



The Journalism School

Columbia University

DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN COMMUNICATIONS

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The Doctor of Philosophy degree in Communications is offered by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and administered by the Graduate School of Journalism in cooperation with various other departments and divisions, including Political Science, Sociology, the Business and Law Schools, and Teachers College. The program consolidates, enhances, and focuses the considerable resources of Columbia on an interdisciplinary approach to the study of communications.

With its long tradition of scholarship and reflection on the media, its wide range of relevant course offerings in a variety of disciplines, and its location in the communications capital of the world, Columbia is the ideal place for the marriage of research and teaching, theory, and practice in this important area. Students craft individual courses of study drawing on the university's graduate resources in the humanities, the social sciences, business and economics, the law, public and international affairs, education, and engineering. Also open to second- or third-year students in the program are courses at the member institutions of the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium – New School University, New York University, CUNY Graduate Center, Fordham University, and others – which further expands the opportunities for study. The interdisciplinary program provides a unique preparation for students who wish to conduct original research in communications, to teach in colleges and universities, and to pursue research careers in government and industry.

Our first students entered in September 1998, and we had our first graduates in May 2004. Current students come from a variety of backgrounds, including journalism, business, politics, not-for-profit organizations, and the law, while others are recent college graduates or have been pursuing graduate work elsewhere. Their academic interests include: political narrative, “fake news,” and popular culture; the history and culture of college radio; terrorism victims as political pressure groups; journalistic professionalism and authority in the internet age; myth and archetype in journalistic writing; media regulation and the public interest; and political participation through the media.

The admissions committee seeks candidates who present clear evidence of intellectual or academic achievement, who demonstrate a commitment to advanced scholarship, and whose plan of study challenges or crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries. Applications from international candidates are welcome. Full-time students are expected to complete the degree in five to seven years (or four to six if they enter with advanced standing). Admission is quite competitive, as we can accept only a very small number of students a year.

Part-time study is possible under some circumstances, but given the demands of the program we do not normally recommend it, and the admissions committee strongly prefers applicants for full-time study. Since opportunities for night or weekend coursework are extremely limited, students must be able to accommodate daytime classes in their schedules.

Substantial financial aid, usually including tuition waivers, loans, and research or teaching assistantships, is generally available for full-time students. Given the high cost of living in New York most students find they must supplement their awards with savings, family contributions, or summer jobs.

Each student's program is designed, in conjunction with an adviser, to reflect and further his or her individual interests. Candidates must select a major field of study -- the area in which she or he expects to write a dissertation -- from the areas listed below.

Journalism and Public Life. Drawing on the resources of the humanities and qualitative social sciences, this field centers on the social practice of journalism in the creation and maintenance of the public sphere and cultural life.

Social Impact of Media. This field brings the resources of the social and behavioral sciences along with the arts to bear on the problems surrounding the social consequences of media for the production and distribution of culture.

Economic, Legal, and Policy Aspects of Communications. Emphasizing the economics, organization, regulation, and management of communications, this field is informed by economics, law, business, and the policy sciences.

Admissions and Degree Requirements

New students are admitted in September only and applications are due in mid-December of the previous year. Online application forms and instructions are available on the pages for prospective students, <http://www.journalism.columbia.edu/admissions>. All questions about the application procedure itself -- about tests, forms, submission of supporting materials, or payment of the application fee -- should be directed to the Admissions Office, Graduate School of Journalism, 2950 Broadway, room 203, New York, NY 10027. Their telephone number is 212.854.8608 and their e-mail address is admissions@jrn.columbia.edu. Decisions will be announced in mid-to late March.

Besides the forms and the nonrefundable fee, all candidates must submit the following:

- * three letters of recommendation, preferably from teachers and/or professional colleagues who can evaluate the candidate's intellectual and academic achievements;
- * two brief essays, one autobiographical and one outlining, as specifically as they can, their reasons for seeking a Ph.D., the areas of inquiry that particularly interest them, and their postgraduate career plans;

- * transcripts from all institutions of higher education they have attended;
- * and scores from the general GRE that are no more than five years old as of the application deadline. We do not accept GMAT scores.

In addition, *all* applicants whose native language is not English – no matter where they now live or where else they have studied – must submit scores from the TOEFL or IELTS that are no more than two years old as of the application deadline. This requirement is firm and *cannot be waived*. Applicants should score a total of *at least* 650 on the paper-based TOEFL, 280 on the computer-based TOEFL, 114 on the Internet-based TOEFL, or 8.5 on the IELTS to be seriously considered for admission.

Applicants for the Ph.D. are *not* required to take the Journalism School's special writing test administered to M.S. applicants in January, and they should not submit clips. The GRE is however mandatory, as is the TOEFL or IELTS for all non-native speakers of English, and applications lacking official score reports cannot be considered. Information for taking these tests is available at the Admissions Office or from www.ets.org.

We cannot accommodate requests for deferred admission. A successful applicant who does not enroll in the term immediately following acceptance will be asked to resubmit his or her application to be considered in another year, and readmission is not guaranteed.

Below are the requirements for the successful completion of the program. They should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the most recent bulletins of the Journalism School and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. The M.A. and M.Phil. degrees are awarded as part of the normal progress toward the Ph.D.; the program does not accept candidates for terminal M.A. or M.Phil. degrees.

For the M.A. Degree (In-Course)

Applicants must have completed at least a Bachelor's-level degree or its international equivalent at an accredited university. Students who enter the program with no applicable previous graduate-level work must begin by earning the M.A. in Communications (which requires the completion of 30 graduate-level credits and the submission of a master's essay) as the first step toward the Ph.D. Upon its completion their candidacy will be reviewed by the doctoral subcommittee.

For the M.Phil. Degree

Students who enter the program having already completed a Master's-level degree at Columbia or elsewhere may receive up to 30 credits of advanced standing *if* the following conditions are met. The doctoral subcommittee must judge that the previous degree is the academic equivalent of the Columbia M.A., the grades must be acceptable, and the work must have contributed directly and substantially to the requirements for the M.Phil. and Ph.D. University regulations do not permit courses deemed "professional" (including most journalism courses) to be accepted for credit toward the Ph.D. The formal decision to grant advanced standing is made after the student has completed a full year of study at Columbia.

Beyond the M.A. degree, students must complete 54 additional graduate-level points, usually in four semesters (for a total of 84), to include the core curriculum and other courses that will constitute a concentration in one of the three major areas designated above. The program of study is to be designed in conjunction with faculty advisers to reflect and further each student's individual interests.

Core courses: All students must complete the following five core courses: Communications/Journalism J8040, Proseminar in communications: contemporary issues in theory and research in communications (which should be taken in the first or second year); Communications/Journalism J6030, Social impact of mass media; Communications/Business Economics G8210, Management of information, communication and media; Communications/Political Science G8247, Mass-mediated American and global politics; and (in the second or third year) Communications/Journalism J9042, Communication research problems. All core courses must be taken for a letter grade.

Research methods: If appropriate, students must prepare in research methods appropriate to the area of the proposed dissertation through successful completion of a course or equivalent work or qualifying examination in the relevant subject, which may include quantitative methods (e.g. experimental or survey methods or social statistics), analytic methods for networks and systems, econometrics, or qualitative and historical methods.

Languages: All students must demonstrate reading knowledge of one foreign language from among those encompassing a significant literature in communications. Tests in the appropriate languages, among which are Spanish, French, German, Italian, Hebrew, and Russian, are given periodically by the relevant foreign language departments at Columbia.

Examinations: Students choose between the following two options. In either case, the student works with an approved advisory committee of three faculty members, at least one and preferably two of whom must be members of the Communications Ph.D. faculty subcommittee. Students are strongly encouraged to finish this requirement no later than the end of the semester following the one in which they have finished all coursework, but they *must* finish the comps by the end of the second semester after coursework.

Option 1: The exam, designed to assess the student's mastery of the significant literature in his or her fields of concentration, consists of a written portion of no more than one day's duration followed within one month by a two-hour oral portion. Each committee member works individually with the student to define the area covered by the exam and to suggest the preparation she or he finds appropriate.

Option 2: Students must complete *all* of the following requirements: a) Submit an article to a refereed scholarly journal in an appropriate field; b) Present a paper (an entirely distinct work from the journal article) at an appropriate scholarly conference for which the submission was accepted in competitive judging; c) Prepare a syllabus and the introductory lecture for a semester-long course suitable for advanced undergraduates or master's-level students on a broad and significant topic in communications.

For the Ph.D. Degree

The completion of a dissertation embodying original research and its defense before a committee constitute the major requirement. Admission to candidacy is to be determined by the doctoral subcommittee when the student completes the M.Phil. Candidacy for the Ph.D. degree presupposes a common interest in research matters with at least two faculty members in the program. Each student must have three faculty sponsors, including one who serves as dissertation sponsor, approved by the subcommittee in order to undertake the research. The dissertation proposal, endorsed by the three faculty sponsors, must be submitted for subcommittee approval by the end of the semester that follows the term in which the comprehensive examinations were taken.

Core Courses

Communications/Journalism J8040. Proseminar in communications. 3 pts. M. Schudson. A synoptic overview of theory and research.

Communications/Journalism J6030. Social impact of mass media. 3 pts. A. Tucher. Seminar surveying the history and the social, political, and economic impact of media from the birth of the newspaper forward.

Communications/Business Economics B8210. Management of information, communication, and media. 3 pts. E. Noam. The information market; telecommunications networks and regulation; international telecommunications; the economics of radio and television; film, print and electronic publishing; copyright issues; and information strategies and investment.

Communications/Political Science G8247. Mass-mediated American and global politics. 3 pts. B. Nacos. The focus is on the press itself (its workings, effects, etc.) and on the relationships between the media and the institutions and actors in politics and government.

Communications/Journalism J9042. Communication research problems. 3 pts. T. Gitlin. A seminar in which students identify and explore their dissertation topic.

Suggested Courses:

Following is a sample of courses that might further the interests of a Communications student. Not all courses are offered every year.

Anthropology G6019. Recording angels. 3 pts. J. Pemberton

Anthropology G6206. Profane illumination. M. Taussig.

Anthropology G6304. Ghosts of modernity. M. Ivy.

Art History G4601. Origins of modern visual culture. 3 pts. J. Crary.

Business B9501. International communication and media networks. 3 pts. E. Noam.

Comparative Literature and Society G6130. What is an author? 3 pts. D. von Muecke.

Comparative Lit.-German W4207. Aesthetics under siege: the Frankfurt school. 3 pts. A. Huyssen.

Film/Law L9095. Law and the film industry. 3 pts. T. Selz.

History G8405. U.S. cultural and intellectual history. 4 pts. C. Blake.

History G9570. Seminar in American urban history. 4 pts. K. Jackson.

History G9920. Oral history: method and theory. 4 pts. M.M. Clark.

International Affairs U6360. Global communications in world affairs. 3 pts. N.B. Jackson.

International Affairs U6353. Perceptions and politics of global news. 3 pts. T. Lansner.

International Affairs U8840. Organizations and interactive technologies. 3 pts. D. Stark.

Journalism J6010.017. Sociology of news. 3 pts. M. Schudson.

Journalism J6036. History of American journalism. 3 pts. A. Tucher.

Journalism J8030. Media and contemporary society. 3 pts. T. Gitlin.

Law L6160. Law in the internet society. 2 pts. E. Moglen.

Law L6229. Ideas of the first amendment. 2 pts. V. Blasi.

Law L6178. Principles of intellectual property. 2 pts. T. Merrill, C. Long.

Marketing B9601. Commercial communication in the culture of consumption. 3 pts. M. Holbrook.

Philosophy G4481. Philosophy of language. 3 pts. H. Gaifman.

Political Science G4238. Public opinion and political behavior. 3 pts. M. Lindeman.

Political Science W4316. American presidency. 3 pts. R. Pious.

Political Science W4911. Analysis of political data. 3 pts. R. Shapiro.

Sociology G4020. Civil society. 3 pts. D. Fisher.

Sociology G4099. Field research methods. 3 pts. H. Gans.

Sociology G8200. Economic sociology. 3 pts. D. Stark.

Teachers College MSTU4010. Theories of communication. 3 pts. F. Moretti.

Teachers College MSTU4016. History of communication. 3 pts. F. Moretti.

Teachers College MSTU5606/7. Readings in communication theory and social thought. 3 pts. F. Moretti, R. McClintock.