self-reliance, creativity, accuracy, scholarly integrity, and ethical conduct. Students are expected to be familiar with the procedures, guidelines, and regulations which apply to this program, as outlined in this handbook and on the Graduate Studies site.

ADMISSIONS

CRITERIA

Applicants must have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. (See the section on Graduate Program Degrees in the University Catalog for a complete statement of the procedures for admission.) The Graduate Director is available to answer questions on the admission process. All applicants will be notified in writing of admission decisions.

The Graduate Program Committee considers the below factors in evaluating applications:

Coursework	Background and coursework completed in communication studies. Students with majors outside the communication discipline will be considered, but may be required to take up to nine units of background studies in communication to prepare for the program.
GPA	3.0 or above in the last 60 units attempted is expected.
Recommendations	Three recommendation forms from people familiar with the applicant's academic abilities. These should be from professors with whom the applicant has studied or from professionals with whom the applicant has worked. If the applicant is applying for a Graduate Student Assistantship, the attached letters should also indicate support for a TA or FA position.

Cover Letter	A cover letter from the applicant stating their professional interests, goals, and objectives in obtaining a Communication Studies MA. Send the letter directly to the Graduate Director.
Writing Sample	Preferably academic writing from an upper-division course. The writing sample should be substantial enough to demonstrate the applicant's writing, reasoning, and research ability. If the applicant does not have a 10-20 pp. sample, multiple shorter samples should be provided.

PROCEDURES

Application for the Communication Studies MA requires filing different materials with the Office of Admissions and the Graduate Director. The Graduate Committee cannot process applications until all documents are on file.

Admissions	A formal application for admission through Cal State Apply. Official transcripts from all colleges or universities.
Graduate Director	Official or unofficial transcripts from all colleges or universities. Three recommendations (see recommendation form). Cover letter. Writing sample. Graduate assistantship application if interested in assistantship.

DEADLINES

March 01	Fall admission.
October 01	Spring admission.

GETTING STARTED

MATRICULATE

New graduate students are "conditionally" classified until they matriculate in the degree program. Matriculation in the degree program is accomplished by completing the "classification" process which involves filing a Graduate Study Plan (GSP). The GSP is a plan of study which lists the 30-units the student will take to graduate, and indicates the exit option, and lists the student's Committee. The GSP is approved by the student's Committee and should be filed prior to completing 13 units of coursework. (HCOM 500 and HCOM 536 should be taken as soon as possible). Until students have selected a Chair, the Graduate Director functions as adviser. Students should confer with the Graduate Director to plan their semester's coursework.

FORM A COMMITTEE

Find a Chair   Committees should be content and/or methodological experts in the student's research area. Students should discuss their research interests and potential Chairs with the Graduate Director. After meeting with the Graduate Director to develop a list of potential Chairs, students should arrange to meet with the faculty on the list to discuss their interests. Selection of a Chair is a joint decision between the student and faculty involved. Students request that faculty members serve as Chair and faculty members must agree to serve. Each faculty member determines the committees they want to Chair and serve on.

Form a Committee   Committee composition should be a joint decision between students and Chair (at least two out of the minimum three members of the Committee must be from the Department of Human Communication Studies). After discussing possible members with their Chair, the student should meet with those faculty and ask them to serve. Students may include a non-departmental faculty member as an additional member of the committee, provided that member is a faculty member in a graduate school. (It is understood that the department will not be responsible for financial support such as travel, accommodations or other expenses incurred due to non-departmental participation).

Selection Form   After everyone has agreed to serve on the Committee, the student obtains a Committee Selection Form from the Department office and obtains the necessary signatures. File the completed form with the Graduate Director.

Don't Delay   Students should not delay forming a Committee. The student can select a Chair in one specialization and make sure that the other members of the Committee have expertise in other specializations under consideration. Students should keep in mind that the Committee is not "written in stone" and can be changed as circumstances warrant. If students are unsure whether they should continue with the same committee or change committees, it is recommended that they consult with the Graduate Director. It is important to form a Committee as early as possible so that the GSP can be filed before completion of the first 13 units.

DEVELOP A GRADUATE STUDY PLAN

Graduate study plans are approved by the student's Committee and checked by the Graduate Director to ensure compliance with Department and University guidelines. GSPs are "plans" for study. When the GSP has been approved by the student's Committee, the Graduate Director, and the Office of Graduate Studies, it serves as a contract for the degree.

GSPs must be filed before completion of 13 units. The first step in filing the GSP is for the student to meet with their Chair to discuss the plan. The student and Chair should draft a GSP. Once a GSP is drafted, the Committee should discuss the GSP. Committees consider the following factors in evaluating GSPs: (1) the requirements for the MA degree; (2) the student's future professional objectives; (3) the breadth and depth of the student's knowledge and training prior to admission to the degree; and (4) the breadth of the graduate coursework and the depth of the graduate coursework in the student's area of concentration. In general, the GSP must demonstrate that the student will meet the requirements for the MA degree; include no fewer than 30 units of 400- and 500-level coursework; and designate comprehensive exam areas or select the thesis or project option.

Changes can be petitioned by the student on the "Request for Change of Study Plan" form. Coursework and exit option changes must be petitioned prior to modifying the approved GSP. Petitions to change courses on approved GSPs must be filed before registering for the course(s) to be added. Changes must be approved by the student's Committee, Graduate Director, and the Office of Graduate Studies. Courses not on the GSP taken prior to the petition for substitution cannot be included on the GSP. Courses cannot be removed from a GSP after the student has taken them.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this section is to outline the requirements for the Communication Studies MA. All requirements must be met in order to graduate. Students are responsible for seeing that all requirements for the degree are met. Questions should be addressed to their Chair and/or Graduate Director.

Unit Requirements   A minimum of 30 units of 400- and 500-level coursework. 24 of the 30 units must be taken in residence. A minimum of 15 units of 500-level coursework must be taken in residence. Up to six units of 500-level work may be transferred, provided the student received a "B" or better. After students begin the MA program, they must ask their Committee to take courses at other universities.

Required Courses   Two courses are required: HCOM 500 (Research in Communication Studies) and HCOM 536 (Seminar in Communication and Rhetorical Theory). These courses should be taken within the first two semesters of graduate study. Students must also take at least three seminars from among the following: HCOM 507 (Seminar in Critical/Cultural Studies), HCOM 509 (Seminar in Qualitative Methods), HCOM 510 (Seminar in Interpersonal and Relational Communication), HCOM 520 (Seminar in Group Communication), HCOM 522 (Seminar in Intercultural Communication), HCOM 525 (Seminar in Organizational Communication), HCOM 530 (Seminar in Rhetorical Theory and Criticism), and HCOM 535 (Seminar in Argumentation and Persuasion).

Other Courses   Students may take nine units of 400-level coursework approved for graduate credit at CSUF. 400-level courses are approved for graduate credit by Graduate Studies and require work over and above the work undergraduates do in the course. Students who take background studies should not include this coursework on their GSP. Students must petition their Committee to take courses outside the department (six units maximum). No more than six units of HCOM 599 (Independent Study) may be included on a GSP. Titles and instructors for independent studies should be specified on the GSP. Students may not retake the same 400-level course at the graduate level if they took it as undergraduates in our department.

Exit Options   Students have three exit options, depending on their interests and goals. Consult with your Chair or the Graduate Director to determine which is best for you. The following table breaks down the units/coursework required per option.

Exit Option	Coursework	Exit Units	Total Units
Exams	30 units	0 units	30 units
Project	27 units	3 units	30 units
Thesis	24 units	6 units	30 units

Grade Requirements   All courses on the GSP must be taken for a letter grade. Students completing background studies must receive a "B" or better in each course. Students must have grades of "C" or better in all courses on their GSP and at least a "B" in HCOM 500 and HCOM 536. Students must repeat courses on their GSPs in which they receive a grade lower than a "C." Courses can be repeated only once. When courses are repeated, both grades are included in the GPA. Students receiving an incomplete in a course must complete the work for the course within one year following the end of the term in which the work was assigned. Incompletes are subject to the terms specified by university policy.

Probation   Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) in all work taken for the degree and for all courses on the GSP. Failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA will result in academic probation and possibly disqualification. Up to two courses may be added to a GSP after it has been filed to bring the GPA for the GSP up to 3.0. If the GSP includes nine units of 400-level courses, the courses added must be 500-level.

Graduation   At the beginning of the last semester of graduate work (or, if graduating during the summer, the beginning of spring semester) a student must file an Application for Graduation. Application deadlines are early in the semester. See Graduate Studies website for specific deadlines.

Time limit   The time limit for the degree is 5 years (10 consecutive semesters). The time limit commences with the beginning of the semester of the earliest course listed on the GSP (including transfer courses). Students needing longer than 5 years must petition the Office of Graduate Studies through the Communication Studies Graduate Committee for an extension of the time limit to 7 years (14 semesters). Coursework older than 5 years (7 years with an extension) must be repeated. However, a maximum of 9 units may be validated by taking an exam or the equivalent at the discretion of the Graduate Director and the Associate Vice President for Academic Programs (or designee). Transfer coursework and any coursework older than 10 years may not be validated.

Enrollment   Students must maintain continuous enrollment until graduation. Students must either be enrolled for coursework or register for Graduate Studies (GRAD) 700 to be maintained in the program. Students may register for GRAD 700 through Extended Education for two semesters. After that they must pay the full amount and register through regular university registration. Leaves of absence may be granted for one semester. Forms are available in the Office of Graduate Studies. Students must be in good academic standing and have completed six credit hours in residence at the University to be eligible for a leave.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

The purpose of comprehensive exams is twofold. First, to motivate students to systematically review and integrate material they have learned in the program. Second, to provide a procedure whereby students can demonstrate their mastery of the material learned. Students must successfully pass comprehensive exams to graduate.

Generally, it is expected that students will demonstrate both breadth and depth (via specialization/integration) of knowledge. Students are expected to be familiar with relevant scholars and current research findings in the literature. Students also should be able to demonstrate a solid grasp of major theories and concepts. The exams will be written in such a way that students can demonstrate their abilities to think analytically, draw relationships between ideas studied, make comparisons and draw contrasts, and synthesize knowledge in meaningful ways.

Application Deadlines September 01 for October exams.
                          February 01 for March exams.

PROCEDURES

Written comprehensive exams are offered in October and March. Exact exam dates are announced each semester. Students should plan to take comprehensive exams in their last semester of coursework. To be eligible to take the exams, a student must be classified (i.e., the GSP must be approved by the Graduate Studies Office prior to applying for the exams), have completed relevant coursework, have a 3.0 GPA, and have applied for and been approved to take the exam. Comprehensive Exam forms are available in the Department office and online. One copy of the form should be submitted to the Graduate Director and one copy should be given to the Chair.

The department identified four areas of proficiency we can reasonably expect of graduate students:

> **disciplinary:** understanding how their area of specialization fits within the communication discipline as a whole or a meta-theoretical question about the discipline or situating communication within academia more generally.

> **specialization (primary):** expertise in theoretical debates, issues, and current topics within their primary area.

> **integration (secondary):** knowledge of how their primary and secondary areas intersect.

> **methods/application:** knowledge of methodological questions within their area and/or the ability to apply theory to specific, real-world communication problems.

Consequently, comprehensive exams are expected to assess proficiency in each of these areas.

Students are encouraged to discuss comprehensive exam procedures with their Committee when they file a GSP. Students should plan at least a few months of study time ahead of the exams in order to prepare. The Committee has at least two options in guiding the student preparing for the exams: (1) a reading list over which the student will be examined, or (2) a list of potential questions containing a minimum of two questions from each of the four proficiency areas above (min. eight questions total).

Common specializations include but are not limited to: argumentation; computer mediated communication; conflict, mediation, and negotiation; critical-cultural studies; digital culture; ethics and communication; family communication; health communication; instructional communication; intercultural communication; interpersonal communication; nonverbal communication; organizational

communication; persuasion; rhetorical theory and criticism; small group communication; social media; and sports communication. This is not an exhaustive list and we do not offer graduate coursework in some of these areas but students may pursue independent studies in consultation with a faculty member. A clear plan for preparing for comprehensive exams in areas where courses are not offered must be included when the GSP is filed (e.g., completing one or more independent studies, completing additional readings based on a reading list). Other concentrations must be approved by the students' Committee.

The students' Committee submits the final comprehensive exam questions to the Graduate Director. Comprehensive exams are taken over a period of two days. Students take the exam in an on-campus location determined by the Graduate Director (usually the Andersen Room, CP-420-12). Exams are administered on university Apple laptops. The time limit for each question is 90 minutes. Students receive two questions each day. The Committee Chair is expected to communicate to the student which questions are on which days. (e.g., Day 1 is disciplinary and specialization. Day 2 is integration and methods/application.) Students are encouraged to contact DSS if they require accommodations.

EVALUATION

Criteria	Committee members will judge each answer to be either adequate (passing) or inadequate (failing). Adequate answers should:
	
	    o Be complete (i.e., answer all parts of the question) and responsive to the question.
	
	    o Be persuasive, compelling, and well-reasoned.
	
	    o Demonstrate competent graduate-level writing skills (e.g., related to issues of clarity, organization, and grammar).
	
	    o Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the topic area(s).
	
	    o Include in-text citations of relevant, primary sources.

Assessment	Committee members should first individually assess a student's responses. After doing so, committee members may choose to confer based at their own discretion and then vote on whether the answer is adequate or inadequate. Decisions about whether each question is adequate or inadequate need not be unanimous. A question will be deemed inadequate if two or more committee members assess it as such.
Retake	If a student's response(s) to any question(s)—whether from the general or specialization/integration pool—is (are) deemed to be inadequate, they will be given the opportunity to retake just the failed question(s) one time. The question(s) given for the retake may be the same OR different as compared to the original exam (at the discretion of two or more committee members), but will be from the same (original) pool. One retake of the comprehensive exams (or a part of the exams) is allowed.
Defense	Although an oral defense is not standard, it may be included at the discretion of the Committee after the student has failed to adequately answer comprehensive exam question(s) on two attempts. If two or more Committee members vote in favor of an oral defense, an oral defense will be held. At the defense, the student addresses their most recent answer(s) to the question(s)

under consideration. Afterward, the Committee confers in private to determine whether the oral defense sufficiently addresses the Committee's concerns with prior exam answers. The Committee votes on the outcome of an oral defense. If two or more members deem the answers inadequate, the defense is failed.

Outcome   Passing comprehensive exams qualifies the student to graduate, provided all other degree requirements are completed. Failing comprehensive exams on a retake or oral defense leads to disqualification. Once comprehensive exams have been taken, the student cannot change exit options (i.e., change to thesis or project).

THESES AND PROJECTS

This section outlines procedures for the thesis and project exit options. The Committee Chair is primarily responsible for guiding the student under both options, but the full Committee must be consulted at each step. While an initial decision must be made prior to filing the GSP, students can change their option with the approval of their Committee by petitioning the Graduate Director. Theses and projects have similar requirements: proposal, proposal defense, proposal approval, writing/rewriting, draft approved for defense, oral defense, finishing final draft, and filing required information with the Office of Graduate Studies and Graduate Director. The steps in writing a thesis or project are addressed later in the handbook.

THESES

Course Registration. Students completing a thesis must register for six units of HCOM 598A, 598B, and 598C (two units each). Students can register for all credits in one semester or spread them out over three semesters. The student's Chair will submit grades upon completion of requirements. A Report in Progress (RP) grade is entered until requirements are completed. To register for HCOM 598, students file an "Independent Study" form and receive a five-digit schedule number to register for the course.

A thesis involves scholarly research in the student's concentration. The California Code of Regulations: Title 5 Education, Section 40510 defines a thesis as:

> the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation.

The scope of a thesis is approximately that of an article in a major journal in the field, though the written length is often longer than a typical article. The thesis allows the student to demonstrate their ability to conduct scholarly research. Guidelines for writing theses are provided later in this handbook.

PROJECTS

Course Registration. Students completing projects must register for three units of HCOM 597. The student's Chair will submit grades upon completion of requirements. A Report in Progress (RP) grade is entered until requirements are completed. To register for HCOM598, students file an "Independent Study" form and receive a five-digit schedule number to register for the course.

A project is defined by the California State University Education Code, Title V, Section 40510 as:

> a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation.

The following are the most common types of projects approved at CSUF:

A creative project is an original contribution to the verbal, visual, or performing arts. Examples include: a video of public service announcements to be used in a nonsmoking campaign, a completed play for presentation by a readers' theatre troupe.

A curriculum project contributes to a field of teaching by enhancing communication of a subject matter. Examples include: a course of study, a training and development leader's manual, an instructional manual, or a design for a new teaching method.

An investigative or research project contributes to the disciplines or the professions by adding to technical/professional knowledge or by providing an original application of technical/professional knowledge in the professional field. Examples include: building a device, a field study, a case study, a documentary report, or a professional article of publishable quality.

Projects may be presented in a digital form, as appropriate, including but not limited to multimedia presentations, YouTube videos, online portfolios and training modules.

GUIDELINES FOR THESES AND PROJECTS

The purpose of this section is to specify some general guidelines for theses and projects in order to create realistic expectations and increase the likelihood that the thesis and/or project will be a positive learning experience. The guidelines presented are suggestions and some Chairs/Committees may prefer other procedures. If you have any questions on what your Chair and/or Committee's expectations are, ask them.

Committee	When you begin work on your thesis or project, you will have a Committee you selected early in your program. This committee may or may not be an appropriate committee to guide you in your thesis or project. If you are unsure whether your committee is appropriate, you should talk with your Chair and/or the Graduate Director. It is expected that some students will adjust Committees.
Brainstorming	The initial step in doing a thesis or project is to sit down with the Chair and discuss research topics as well as consult with other Committee members as appropriate. Once research topics are "finalized," the student writes a proposal with the Chair's guidance.
Proposal	A proposal consists of a rationale or justification and a thorough literature review. A quantitative or qualitative study will also include the research questions or hypotheses and an outline of appropriate methods. A rhetorical or critical study will also identify a thesis, exigence, or intervention; an archive or artifact(s); and appropriate analytic framework. Expect to write several drafts of the proposal with the Chair prior to giving the proposal to the other committee members to read. Once there is a draft of the proposal with which both the Chair and student are satisfied, the proposal is distributed among the Committee. All members of the Committee read the proposal and, if the

proposal seems "defensible," schedule a meeting with the student to discuss and approve the proposal.

Approval	The full Committee meets with the student to discuss the proposal and approve the proposal or recommend necessary changes prior to approval. Once approved, the proposal becomes a "contract" between the student and their Committee for completing the thesis or project. At this meeting, the Committee should set expectations for when the Committee expects to be consulted during the research/writing process.
IRB	Any research involving "human subjects" must be approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to collecting data. After your proposal is approved, you should work with your Chair on submitting IRB if necessary.
Data Collection	Your Chair should approve final data collection procedures before you begin. Questionnaires, for example, may go through several drafts and pre-tests.
Drafting	Drafting is an iterative process, primarily undertaken with the Chair. Typically, Committee members are not given drafts of sections until they are approved by the Chair. Students should plan writing such that they have sufficient time for their Committee to read full drafts prior to receiving approval for an oral defense. A "defensible" draft of the project should be provided to all Committee members at least two weeks prior to the oral defense. Students may be required to make further revisions after the oral defense.
Defense	The defense is a public presentation of your work. Announcements of the defense will be posted at least one week prior to the oral defense and your colleagues invited to attend. Your defense should be scheduled at least one week before you plan to submit your final draft to Graduate Studies.
Schedule	To complete a thesis or project that involves straight-forward data collection/analysis (e.g., surveys from students in U.S.) in May, you should plan on having your thesis or project proposal approved by the end of Fall semester (e.g., December of preceding year). If you want to finish in the Fall and your data analysis is relatively simple, you should plan on having your proposal approved before Fall classes begin. If your data collection is not straight-forward (e.g., content, historical/ critical, rhetorical analyses) or involves data from nonstudent samples (e.g., organizations, married couples) or other cultures, adjust your time frame appropriately. Remember, the time necessary to complete a qualitative, rhetorical, or critical thesis or project is often longer than that for a quantitative thesis or project after the proposal is approved.
Turnaround Time	Your Chair and Committee members serve on committees over and above their regular responsibilities. Expect a minimum of two weeks turnaround time.
Deadlines	Make sure your thesis is finalized and ready for signatures at least one week prior to Graduate Studies deadlines, as posted on their site. Students are responsible for complying with all appropriate University deadlines.
Thesis Submission	There is a complicated process you need to follow to submit your thesis to Graduate Studies. Make sure you're aware of the process and account for it in scheduling your writing/defense/final submission.

Format	All theses and projects should follow the most recent edition of a recognized publishing style guide (e.g., APA, MLA, Harvard, Chicago, etc.), determined in conjunction with their committee. Theses and projects are also required to meet the requirements in the "Office of Graduate Studies Thesis Manual." You are responsible for meeting the format guidelines in this document. You should put the first draft of your proposal in the correct format.
Acknowledgements	Include an acknowledgements section and thank those who helped you finish.
Dissemination	After completing your thesis or project, you might consider submitting it for presentation at a conference or for publication in a journal. If you are unsure whether the quality of the thesis or project is sufficient to warrant submission, consult with your Chair. Also, if your Chair or another committee member made major contributions to your thesis, you should consider asking them to be a co-author of the manuscript being submitted (note: APA ethical guidelines require that you be first author, a policy the department supports regardless of which style guide you use for your thesis/project). This decision should be based on the contribution others made to your study. If you used data that your Chair or another committee member already collected for another study, it is expected that they will be a co-author on any submission resulting from your thesis or project. Most, if not all, papers written from theses or projects should include the Chair as a co-author. There are very few, if any, theses or projects in which the Chair does not make a major contribution.
Summer Work	It is expected that theses and projects will be completed during the regular academic year. Since summer is not part of the regular work schedule for faculty, they may not be available to assist a student during the summer. If students plan to complete theses or projects over the summer, they should first get approval from their committee (they are doing you a big favor if they work over the summer). Then, students should file both Departmental and Graduate Studies "summer completion forms." These forms should be filed by May 15 of the year in which the student expects to complete degree requirements.

Sample Thesis Outline (Quantitative/Qualitative)

Chapter 1	Literature review + rationale + RQs or hypotheses
Chapter 2	Methods
Chapter 3	Results
Chapter 4	Discussion
Chapter 5	Summary, Limitations, Future directions

Sample Thesis Outline (Rhetorical/Critical)

Chapter 1	Literature review (theory) + rationale/exigence + thesis and/or intervention
Chapter 2	Literature review (methods, analytic framework)
Chapter 3	Case study 1
Chapter 4	Case study 2
Chapter 5	Discussion

Sample Project Outline

Projects are called "projects" because the product is atypical of the scholarly genre, despite being based in the research literature. Projects have as much theoretical/methodological grounding as theses but are organized according to the generic conventions of the product agreed upon with the Committee.

GUIDELINES FOR THESIS/PROJECT DEFENSE

Students must publicly defend theses/projects. The purpose of the defense is to publicly recognize your accomplishments in completing the thesis/project, and to provide a forum where final changes to theses can be discussed. The guidelines for oral defenses are as follows:

Scheduling	Oral defenses are public. Graduate students and faculty in Communication Studies must be invited. The Chair schedules and announces the oral defense in consultation with the student and other committee members. Defenses are scheduled only when the Committee members agree the thesis/project is ready for defense. Committee members should provide comments on complete drafts of the thesis/project and the student should make appropriate changes prior to scheduling a defense.
Announcement	Defenses should be announced at least one week prior to the defense date. Defenses must be announced through an email to the Communication Studies faculty and Graduate Students. Chairs may announce defenses through other media as they see fit. The announcement should provide the student's name; the title and an abstract of the thesis/project; the date, time, and place of the defense; and the student's committee members. Oral defenses typically last 60–90 minutes, but remember to schedule 90–120 minutes for the room for setup.
Moderation	The Chair will moderate the oral defense.
Presentation	Students are expected to begin the defense by summarizing their thesis/project. Students should remember that the audience will not have read their theses/project so the summary should be sufficient to inform the audience about the topic, rationale, research questions/hypotheses (if appropriate), methods, findings, and conclusions.
Questions	After the summary, committee members will ask questions. After committee members have asked questions, the Chair will provide an opportunity for audience members to ask questions.
Deliberation	After the audience has asked questions, the audience and student will be asked to leave the room. Committee members will evaluate the student's performance and discuss changes that are needed to finalize the thesis/project. Once committee discussion concludes, the student is invited to return to the room. The student and committee then discuss final revisions in private.
Afterward	Generally, students should expect to make final changes to their thesis/project after the defense. Students, therefore, should ensure that their defenses take place in a time frame that will allow the changes to be made prior to submitting their thesis/project to Graduate Studies (e.g., defenses should be at least one week prior to deadline for submission of their thesis/project). The student's Committee signs the thesis/project only after final revisions are made and the thesis is ready for submission to Graduate Studies.

Sample Defense Agenda (60 min.)

Call to Order	05 min.	Committee Chair
Presentation	20 min.	Student
Questions	15 min.	Committee
Open Floor	10 min.	Committee and other attendees
Deliberation	05 min.	Committee
Discussion	05 min.	Committee and student
End		

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate Student Assistantships available through the department do not offer full financial support. They are intended as a mechanism to provide those interested in working in the classroom, debate room, or otherwise in academia a way to get experience, mentorship, and a competitive C.V. Applicants should not expect Assistantships to suffice as a sole source of income.

Teaching Associate and Forensic Assistant positions are available through the Department of Human Communication Studies. Teaching Associates generally teach HCOM 100: Introduction to Human Communication and/or HCOM 102: Public Speaking. Forensics Assistants work with the forensics program. On a limited basis, it is possible that Teaching Assistant positions will become available. Teaching Assistants generally assist faculty with large sections of courses or assist with faculty research.

Application and renewal decisions are made by the Department Chair in consultation with the Graduate Director and, as appropriate, the Graduate Committee, Basic Course Director, and Forensics Director.

Application	Applicants must fill out a separate Graduate Student Assistantship form if they are interested in a position. Assistantship decisions are made separately from admissions decisions, though the application materials may inform the decision. Students admitted to the MA program who are required to take background studies are not eligible for Assistantships until after background studies are completed. (They may apply the semester following completion of their background studies). Current MA students applying for assistantships should submit the Graduate Assistantship form, a current unofficial CSUF transcript, and recommendations from three faculty members. Students switching between TA/FA positions are considered "new applicants," not "renewals."
Eligibility	It is expected that Assistants will maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA.
Renewals	Renewals are not automatic. Assistantship renewal requests will be based in part on a combination of GPA, Student Opinion Questionnaires, and other data as available and appropriate. Deadlines to request renewal are October 01 for Spring semester and March 01 for Fall semester.

COMMUNICATION STUDIES FACULTY

Firstname Lastname	Specialization
Rank office // email // extension Pronouns	Education

Jon Bruschke	argumentation, forensics, legal communication
Professor 01 // jbruschke // 3272 he/him/his	B.A., M.A. California State University, Fullerton; Ph.D. University of Utah.

K. Jeanine Congalton	rhetorical theory and criticism, argumentation, forensics.
Associate Professor 06 // kcongalton // 3575 she/her/hers	B.S., Illinois State University; M.A., North Dakota State University; Ph.D., University of Utah.

Tenzin Dorjee	intergroup communication, intercultural communication, identity and conflict management, and peace-building.
Associate Professor 26 // tdorjee // 3894 he/him/his	B.A., Punjab University, Chandigarh, India; B.A., M.A., California State University, Long Beach; Ph.D., University of California, Santa Barbara.

Claudia A. Evans-Zepeda	intercultural communication, Latina/o critical race theory, migration activism, social justice.
Assistant Professor 17 // cevans-zepeda // 3579 she/her/hers	B.A., M.A., California State University, Los Angeles; Ph.D., University of New Mexico.

Javette G. Hayes	interpersonal communication theory, close relationships, emotions, conflict management, qualitative methods.
Associate Professor 22 // jhayes // 2954 she/her/hers	B.A., William Jewell College; M.A. Illinois State University; Ph.D. Northwestern University.

Zac D. Johnson	teaching and learning, student-student communication, college student experience, instructional communication, educational leadership, sport communication.
Assistant Professor 25 // zjohnson // 3104 he/him/his	B.A., M.S., University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Ph.D., West Virginia University.

Jessica Kamrath

Assistant Professor
19 // jkamrath // 3272
she/her/hers

organizational communication, leadership communication, sport communication, transformative pedagogical methods, qualitative methods.

B.A., B.S. University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh; M.A., Arizona State University-West; Ph.D., Arizona State University-Tempe.

Patty Malone

Associate Professor
27 // pmalone // 3273
she/her/hers

organizational communication, organizational conflict.

B.A., California State University, Sacramento; M.A., University of Southern Mississippi; Ph.D., University of Texas, Austin.

Summer C. Martin

Associate Professor
23 // sumartin // 4197
she/her/hers

health and interpersonal communication, qualitative methods.

B.A., University of California, Santa Barbara; M.A., San Diego State University; Ph.D., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

S. Irene Matz

Associate Professor
11 // imatz // 4418
she/her/hers

leadership, education, organizational communication, uncertainty reduction

B.A., M.A. California State University, Fullerton; Ph.D. Claremont Graduate University.

Shanara Reid-Brinkley

Assistant Professor
430-B // sreid-brinkley // 6517
she/her/hers

rhetoric, political advocacy, anti-blackness, social movement theory, black feminist and black queer studies, critical/cultural studies

B.A., Emory University; M.A., University of Alabama; Ph.D., University of Georgia

Alyssa A. Samek

Assistant Professor
07 // asamek // 3482
she/her/hers

rhetoric, public address, social movements, feminist and LGBTQ studies.

B.A., University of St. Thomas; M.A., Colorado State University; Ph.D., University of Maryland.

Dan Sutko

Assistant Professor
21 // dsutko // 3260
he/him/his

critical/qualitative methods, history/philosophy of communication, poststructuralism, critical-cultural theory, digital media, robots/AI.

B.A., Davidson College; M.S., Ph.D., North Carolina State University.

Tara Tatwin

Assistant Professor
08 // ttatwin // 3851
she/her/hers

quantitative methods, interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, social media.

B.A., Assumption University Bangkok, Thailand; M.A., California State University, Los Angeles; Ph.D., Arizona State University.

Jason J. Teven

Professor
04 // jteven // 4755

instructional, interpersonal, and organizational communication.

B.S., Carroll College; M.S., Illinois State University; Ed.D., West Virginia University.

Erika M. Thomas

Associate Professor
03 // erthomas // 8319
she/her/hers

rhetorical criticism and theory, critical/cultural theory (feminist and queer rhetorical theory), argumentation and forensics.

B.A., John Carroll University; M.A. Communication, Miami University; Ph.D., Wayne State University.

Stella Ting-Toomey

Professor
28 // sting // 3691
she/her/hers

interpersonal and intercultural communication, conflict.

B.A., M.A., University of Iowa; Ph.D., University of Washington.

STUDENT RESOURCES

The Communication Studies MA program enforces and abides by all university policies outlined here: http://fdc.fullerton.edu/teaching/syllabus.php

Graduate Student Success Center

The Graduate Student Success Center (GSSC) at CSUF offers you many resources: graduate learning specialist tutoring and academic assistance, writing tutoring, workshops on academic and professional development, and a food pantry.

http://www.fullerton.edu/graduate/soar/index.php

IT Help

Fullerton offers 24 hr. help desk at (657) 278-8888. The below link is your one stop shop for all IT help and resources.

http://www.fullerton.edu/IT/students/

University Learning Center

There are lots of good resources here, from online writing tutoring to general writing resources!

Appointments: https://apps.fullerton.edu/learningcenter/

Other resources: http://www.fullerton.edu/ulc/resources.asp

Career Center

http://www.fullerton.edu/career/

Counseling

Mental health and challenges to mental health are part of life. Don't go it alone.

Counseling phone: (657) 278-3040

http://www.fullerton.edu/studentwellness/caps/

National suicide prevention lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

Police

Campus police are available for emergencies as well as non-emergency situations such as escorting you to your car or between buildings in the dark. 911 will work for emergency situations within a mile of campus, connecting you directly to CSUF police. For non-emergency situations, use 657-278-2515.

Documentation / Immigration Status

Per a memorandum from CSU Chancellor White (2/22/17): if anyone on campus approaches you asking for information or documentation regarding immigration, you should not answer any questions and immediately contact the 24-hour University Police hotline listed below where a University Police officer will speak with whomever is asking questions. Here's what President Garcia emailed on 2/22/17: "I wholeheartedly support his statement and ask that you read it carefully. In light of one of the recommendations, Cal State Fullerton's University Police Department has set up a dispatch line that will be covered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The phone number is (657) 278-2578."

Sexual Violence

In addition to contacting the police or the counseling center, the below are options:

24-hour Rape Crisis hotlines (714-957-2737; 949-831-9110)

Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (800-656-4673)

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at the WoMen's Center (see below) to obtain information about various support services or seek out the Title IX Coordinator..

CSUF Title IX coordinator at http://www.fullerton.edu/titleix/

Cultural and Resource Centers

African American Resource Center: http://www.fullerton.edu/aarc/

Asian Pacific Islander Resource Center: http://www.fullerton.edu/aparc/

Chicana/o Resource Center: http://www.fullerton.edu/crc/

Disability Support Services: http://www.fullerton.edu/dss/

LGBTQ Resource Center: http://www.fullerton.edu/lgbtq/

Titan Dreamers Resource Center: http://www.fullerton.edu/tdrc/

Veterans Resource Center: http://www.fullerton.edu/veterans/

WoMen's and Adult Reentry Center: http://www.fullerton.edu/womenscenter/

STUDY SPACES

Here is a noncomprehensive list of study spaces. Some are quieter than others. Explore campus and find a place that fits your needs!

College Park   Andersen Research Library (CP-420-12).

Pollak Library   1st floor: computers, help desk, and tables (typically loud).
2nd floor: computers & tables.
3rd floor: computers & cubicles (individual quiet place).
4th floor: computers, tables, and portable white boards (group study areas).
Group and study rooms available on all floors. To reserve a room go into the library to the help desk or check the library website.

Mihaylo   Spaces on the 1st floor and spread throughout.

Titan Student Union   Grand Stair Studio, underground study spaces, and table spaces.

University Hall   Tables and benches available for quiet study space.

Langsdorf Hall   Computers, free printing, and study spaces.

Visual Arts Building   Study spaces around student art work.

Arboretum   Relaxing and meditating spaces for studying with available benches.

PROGRAM CHECKLIST

- o Read the handbook. (Congratulations! You're already doing it. Check this off.)
- o Meet with Graduate Director to determine first semester coursework.
- o Meet with Graduate Director to discuss potential Chairs.
- o Meet with potential Chairs suggested by Graduate Director.
- o Select a Chair.
- o Select Committee in consultation with Chair.
- o File Committee Selection form with Graduate Director.
- o In consultation with Chair and Committee, determine Graduate Study Plan (GSP) and exit option.(Your GSP should be filed before completion of 13 units of graduate coursework).
- o Submit GSP to Graduate Director.
- o File an Application for Graduation in your last semester of coursework. Deadlines are early in the semester. Summer deadline is in early Spring semester. Check with Graduate Studies.
- o Maintain continuous enrollment and complete all coursework.
- o Complete exit option (see other checklists below).
- o Graduate! (Hurray!)

If comprehensive exams are selected:

- o Meet with Master's committee to determine option (reading list or questions) for preparing comprehensive exams. The earlier you do this, the more time you have to prepare.
- o Apply to take comprehensive exams. Give a copy of your application to your Chair.
- o Take comprehensive exams in October or March.

If thesis or project is selected:

- o Download the "Graduate Thesis Regulations" from the Graduate Studies Office.
- o Under the supervision of your Chair, write proposal.
- o Meet with Committee for proposal approval.
- o Upon approval, complete IRB form if necessary.
- o Draft, revise, draft, revise, etc.
- o Get committee approval for defense.
- o Schedule and announce defense.
- o Defend thesis or project.
- o Submit revised thesis to Graduate Studies (see their site for deadline and procedures). Projects do not need to be filed with Graduate Studies.