

Department of Communication
Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

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Revised September 2008

Department of Communication

Mission Statement and Overview of Programs

Mission Statement

The Department of Communication prepares individuals to engage diverse local and global communities by advancing and applying critical, humanistic, and social scientific approaches to the study and practice of human communication.

The degrees in Communication provide students with broad competence in oral and written communication, critical analysis of human discourse, and statistical and qualitative research methods. The department emphasizes application of theoretical knowledge, cultural competency, and ethical responsibilities in from personal, professional, and public settings.

Overview of Programs

Recognizing that some careers require extensive knowledge about specific communication practices (in occupations ranging from politics and law to human resources and public relations), while virtually every field demands competence in oral and written communication skills, the Department's undergraduate program offers degree and certificate options tailored to our students varying needs, including a Teacher Credential Program coordinated with the Department of English, a minor in Communication, and a Communication Skills for Professionals Certificate.

The Department provides additional services to the entire University student body through its General Education offerings. All undergraduates are required to take a course in Oral Communication (G.E. Foundation A1), and the Department of Communication is the only program providing instruction in this area; the department also offers a lower-division G.E. Critical Thinking course and an upper-division G.E. Multicultural/International course. In order to encourage student interaction with the larger community of Fresno, several sections of Group Discussion (COMM 8) as well as Communication and Learning (COMM 114) have been offered with service-learning components.

The Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in the Department of Communication is a comprehensive 30-unit program reflecting the history and breadth of the communication discipline. The graduate program reflects the diverse backgrounds and interests of the department faculty, as well as the faculty's commitment to a program that is grounded in the traditional as well as contemporary approaches to the study of human interaction.

The program is committed to providing a quality education to students in two broad categories: (A) students pursuing an advanced degree in preparation for further graduate study and/or for teaching in higher education and (B) students pursuing a graduate degree that will further furnish them with knowledge and skills in applied communication studies and professions. Our unique curriculum offers a culminating experience with a thesis, project or comprehensive examination option to complete the Masters degree.

We also offer a Graduate Teaching Associates program to interested and qualified students.

Goals and Learning Outcomes

Undergraduate Program

Goal 1: Students will demonstrate proficiency in the fundamentals of human communication.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of one or more of the foundational courses (e.g. COMM 3, 7, and/or 8) students will be able to:

1. Practice and perform the canons of effective human symbolic communication by discovering and testing ideas, constructing arguments with clear lines of reasoning and rhetorical appeals, organizing ideas and arguments, using clear, appropriate, and creative language, and employing extemporaneous delivery techniques in oral and written communication performances. (CCTC 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.3, 2.3.1, 2.4.4)
2. Analyze and assess the impact of culture and situational contexts on communication choices used to inform and persuade audiences. (CCTC 2.4.1)
3. Examine, test, and critique public arguments and reasoning, decision-making processes, and rhetorical messages through oral and written reports. (CCTC 1.4.3, 2.3.2, 2.5.2, 3.2.4)
4. Research and properly document sources of evidence and support for their oral and written performances. (CCTC 2.5.1, 2.5.3)

Goal 2: Students will demonstrate proficiency in the theoretical and methodological developments of communication and rhetorical theory and practice.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the core theory and method courses (COMM 140, 142, 162, 164) students will be able to:

1. Recognize and differentiate the major contributors to rhetorical and communication theories.
2. Explain and appraise the process of theory building in rhetorical and communication studies.
3. Use methods to test and advance communication theory and analyze rhetorical phenomena.

Goal 3: Students will demonstrate proficiency in communication principles and ideas central to personal and professional growth.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the major requirements students will be able to:

1. Identify and examine processes, strategies, and techniques for influencing relational development.

2. Analyze and employ organizational and professional processes, strategies, and techniques.
3. Practice interpersonal and public advocacy.

Goal 4: Students will demonstrate competency in personal, narrative, and research writing.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the major requirements students will be able to:

1. Develop a thesis statement or research question that makes an arguable claim and/or addresses a relevant and consequential communication issue.
2. Formulate document design and/or organization of ideas appropriate for the intended purpose and reader.
3. Utilize appropriate language choice, sentence structure, grammatical and punctuation conventions.
4. Follow appropriate research style conventions (e.g. MLA or APA).

Goal 5: Students will demonstrate cultural competency within a diverse and pluralistic society.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the major requirements students will be able to:

1. Recognize that everyone has a culture, cultures are dynamic and internally diverse, and cultural differences are accompanied by differences in status and power.
2. Explain how cultural identities are social constructions and performances.
3. Integrate theories and concepts of power, privilege, and difference into their communication theorizing and interactions.

Graduate Program

Goal 1: Students will demonstrate proficiency in the dominant theories and programs of research in the communication discipline.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the core M.A. requirements students will be able to:

1. Differentiate and assess the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of communication and rhetorical theories.
2. Discuss the role of rhetorical and communication theory in the examination and analysis of human communication activities.
3. Apply appropriate scholarly criteria to judge and evaluate rhetorical and communication inquiry and applied scholarship.

Goal 2: Students will demonstrate competency in effective and skilled scholarly research and expression.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the culminating M.A. experience students will be able to:

1. Develop a situated rationale of study, statement of the problem, and/or research question that addresses a relevant and consequential scholarly inquiry.
2. Apply at least one critical/theoretical perspective or method to systematically analyze and assess a rhetorical or communication phenomenon.
3. Formulate document design and/or organization of ideas appropriate for the intended purpose and reader and offer clear development of argument and/or discussion of results.
4. Interpret findings and/or results of inquiry with implications for current and future research.
5. Utilize appropriate language choice, sentence structure, grammatical and punctuation conventions and follow appropriate research style conventions (e.g. APA, MLA, or Chicago).

Goal 3: Students will be encouraged to demonstrate a commitment to departmental and disciplinary citizenship.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the M.A. degree students will have had an opportunity to do one or more of the following:

1. Serve as ambassadors and representatives of the program at departmental, university, and community events.
2. Participate in local, regional, national, and/or international conferences.
3. Work with faculty on research studies for presentation and publication.

**Proposed Five Year Timeline
For Implementing Assessment Plan**

Academic Semester	Assessment Activity
Fall 2008	Undergraduate: Goal 1.1 and Goal 1.4 Graduate: Employ Rubric for Culminating Experience (Goal 2.1)
Spring 2009	Undergraduate: Goal 1.2 and Goal 1.3 Graduate: Evaluation in COMM 241 and 262 (Goal 1.1); Summary of departmental and professional activities & accomplishments (Goals 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)
Fall 2009	Undergraduate: Goal 2.1 and Goal 2.2 Graduate: Employ Rubric for Culminating Experience (Goal 2.2)
Spring 2010	Undergraduate: Goal 2.3 Graduate: Employ Rubric for Culminating Experience (Goal 2.3); Summary of departmental and professional activities & accomplishments (Goals 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)
Fall 2010	Undergraduate: Goal 3. 1 and Goal 3.2 Graduate: Employ Rubric for Culminating Experience (Goal 2.4)
Spring 2011	Undergraduate: Goal 3.3 Graduate: Employ Rubric for Culminating Experience (Goal 2.5); Summary of departmental and professional activities & accomplishments (Goals 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)
Fall 2011	Undergraduate: Goal 4.1 and Goal 4.2 Graduate: Evaluation in COMM 242 and 264 (Goal 1.2 & 1.3)
Spring 2012	Undergraduate: Goal 4.3 and Goal 4.4 Graduate: Employ Rubric for Culminating Experience (Goal 2.1); Summary of departmental and professional activities & accomplishments (Goals 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)
Fall 2012	Undergraduate: Goal 5. 1 and Goal 5.2 Graduate: Employ Rubric for Culminating Experience (Goal 2.2)
Spring 2013	Undergraduate: Goal 5.3 Graduate: Evaluation in COMM 241 and 262 (Goal 1.1); Summary of departmental and professional activities & accomplishments (Goals 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)