

New Mexico State University

**Department of
Communication Studies**

Graduate Student Handbook

September 2017

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

The Master of Arts in Communication Studies provides students with a social scientific approach to the study of human interaction, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Our curriculum is designed to explore how communication takes place interpersonally, within organizations and groups, within political systems, and among cultures.

All graduate students take courses in communication theory and research methods as well as interpersonal communication, organizational communication, political communication, and/or cultural communication. We also offer courses in topic areas such as health communication, leadership, persuasion, nonverbal communication, sports communication, and new communication technologies.

The program offers a wide variety of courses allowing students in the program an opportunity to select topics pursuant to their special interests. In addition to courses, students can obtain practical experience by participating in professional activities offered by the department; for example, graduate teaching assistantships, research, colloquia, and internships.

Degree Requirements

The department offers both thesis and non-thesis options in its Masters of Arts program. Both options call for a minimum of 36 credits, which may include courses from outside the department. The thesis option requires at least 30 credits of coursework, 4-6 credits of thesis (COMM 599), and an oral defense of the thesis and coursework. The non-thesis option requires 36 credits of coursework, plus a comprehensive written examination (6 hours minimum), followed by an oral defense. Both options require a minimum of 30 credit hours of Communication courses.

Graduate students are required to take COMM 505: Research Methods and COMM 583: Seminar in Theories of Communication **their first year of enrollment**. These courses serve as a foundation for other coursework in Communication Studies. Students are also expected to take at least one other core content course their first year of enrollment (see below).

Graduate students can take undergraduate courses listed at the 450-level or higher. Graduate students must take graduate-level versions (500 vs. 400 level) of any dual listed course when offered. However, the Graduate School only allows two courses (6 hours) at the undergraduate level to count toward the M.A. degree in Communication Studies.01

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

Master's Degree Program

Both of the following courses are required (6 hours):

- o COMM 505 Research Methods 3 hrs.
- o COMM 583 Seminar in Theories of Communication 3 hrs.

Three of the following four core content courses are required (9 hours):

- o COMM 540 Seminar in Political Communication 3 hrs.
- o COMM 570 Seminar in Organizational Communication 3 hrs.
- o COMM 576 Seminar in Communication and Culture 3 hrs.
- o COMM 584 Seminar in Interpersonal 3 hrs.

Communication COMM Electives

- Electives in Other Departments (graduate levels; numbered 450+) 3 - 6 hrs.
- Thesis Option: COMM 599 Thesis 4 - 6 hrs.
- Non-Thesis Option: Additional Graduate COMM Electives 3 - 6 hrs.

A minimum of 30 credit hours of Communication courses are required.

Transfer of Credits

Students who have previously taken graduate-level courses (either at NMSU in another department or at another university) can transfer and apply up to 6 credit hours toward the Communication Studies M.A. degree. However, according to the NMSU graduate school, transfer credits cannot be more than seven years old from the time you begin your graduate coursework at NMSU. The Department Head must approve all transfer credits.

Transfer credits will NOT be approved for COMM 505: Research Methods or COMM 583: Seminar in Communication Theories. Both courses must be taken at NMSU in the Department of Communication Studies.

Grades and Grading

Communication Studies graduate students are expected to apply themselves intensively to the study of the material covered by the courses in which they are enrolled. Accordingly, a high level of performance is required. A Communication Studies Graduate student must maintain an overall GPA of at least 3.0 in all graduate and undergraduate courses taken as a graduate student at NMSU. All graduate COMM courses must have a final grade of B- or better for the student to proceed into comprehensive exams, thesis, or earning the degree. Courses transferred from other programs at NMSU will be included in determining a cumulative GPA. Grades from other universities or colleges will be not be used to calculate GPA.

Although C grades earned at New Mexico State University may be counted toward the requirements for an advanced degree, this is not considered acceptable graduate-

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

level performance in Communication Studies courses. Courses in which a student earns a D or F are considered failing grades and may not be counted toward a graduate degree. However, such grades are calculated in determining the GPA. Required and core classes in which a student has not received a B- or better must be re-taken in order for the student to graduate with an M.A. in Communication Studies.

Graduate Faculty

- Greg G. Armfield (Ph.D. 2004, University of Missouri-Columbia). Associate Professor of Organizational Communication. Specific Interests: Organizational Culture, Communication and Sports, and Religious Communication.
- Jeanne Flora (Ph.D. 1998, University of Kansas). Professor of Interpersonal Communication. Specific Interests: Family Communication, Relationship Development, and Maintenance.
- Kenneth Hacker (Ph.D. 1986, University of Oregon). Professor of Political Communication. Specific Interests: New Media Networking, Political Communication, and Communication and National Security.
- Danielle Halliwell (Ph.D. 2016, University of Missouri-Columbia). Assistant Professor of Interpersonal Communication. Specific Interests: Interpersonal and Family Communication, Communication and Technology.
- Anne Hubbell (Ph.D. 2000, Michigan State University). Professor of Organizational and Health Communication. Specific Interests: Trust and Deception in the Organization and Health Disparities among Minorities.
- Eric Morgan (Ph.D. 2002, University of Massachusetts-Amherst). Associate Professor of Intercultural and Environmental Communication. Specific Interests: Cultural/Intercultural Discourses of Environment and Place in Diverse Contexts.

Selecting an Advisor

Students are assigned a temporary faculty advisor, usually the Department Head, as soon as they are admitted to the program. The role of the temporary faculty advisor is to orient new students to the Communication Studies department, provide support and encouragement during the first semester of coursework, and to guide students toward their academic goals.

During the student's second semester in the program, he/she will select a permanent advisor. Students should consult with the faculty member they would like as their new

advisor, to determine their availability and fit. The permanent advisor's role is to provide support and encouragement throughout the rest of the student's program, and to chair the student's comprehensive oral exam OR thesis prospectus and defense meetings. Students are encouraged to select a permanent advisor who has similar academic interests as they do. Once you select this advisor you need to fill out a Change of Advisor Form (<https://commstudies.nmsu.edu/files/2013/09/scan0003.pdf> all forms are available on the Graduate School website). You should also fill out a Plan of Study form online (http://provost.nmsu.edu/gradschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/04/masters_program_of_study.pdf) print and have the new advisor sign off before the Department Head authorizes the form. This form must be typed.

Each student must follow his/her advisor's advice regarding their graduate courses. Failing to follow his/her advisor's advice is a possible means for dismissal from the program or a forced advisor change.

It is NOT the responsibility of the advisor to track the thesis or non-thesis deadlines. Graduate School deadlines can be found at: https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/graduate_calendar/

Admission to Candidacy

After the student successfully completes the first year of coursework, he/she needs to file an "Application for Admission to Candidacy" or "Program of Study" form (see above) with the Graduate School after the completion of 12 credits of graduate work. This form formally lists curriculum requirements for the student's program of study. It is completed in consultation with the student's advisor and is approved by the Communication Studies Department Head before being sent to the Graduate School. A copy of this form will be placed in the student's office file.

Application for Degree

The student must file an "Application for Degree Form" via www.my.nmsu.edu (or see Graduate School website) and pay the graduation fee the semester she/he intends to graduate. The Graduate School publishes graduation deadlines each semester.

Thesis Option

Some students in our department choose the thesis option, which gives them the opportunity to pursue original research in their specific area of interest. Students selecting the thesis option will complete a minimum of 30 credit hours of courses (24 in COMM) and 6 hours of thesis work (COMM 599) totaling at least 36 credit hours.

Students are required to use the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association in preparing the thesis proposal. The completed thesis must also conform to guidelines established by the Graduate School's

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

Guidelines for Preparing a Thesis or Dissertation which is published annually (<http://provost.nmsu.edu/gradschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/06/Thesis-Forms-Packet.pdf>). The thesis guidelines can be found at (<http://provost.nmsu.edu/gradschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/08/TDG.pdf>). Whenever human subjects are to be involved as research participants, the NMSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required. On-line training about human subjects in research must be completed prior to data collection.

Advisors and Graduate Committee

When a student has chosen a research area to pursue for the thesis, the student should ask a graduate faculty member in the appropriate area of specialty to serve as the student's thesis advisor. This faculty member will most likely serve as the student's course advisor as well. The thesis advisor and student work together on a timeline for completion of the thesis.

The student and advisor will select a graduate faculty committee comprised of 1 to 2 additional graduate faculty members from the Department of Communication Studies and 1 faculty member from the graduate faculty to serve as the Dean's Representative. Additional internal and/or external faculty can serve as committee members with the student, advisor, and Department Head's agreement and/or approval. The student should talk in person with potential committee members to ascertain their willingness and availability to serve on the thesis committee. These committee members will be present at the Prospectus Meeting and the Oral Defense Meeting.

Thesis Prospectus Meeting

This meeting will be held with the student's committee to approve the Thesis Prospectus. The Thesis Prospectus and the Thesis Prospectus Meeting serve as preparation before the student starts to collect data for the thesis research. The Prospectus usually includes the information that will serve as the basis for the first few chapters of the thesis. At a minimum those first chapters should address the following: 1) introduction/rationale for the research; 2) a review of the relevant research literature and theory guiding the research; 3) a statement of research questions or hypotheses and the rationale for the choices made; 4) a detailed description of the proposed research methodology; and 5) a detailed description of proposed data analysis techniques. Although prospectuses vary in length, the average manuscript should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a grasp of the relevant research literature and demonstrates a thoughtful approach to the research method proposed for the student's study. Please note: It is not appropriate to submit a Human Subject's (IRB) Approval Form prior to the prospectus meeting unless the student has approval from all committee members.

In consultation with the advisor and committee members, a two-hour prospectus meeting will be scheduled. The student should consult with his or her advisor on requirements for the Prospectus. The student is responsible for scheduling the meeting at a time convenient for all members of the committee and reserving a room through

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

the department administrative assistant. The student will deliver copies of the Prospectus to each committee member at least two weeks (10 working days) prior to the meeting.

There are three possible outcomes following the evaluation of the thesis prospectus by the faculty committee: approval; approval contingent upon recommended modifications; or rejection. It is common for a student to receive approval contingent upon recommended modifications; it is uncommon for a student's thesis prospectus to be rejected.

Oral Defense Meeting

Upon completion of the thesis and with the approval of the advisor, a two-hour Oral Defense Meeting is scheduled with the thesis committee. Students are responsible for contacting all committee members to determine the best time for the meeting and then scheduling the defense through the department administrative assistant. During this two-hour meeting the student is questioned on the completed thesis and M.A. courses. Students must pass the defense to graduate.

Students are responsible for meeting all Graduate School procedures and deadlines. Students should submit the Masters Final Examination Form with all necessary signatures to the Graduate School at least 10 working days prior to his/her oral defense.

Non-Thesis Option

Students opting for the non-thesis track will complete a minimum of 36 hours of course work. A minimum of 30 hours of course work must be completed in Communication Studies.

The comprehensive examination is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate an ability to integrate broad and specific knowledge of the discipline of Communication. Integration, roughly, involves reasoned synthesis, application, and communication from a social science perspective of knowledge gained from empirical research, theory, and even practical experience in the discipline of Communication. The comprehensive exam is an outcome measure of the graduate program curriculum. We are assessing to what degree you can demonstrate the following: content knowledge in Communication, thinking grounded in theory, and critical thinking about concepts and issues in Communication. Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate such abilities in their written and oral responses.

Advisors and Graduate Committee

Students will work with their advisor to choose a graduate faculty committee comprised of 1-2 graduate faculty members from the Department of Communication Studies (in addition to the student's advisor) and 1 graduate faculty member from a related area (usually a faculty member from whom the student has taken courses) to

serve as Deans Representative. All must have Graduate Faculty Status from the Graduate School. This committee will write exam questions and will be present at a two-hour Oral Defense Meeting of the exam answers and course work. Also, we do not encourage more than 4 faculty members to be present in these meetings.

Written Examination and Oral Defense

During the last semester of residence, students will undergo a comprehensive six-hour written examination over the course areas they have studied. Students will meet with their advisor to determine areas over which they will be examined (at least one hour in Communication Theory and one hour in Quantitative Research Methods is required). It is common for students to receive re-writes on portions of their original answers. A student can only receive ONE re-write per question. If a student fails the re-write, the student fails the comprehensive exam and fails to graduate with an M.A. in Communication Studies that semester. To retest, the student must enroll in the following full (i.e., fall or spring) semester and carry a minimum of 3 credit hours of Communication Studies courses to take their written examinations a second time and potentially proceed to an Oral Defense. If a student fails the written exams a second time, they fail to graduate with an M.A. in Communication Studies. Students must successfully complete the written portion of the exam by passing all written questions before scheduling the two-hour oral defense. During this two-hour oral defense meeting the student is questioned on his/her written exams and ALL M.A. courses. Students must pass this oral defense as a requirement for graduation. If a student fails the oral examination, regardless of the outcome of the written examination, the student fails to graduate with an M.A. in Communication Studies.

Criteria for Evaluating Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination Answers

The results of the total comprehensive examination (both written and oral) will be evaluated by the student's committee.

- Answers should respond to the question. Regardless of the other criteria, answers should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the important issues presented in the question.
- Answers should present accurate knowledge of communication literature and theory. Answers should demonstrate that the student's knowledge base has both depth (i.e. employing of specific literature with appropriate citations) and breadth (i.e. articulating conceptual considerations).
- Answers should exhibit the integrative thinking indicative of a social scientist. The answer should be thoughtful in that it integrates empirical thinking. Answers should demonstrate critical thinking rather than simple rote information.
- Answers should be organized and communicate ideas clearly and coherently.

Steps in Completing Your Comprehensive Exams

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

1. The student meets with his/her advisor to discuss written/oral examination procedures. The student and advisor put together a committee of 2-3 Communication Studies graduate faculty members (this includes the student's advisor) and 1 graduate faculty member from a related discipline (usually the student has taken course work from this person). The student must ask the faculty members to write the exam questions and/or be on the committee.
Please note that a grade of B- is required in ALL of your COMM courses. Overall, you must have a GPA of 3.0 or better before exams are planned.
2. The student and advisor will agree on "grouping" the student's work by content areas and/or faculty members. One hour must cover "Theories" while a second hour must cover "Methods." Then the student and advisor will decide who the student will write for, in what areas, and for how many hours. The student and advisor may seek questions from other faculty for courses that are not represented by faculty members on the committee. The length of the written exams shall be 6 hours.
3. The advisor will compile the breakdown of the committee members, subject areas, and writing times (length) into a memorandum, with a copy going to each faculty questioner and to the Department administrative assistant.
4. Students may confer with each faculty member for whom they are writing. The student and faculty member may discuss the subject areas for the questions and the faculty member may suggest areas of concentration for the student. The faculty member should make sure the student understands if any materials (e.g. outlines, articles, etc.) other than the question are allowed during the exam and that approval of additional materials is needed by a specific deadline. Most faculty members do not allow additional materials.
5. Students typically schedule their written exams about the 11th week of their final semester, and complete them within two weeks. Any re-writes should be completed as soon as possible after the initial 10 working day (two-weeks) testing period.
6. Students should determine the exam schedule with his/her advisor, not with the administrative assistant. Students will answer the exam using a departmental laptop. After the student and advisor agree on an exam schedule and after computer availability has been determined, the student should schedule a room and computer via the department administrative assistant.
7. The student must complete the "Master's Final Examination Form," (http://provost.nmsu.edu/gradschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/04/masters_final_examination_form.pdf) which delineates the committee members and the date and time of the oral defense of

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

the examination. This form must be submitted to the Graduate School no later than 10 working days before the oral exam.

8. Faculty members will submit their questions for the written exam to the advisor at least 3 working days prior to the exam. The questions should be clearly marked as to length of time the student has to answer and indicate what (if any) additional items the student can use during the exam.
9. The advisor will prepare each exam question and attach a yellow cover sheet (i.e. indicating the name of the student, the name of the questioner, the length of time the student has to complete the question, and indicate any additional materials the student can use during the exam) to each question for the department administrative assistant to.
10. The department administrative assistant will distribute the questions according to the advisor's instructions. Students can keep a copy of their answers. The original copies of the questions and answer will be returned to the questionnaire for grading and a copy of the original question and student's answer will be returned to the student's advisor.
11. The questioners will evaluate each question as "pass" or "rewrite" and will mark that assessment on the cover sheet. Questioners will return the cover sheets to the advisor within one week after receiving the student's answer.
12. Before proceeding with the oral examination, students must receive a "pass" for all parts of the written exam. Any portion of the exam given a "rewrite" must be made up by rewriting that portion of the exam to achieve an evaluation of "pass" for that portion. Only one re-write is permitted per original question. If a student fails a re-write, then the student fails that question, is not allowed to orally defend their answers, and fails to graduate with an M.A. in Communication Studies that semester. The student must retake all questions the following spring or fall semester while concurrently enrolled in a minimum of 3 credit hours of coursework in the Department of Communication Studies.
13. The oral examination will be held with all committee members present and will normally last 2 hours. The advisor will chair the oral examination. The Dean's Representative (the outside faculty member) will submit the ballots and the final report to the Graduate School.

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

14. During the exam, student notes are restricted to his/her exam answers, blank paper, and only what was allowed during the exam (the questions, approved outlines and/or articles). No other course notes, study notes, research articles or papers are allowed.

15. Upon completion of the oral examination, one copy of the student's answers will be kept in the student's file in the department office.

Sample Programs

Below are two sample programs. One is patterned after the thesis option; the other follows the non-thesis option. Neither program is an exact representation of a past student's program. These are composite models that illustrate the balance between required COMM courses and other courses that enhance a program of study. For the most part, the courses listed below are offered in the fall and/or spring semesters. Some students also attend summer school. Be advised, though, that the offerings in the summer are not very extensive. Note that both options include 30 credit hours of Communication courses.

Thesis Option

First Semester	COMM 540 Seminar in Political Communication COMM 583 Seminar in Theories of Communication COMM 584 Seminar in Interpersonal Communication
Second Semester	COMM 505 Research Methods COMM 576 Seminar in Communication and Culture COMM 562 Seminar in Family Communication
Third Semester	COMM 545 Seminar in Ethnicity, Racism, and Communication COMM 599 Master's Thesis (3 credit hours) ANTH 543 Indigenous Ways of Knowing
Fourth Semester	COMM 595 Communication Internship COMM 599 Master's Thesis (3 credit hours) SOC 558 Seminar: Sociology of the Family

Non-Thesis Option

First Semester	COMM 540 Seminar in Political Communication COMM 583 Seminar in Theories of Communication COMM 584 Seminar in Interpersonal Communication
Second Semester	COMM 505 Research Methods COMM 570 Seminar in Organizational Communication COMM 471 Seminar in Leadership and Communication
Third Semester	COMM 550 Seminar in Communication Technologies COMM 551 Seminar in Persuasion PSY 530 Human Computer Interaction
Fourth Semester	COMM 591 Special Topics COMM 590 Independent Study MGT 590 Strategic Management

While the required courses will be the same for all students, elective courses within and outside the department are chosen by the student with the approval of his/her advisor. Since each student's program is unique, these sample programs are not intended to be duplicated.

Outside Courses

Students majoring in Communication Studies may take 6 credits of courses outside of the department. This may or may not constitute an official minor. The Graduate School recognizes the completion of at least 9 graduate level credits as a minor. If you wish to have these credits count as a minor, check with the Graduate School. It is important that you consult with your advisor and with the relevant department(s) before choosing your outside courses.

Undergraduate Courses

Students can take up to 6 hours of undergraduate courses numbered 450 – 499 with approval from the student's advisor. Grades earned for undergraduate courses to be applied toward the student's graduate degree must be a B- or higher. Grades of D or F will not count toward the degree, but will be calculated into the GPA.

Writing Style Guides

Graduate students are expected to engage in a considerable amount of writing before graduation, consequently, adhering to a recognized style guide is required. For most

writing purposes, the APA (American Psychological Association) is suggested. First, this style is used predominately by journals in the disciplines and fields of the social sciences. Also, the APA style guide is recognized by the graduate school as one which is allowed for thesis work. Students should purchase the APA guide book for future reference. The department expects all graduate students to understand APA guidelines and to use them in all classes and in all writing. This APA requirement begins as soon as the student begins graduate study.

Research Opportunities

Several courses may require research papers but your research opportunities are not limited to coursework. Faculty members will frequently approach graduate students for assistance and collaboration on research projects. Furthermore, you should feel free to approach faculty members if you would like to participate in one of their research projects or would like assistance on one of your own. If your project is not required in a faculty member's class, he/she may request appropriate authorship on the research project. Such collaboration has produced, in the past, a large number of convention papers and published articles.

Policies:

If a research project involves collecting data in our basic course, please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Permission must be granted by the Basic Course Director before data collection can be approved and scheduled. Prepare a full description of the data collection procedures, including time required and copies of the research measures.
2. Data collection in lab sessions of the basic course will not be permitted. Instead, students will be offered extra credit to participate in the study outside of class.
3. All Institutional Review Board requirements (training and applicable forms) for using human subjects must be completed before data can be collected. Copies of your training certificate and your IRB application/forms should be given to your advisor. You may also request copies to be put in your permanent office file.
4. Extra Credit can only be offered in the basic course by the Basic Course Director and other Communication Studies faculty.

Departmental Policies

The department subscribes to all the policies of the Graduate School. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with university policies and with graduation requirements and deadlines. For graduate teaching assistants, staff policy statements are located in the Faculty Handbook and the Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual. In addition to university guidelines, students majoring in Communication Studies will be expected to adhere to the following departmental guidelines:

1. No more than 6 credit hours in independent study courses (COMM 590 or any other independent study numbers on campus) can be counted toward fulfillment of the minimum hours needed for graduation.
2. Graduate students must enroll in at least one COMM course per year to remain active majors.
3. Students should note that the Graduate School policy for completion of the master's degree is 5 years (or 6 successive summers).
4. Students who do not maintain a 3.0 in their COMM courses may be dropped from the program.
5. Students are expected to attend colloquia, symposia, and special seminars arranged by the department.

Academic and Non-Academic Misconduct

According to the NMSU Student Code of Conduct: Any student found guilty of academic misconduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:

1. Cheating or knowingly assisting another student in committing an act of cheating or other forms of academic dishonesty.
2. Plagiarism is using another person's work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one's own. Any ideas, words, pictures, or other source must be acknowledged in a citation that gives credit to the source. This is true no matter where the material comes from, including the internet, other student's work, unpublished materials, or oral sources. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct. It is the responsibility of the student submitting the work in question to know, understand, and comply with this policy. If no citation is given, then borrowing any of the following would be an example of plagiarism:
 - a. An idea or opinion, even when put into one's own words (paraphrase)
 - b. A few well-said words, if these are a unique insight
 - c. Many words, even if one changes most of them
 - d. Materials assembled by others, for instance quotes or a bibliography
 - e. An argument
 - f. A pattern or idea
 - g. Graphs, pictures, or other illustrations
 - h. Facts
 - i. All or part of an existing paper or other resource

This list is not meant to include all possible examples of plagiarism. See the University Library's web page on plagiarism for further examples.

1. Unauthorized possession of examinations, reserve library materials, laboratory materials, or other course-related materials.
2. Unauthorized changing of grades on an examination, in an instructor's grade book, or on a grade report; or unauthorized access to academic computer records.

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

3. Nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records in, or for, academic departments or colleges.

This policy is taken from the NMSU student handbook. This is a university policy! For more information including your rights should you be accused of academic misconduct see: <https://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/student-code-of-conduct/academic-misconduct/>.

Students who engage in disruptive activities in an academic setting (e.g., classrooms, academic offices, or academic buildings) are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Part III: Standards for Student Social Conduct. Such students are also subject to administrative actions in accordance with the NMSU Graduate and Undergraduate Catalogs (see: <http://catalog.nmsu.edu/>).

Non-Academic Misconduct or violations of Student Social Conduct for students and student organizations can include the following, which is not an inclusive list, and will be subject to disciplinary action:

1. Actual or threatened physical injury to any person (including self) on University owned or controlled property or at a University-sponsored or supervised function, or conduct that endangers the health or safety of a person.
2. Engaging in individual or group conduct that is violent (including sexual misconduct, attempted suicide, or threats of either), abusive, indecent, unreasonably loud, or similar disorderly conduct that infringes upon the privacy, rights, or privileges of others or disturbs the peace or the orderly process of education on campus.
3. Unauthorized use, possession, or storage of any weapon or explosive (including fireworks) on University premises or at University sponsored activities.
4. Forgery, counterfeiting, alterations, or misuse of any University record, document, or identification card of a nonacademic nature (e.g., housing applications or parking permits).
5. Unauthorized entry into or alteration of, any University computer records, or violation of Computer Center policies.
6. Reporting the presence of a fire, bomb, explosive or incendiary device on the University campus without good reason to believe the facts reported are true.
7. Unlawful possession, use, distribution, or sale of any narcotic or dangerous drug as defined by the statutes of the State of New Mexico.
8. Theft of, or unwarranted damage to, University property or property of any member of the University community.
9. Failure to comply with Housing regulations.
10. Failure to comply with the lawful directives of University employees acting within the scope of their duties, including those directives issued by a University administrator to ensure the safety and well-being of students (refer to Student Special Care Policy).

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

11. Entry into, or use of, any building, facility, or room or other University property or grounds without authorized approval. This also includes the unauthorized possession or use of University keys, lock combinations, or other access codes.
12. Participation in illegal gambling activities on University-owned or -controlled property or at a function identified with the University.
13. Possession, or consumption, of alcoholic beverages in contradiction of state law and/or University policy.
14. Entering or attempting to enter any athletic contest, dance, social event, or other event without proper credentials for admission (e.g., ticket, identification card, or invitation).
15. Failure to make satisfactory settlement for any debts to the University.
16. Failure to comply with University traffic rules and regulations.

This list is not designed to be all inclusive, but offers examples of the types of prohibited conduct.

Policies:

All Communication Studies graduate students are required to sign an Acknowledgement of Understanding regarding the departmental policies on plagiarism, academic misconduct, non-academic misconduct, and classroom behavior and expectations. This document acknowledges that the student understands what academic and non-academic misconduct are and that the student will not knowingly commit any such misconduct. This document must be signed and returned to the department within one month after the beginning of the student's first semester of graduate coursework in the Department of Communication Studies.

If after the document is signed and put on file, the student commits any known type of misconduct, then he/she can be immediately dismissed from the program. The Department of Communication Studies has a no-tolerance stance on academic and non-academic misconduct. The following Graduate School policy will be followed should a have academic misconduct allegations brought against them:

1. Allegations regarding academic misconduct of graduate students shall be brought immediately to the attention of the Graduate Dean.
 - a. The Graduate Dean shall conduct a preliminary investigation with the appropriate professional bodies within the University. At the Dean's discretion, he/she may refer the case to the accused student's instructor or Department Head. The instructor or Department Head will then use the same procedures in the academic disciplinary process outlined in IIC for general cases.
 - b. Should serious academic misconduct be suspected:
 - i. The Graduate Dean shall notify the Provost.
 - ii. The Graduate Dean may consult outside experts in the professional field in which misconduct is suspected. The purpose

of this consultation shall be to provide an evaluation of the alleged misconduct.

- iii. In all cases where serious misconduct is suspected, the Graduate Dean shall convene a Misconduct Review Panel consisting of the chairperson of the Graduate Council, the chairperson of the Faculty Senate and/or the chairperson of the University Research Council, and an administrative officer of the unit in which the suspected misconduct occurred. This panel shall review the evidence and its evaluation, decide whether a formal charge is appropriate, and advise the Graduate Dean.
 - iv. If so advised, the Graduate Dean shall:
 1. Appoint an ad hoc committee.
 2. Issue a formal charge detailing the basis for the charge.
 3. Invite the accused to respond to the charge in writing and to appear before the ad hoc committee to discuss the charge and accumulated evidence.
 - v. Following the hearing and upon receipt of formal, written advice of the ad hoc committee, the Graduate Dean shall decide upon the disposition of the case and, if appropriate, the imposition of sanctions.
 - vi. The Graduate Dean shall notify the accused, who shall have ten (10) working days to decide if he/she wishes to appeal the decision. The Graduate Dean will also report the decision to the Coordinator of Student Judicial Services.
2. Appeal Process – The Graduate Dean’s decision may be appealed only in writing to the Executive Vice President and Provost whose review and decision, with the concurrence of the President, is final. The decision of the Provost will be rendered within ten (10) working days following receipt of the request for appeal and will be reported to the student, Graduate Dean and the Coordinator of Student Judicial Services.

The policy on academic misconduct can be located at:

<https://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/student-code-of-conduct/academic-misconduct/> and

the policy on non-academic misconduct can be located at:

<https://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/student-code-of-conduct/non-academic-misconduct/>.

Academic Probation and Suspension

The Department of Communication Studies Academic records of all Communication Studies graduate students are reviewed at the end of each semester, when possible. A student whose cumulative GPA in Communication Studies courses at the end of any semester is less than 3.0 will be so informed in writing and will automatically be placed on probation with the Department. If during the next enrollment period, a student fails to earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or to show substantial improvement in the quality of work in Communication Studies (as determined by the department graduate faculty), the student will be suspended from

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

the Department of Communication Studies. A GPA of less than 3.0 means any number that is numerically less than 3.0 with no rounding up. For example, a 2.99 is still less than 3.0.

Students on suspension from the Department who wish to continue their M.A. education in Communication Studies after suspension must re-apply to the Department. If a student wishes to appeal the suspension with the Department, he/she must follow the appeal steps in the Graduate Student Appeals section of this handbook.

The Graduate School

Academic records of all graduate students are reviewed at the end of each semester by the Department Head or the graduate faculty. A student whose cumulative grade-point average at the end of any semester is less than 3.0 will be so informed and will be placed on probation. If, during the next enrollment period, a student fails to achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.1 or to show substantial improvement in the quality of work (as determined by the Graduate Dean in consultation with the student's primary department), the student will be suspended for one semester from the Graduate School. Students on suspension are barred from enrolling in graduate level courses at NMSU. Students on suspension who wish to continue Graduate School after suspension must re-apply to the Graduate School and the department of interest. Subsequent suspensions will be for one calendar year and the student must petition the graduate dean for re-admission. No NMSU graduate level course credit will be granted for courses taken at NMSU or other institutions while under suspension from NMSU.

If a student wishes to appeal any probation or suspension, the student must formally write a letter to the Dean of the Graduate School. The student must also ask The Department Head of Communication Studies to write a formal letter in support of the appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School. However, the Department Head is under no obligation to write such a letter.

It is possible for a student to be suspended from the Department, but not the Graduate School. In these rare situations, students can continue to enroll in graduate courses in other departments. Students usually apply to a different program to complete their graduate education.

Graduate Student Appeals

Any graduate or prospective graduate student who believes that he or she has been unjustly treated within the academic process may proceed as far as necessary in the following steps to resolve his or her grievance. In general, there are three levels at which a grievance can be addressed:

1. A course instructor or adviser.
2. A Department Head.

3. The Associate Dean of Academics for the College of Arts and Sciences.

If the initial grievance is with an instructor or adviser, the process begins at Step 1. If the initial grievance is with a departmental committee, the process begins at Step

3. In all instances, the process must begin at the lowest possible level.

1. Under normal circumstances, the student should discuss the issue with the instructor or adviser.
2. If the student is unable to resolve the issue through consultation with the faculty member, the student must submit a written memorandum or email detailing the grievance to the course instructor or adviser within 30 days of the beginning of the following full (i.e., fall or spring) semester. The person to whom the memorandum is addressed must respond in writing within 10 working days to the student.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the response from steps 1 and 2 above, he or she must submit a written appeal to the Department Head within 10 working days of the initial decision. If the student is initiating the appeal at the departmental level, he or she must do so, in writing, within 10 working days of the beginning of the following full (i.e., fall or spring) semester. The Department Head must respond in writing within 10 working days to the student, the instructor or adviser (if one is involved), and the Dean of Graduate School.
4. If after the 3rd step the student or any of the other parties involved is still not satisfied with the response, he or she must present to the Associate Dean of Academics in the College in which the class and professor reside within 10 working days a written complaint detailing the nature of the grievance. After receiving a written complaint, the Associate Dean of Academics for the College has 10 working days to respond to the grievance.
5. The student may then decide if the appeal/grievance has been resolved. If not, they may follow university policy regarding whom they should next appeal. See: <https://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/grievance-process/student-academic-grievance-policy/>.

Leave of Absence

No leave of absence can be taken without the written permission of the student's faculty advisor and the Department Head. If such a leave is taken without notice and approval, then the student is automatically dismissed from the program and must re-apply to the Department to resume their graduate education in Communication Studies. A copy of the approval of the leave of absence must be placed in the student's permanent file in the Communication Studies office.

At times, special circumstances may occur in which the leave of absence is unavoidable. If this is the case, a student can provide evidence of the special

circumstances and request a waiver of the re-application requirement. This waiver must be approved in writing by the student's faculty advisor and the Department Head. A copy of the waiver must be placed in the student's permanent file in the Communication Studies office.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

The Communication Studies Department awards a limited number of Graduate Teaching Assistantships each year. Our selection process occurs usually each March and as needed thereafter. Faculty review all complete files and rate the candidates from the best to the least preferred. These are completely independent ratings; the faculty does not discuss their ratings nor do they elaborate on them on their review sheet. The Department Head then generates a mean score from these ratings and awards assistantships based on those with the top scores. The Department Head does not select the Graduate Assistants. The Department Head calculates the scores and offers the assistantships. If positions unexpectedly open we may go back to the scores but often we review the new files and the existing applicants all over to give newly applied students an opportunity to be considered for an assistantship.

Full-time graduate assistants receive a stipend, out-of-state tuition waiver, and office space. Graduate assistantships require 20 hours of service per week to the department, in most cases assisting in COMM 265G (Principles of Human Communication). Additionally, there may be opportunities for Graduate Assistants to teach in the summer.

The graduate assistantship stipend is intended to help you complete your education. Thus, the renewal of your assistantship is dependent on two requirements:

1. Adequate progress toward the completion of the MA degree (Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0, taking required courses, meeting enrollment expectations, etc.).
2. Satisfactory performance of your graduate assistant duties:
 - a. Effective teaching of the basic course lab (6 classroom hours per week).
 - b. Attending weekly lectures (1 hour per week plus all exam sessions).
 - c. Attending weekly staff meetings (1 hour per week).
 - d. Maintaining office hours (3 hours per week).
 - e. Maintaining hours in the Center for Communication Development (2 hours per week).
 - f. Teaching prep time (6 hours per week).
 - g. Timely grading of assignments.
 - h. Maintaining sufficient evaluations, both quantitative and qualitative.
 - i. Attendance and participation at department colloquia, symposia, and special seminars arranged by the department.

The Basic Course Director and Assistant Director should be notified immediately and seek approval if a Graduate Assistant needs to miss a duty as listed above.

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

Graduate Assistants are not allowed to cancel COMM 265G lab classes. In the case of absences, the Graduate Assistant must follow the substitution policy as listed in the lab instructor and policy manual. The Basic Course Director will articulate the substitution policy. Documentation of a valid excuse (e.g. hospitalization, death in the family, conference travel) may be required by the Basic Course Director and/or the Department Head for missing lab, lecture, staff meetings, office hours, and/or Center for Communication Development hours.

If a GA fails to meet the performance criteria above, provide documentation for absences, or compensate substitutes, the GA may lose his/her assistantship. If a student loses his/her assistantship and wishes to appeal that loss, he/she can appeal to the graduate faculty and/or Department Head.

Graduate Assistants are expected to adhere to the following departmental guidelines:

1. GA's must enroll in at least 9 hours of graduate courses each semester.
2. GA's are expected to enroll in at least 6 credit hours of Communication Studies courses each semester (exceptions to be approved by advisor and Department Head).
3. GA's must enroll in at least 3 credit hours of actual courses per semester--exclusive of independent studies or thesis credits (exceptions to be approved by advisor and department head).
4. Graduate Teaching Assistantships can be renewed for up to four semesters (excluding summers) for students fulfilling the above requirements. The department is not obligated to extend graduate assistantship stipends beyond four semesters of courses. Graduate teaching assistantships are not guaranteed and all assistantships will be reviewed for renewal each semester. Decisions on renewal of each GTA is based on the performance discussed above and in their contract.

Additional Department Policies

Any additional policy statements regarding the Department of Communication Studies, if necessary, will be distributed through the Department Head and/or the Basic Course Director. Any additional policy statements regarding Graduate Teaching Assistantships, if necessary, will be distributed through the Department Head and/or the Basic Course Director.

Financial Aid

The university administers an extensive program of loans and work-study employment for graduate students. The awarding of loans and work-study is based on need and will require the student to complete a federal needs analysis application to determine possible award (Free Federal Application for Student Financial Aid).

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

The student must apply annually for financial assistance early and check deadlines with the financial aid office.

Several types of loans are available to graduate students including the National Direct Student Loan (Perkins Loan) and the Guaranteed Student Loan Program (Stafford Loan). The Financial Aid Office is located in the Educational Services Building. For information concerning available financial assistance contact the Financial Aid Office at 646-4105. For information on fellowship and grant competitions through the Graduate School go to: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/funding-opportunities/>
OR https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/awards_fellowships/.

Student Employment

In addition to assistantships, fellowships or college work-study, other employment options are available. Human Resource Services posts job listing for on-campus positions. Graduate students enrolled for a minimum of 9 hours per semester may be served by Human Resources. Student spouses/partners who seek full or part-time work may also apply through the office of Human Resource Services.

NMSU Policies

NMSU policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation and protected veterans status. Furthermore, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct: sexual violence (sexual assault, rape), sexual harassment and retaliation.

For more information on discrimination issues, Title IX, Campus SaVE Act, NMSU Policy Chapter 3.25, NMSU's complaint process, or to file a complaint contact:

Lauri Millot

Title IX Coordinator

Agustin Diaz

Title IX Deputy Coordinator

Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)

O'Loughlin House, 1130 University Avenue

Phone: (575) 646-3635

E-mail: equity@nmsu.edu

Website: <http://eeo.nmsu.edu/>

Americans with Disabilities Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) covers issues relating to disability and accommodations. If a student has questions or needs an accommodation in the classroom (all medical information is treated confidentially), contact:

Department of Communication Studies Graduate Handbook

Trudy Luken, Director
Student Accessibility Services (SAS)
Corbett Center Student Union, Rm. 208
Phone: (575) 646-6840
E-mail: sas@nmsu.edu
Website: <http://sas.nmsu.edu/>

New Mexico State University complies with the American with Disabilities Act. If a student has, or thinks they may have, a disability that interferes with her or his performance as a student in a class, they may wish to self-identify.

If a student has a condition which may affect their ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or which may cause an emergency during class, they are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the Director of Student Accessibility Services.

Student Parking

All students who park on campus must register their vehicles annually with the NMSU Parking Department and obtain a parking permit on or before the date the vehicle is to be operated or parked on the campus. Registration of all motor vehicles, including motorcycles, motor scooters, and bicycles, owned or operated on the University campus by students is required. An annual registration charge will be assessed for each vehicle parking on campus. Parking lots are restricted. The parking permit indicates in which zone to park. (See Parking Zone Map available from the Parking Department).

Student Resources

Activity Center

The NMSU Activity Center is dedicated to helping members of the NMSU community reach their fitness goals and maintain a pure, balanced, and overall healthy lifestyle. The Activity Center offers modern, extensive exercise equipment, a wide variety of classes including aerobic, aquatic, intramural, open recreation and outdoor adventure sports. The fitness/wellness services offered at the AC include such items as comprehensive fitness assessments, certified personal trainers, body composition testing, nutritional analysis, group fitness classes and much more.

Aggie Health and Wellness Center

The Aggie Health and Wellness Center (AHWC) provides integrated comprehensive medical, psychological, and recreational activity services to the students of New Mexico State University. It is a nationally accredited out-patient ambulatory facility offering services in: Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Health education, outreach and programming, Immunizations (travel and preventative), Medical clearance for NMSU research, education and employment purposes, Medical illness and prevention, Mental

health and counseling, Treatment and case management of workers compensation injuries, and Women's health. The AHWC is located on the northeast corner of the building, at the corner of McFie and Breland Drive, across the street from Zuhl Library (AHWC, 2017). For additional information see: <https://wellness.nmsu.edu/>.

Information and Communication Technologies

Computer labs are open 24 hours a day with a support staff available during most of these hours. All graduate students have access to the computer center and free software while concurrently enrolled at NMSU.

Libraries

New Mexico State University has a comprehensive library system and has two campus libraries, Zuhl and Branson. Both are located on the pedestrian walkway that runs through the middle of campus and are situated within easy walking distance of the Speech Building.

The library system offers a plethora of electronic resources ranging from biographies, citation and style guides, to dictionaries, encyclopedias, and maps (see: <http://lib.nmsu.edu/>). Formal instruction and tutorials on research, evaluating periodicals, and accessing and using the electronic databases and journals may be arranged for classroom instruction. Most of the time students can access all the sources needed for literature reviews and classroom presentations, from departmental or home computers.