



## **Department of Communication Graduate Program Handbook**

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# **Department of Communication Graduate Program Handbook**

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# I. Program Overview

The Department of Communication offers graduate study leading to the Master of Arts degree in Communication. The candidate is responsible for their timely progress through the program, and must observe the general requirements for the Master of Arts degree stated in the Graduate and Post-baccalaureate Studies chapter in the CSUEB catalog as well as specific departmental requirements stated here in the Graduate Handbook issued by the department (copies available upon request). University requirements include the 32-unit residence requirement, the 5-year rule in currency of subject matter, the minimum number of units of 6000-level courses, a 3.00 GPA, and the University Writing Skills Requirement. For information on meeting the University Writing Skills Requirement, see the testing Web site at [www.testing.csueastbay.edu](http://www.testing.csueastbay.edu) or call 510.885.3661.

The candidate is also responsible for:

1. Consulting an advisor and planning a tentative program with that advisor.
2. Completing the prerequisites to the program and all program requirements.

The study of Communication includes theories and critical methods of rhetoric and communication, as well as critical analysis of messages as they occur within and across public, interpersonal, and organizational contexts, and across disciplines. The department focuses upon relating theory to practice in ways that recognize and explore the profound influences of ethics and cultural experience on how we communicate. Cal State East Bay's Communication program is widely and highly regarded for its excellence in preparing business, government, teaching professionals, and Ph.D. students. Students with an M.A. in Communication are educated to speak, think, and write clearly and effectively. Because these are highly-sought-after skills, graduates are valuable employees in many jobs, including but not limited to teaching, consulting, human resources, personnel, communication training in organizations, management, banking, sales, government, and politics. The degree is also excellent preparation for Ph.D. and law degrees.

Students who complete the Master of Arts degree in Communication will gain understanding and expertise in media studies, organizational and interpersonal communication. By enabling them to critically analyze and improve spoken and written messages, the program prepares students to play valuable roles in business, industry, government, and education; to pursue doctoral study; and to communicate effectively in day-to-day life.

Students graduating with an M.A. in Communication from Cal State East Bay can: (1) think critically, demonstrated in oral and written work; (2) conduct advanced research; and (3) write a research proposal, report, and scholarly essays. Students construct programs based in communication theory and research, complemented with specialized seminars selected from areas including: rhetoric, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, media studies, political communication, and intercultural communication. In addition, students may choose among special-topics seminars, upper division courses, and independent study. Advisors work with students to create programs of study that meet their goals.

The program consists of 45 units of coursework that includes: core courses, graduate seminars, cognate courses, courses taken outside the department, and independent study courses. The culminating experience is a thesis, project, or comprehensive exam.

We encourage and support student participation in regional and national academic conferences and at department-sponsored communication forums. There are also CSU system-wide opportunities for graduate students to present their work throughout the year.

## II. Admission

Admission to the program includes two parts:

1. Submit the University application (found online at [www.csumentor.edu](http://www.csumentor.edu) ); pay the application fee (see the financial aid section of the University website for grant, scholarship, and fee waiver information), and have official transcripts from all undergraduate institutions attended sent to:

Admissions and Records  
California State University, East Bay  
25800 Carlos Bee Blvd.  
Hayward, CA 94542

Applicants must have an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 to be considered for admission.

2. Print and submit the Department application which also includes:
  - The Department application form, available from the Department of Communication by calling (510) 885-3292. The application may also be downloaded from the Department's Web site at: <http://tinyurl.com/CommunicationMA>
  - A 500 word Statement of Purpose. Indicate in this essay your reasons for pursuing graduate study in communication. The statement should also include: (1) area of subject interest; (2) career goals; and (3) additional relevant information concerning your academic and/or professional work experience. This essay should be typed and double spaced. Applicants with communication-related work experience may attach a resume. Please be aware that your Statement of Purpose will be considered an example of your writing skills by the application review committee.
  - International students also must take the TOEFL and score at least 550 (paper version) or 213 (computer version).
  - Three letters of recommendation. Please send letters, (in sealed envelopes) on letterhead from the recommending Institution or Party, with your application package.
  - A sample of your scholarly writing. Term papers written for undergraduate courses, usually between 10 and 20 pages in length, are appropriate writing samples. Applicants with media-related experience may send clippings in addition to, not in place of, a scholarly writing sample. Your writing sample should demonstrate that you are capable of writing a good scholarly essay.

The Graduate Application Review Committee takes each element of the application into consideration when deciding on candidates. Each applicants undergraduate GPA, letters of recommendation, statements of purpose, and writing samples are evaluated as a whole; no single indicator is used to determine admission.

New students are only admitted in the Fall quarter.

Application deadlines:

1. We accept applications for early review until February 25th.
2. The deadline to submit materials for late review is May 15th.  
Applications are reviewed by a three-person committee comprised of Full-time graduate faculty members from the Department of Communication.

The Graduate Committee will only review complete applications. To expedite the application review process please send all materials (application form, statement of purpose, letters of recommendation, and writing sample) in one package to:

Graduate Coordinator  
Department of Communication  
California State University, East Bay  
25800 Carlos Bee Blvd.  
Hayward, CA 94542

Upon successful review of your application, you may be offered admission under one of the following categories:

"Classified Graduate" Standing--For admission with "Classified Graduate" standing to the M.A. program in Communication, students must (1) submit an application to pursue a specific program of graduate study and be accepted by the department and the university, (2) have completed a baccalaureate major in Communication from an accredited institution, or appropriate preparatory coursework approved by the faculty, (3) have maintained an overall grade point average of at least 3.00, and (4) satisfied the University Writing Skills Requirement.

"Conditionally Classified Graduate" Standing--If a student's communication major did not include prerequisite courses, if a student's degree is in another field, or if the University Writing Skills Requirement has not been satisfied, it may be possible to be admitted with "Conditionally Classified Graduate" standing. In this case, students are admitted graduate students but have conditions to meet. Student status will remain conditional until the work is completed with a minimum of "B" or better grades and the Writing Skills Test has been passed. (See the following section, "Degree Requirements," for prerequisite courses.)

## **III. Program Requirements**

### **A. Selection of Your Graduate Program Advisor**

Upon acceptance into the Graduate Program in Communication and a meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator, you need to select a Graduate Program Advisor from among the Dept. of Communication Graduate Faculty. Your advisor will help you plan your program and choose courses appropriate to your goals. The specific nature of your program of study will reflect your academic and professional background as well as your career objectives and interests. You should meet with your Program Advisor on a regular basis to ensure a smooth journey through the program. All changes to your program of study must be approved by your Program Advisor.

### **B. Writing Skills Requirement**

The University requires that all students take the CSU Writing Skill Test (WST) in the first quarter of their residency as a graduate student. If, due to extenuating circumstances, you cannot take it in your first quarter, you may obtain a Compliance Form from Admissions & Records in Warren Hall. You must then take the WST the following quarter. If you graduated from the California State University, you have probably taken the WST (depending upon when you received your undergraduate degree). If you are not sure you have taken the test, check with the Office of Assessment & Testing to see if you need to take it. To register for the WST, pick up a registration packet at the Office of Assessment & Testing, 245 Warren Hall. International students are also required to take the TOFEL exam. <http://testing.csueastbay.edu/>

### **C. Course Work**

The Master of Arts program requires completion of 45 units of academic credit in an approved program of study, with a B or better in all classes that are to count towards the 45 units. Some courses, such as COMM 6100, may be taken more than once for credit, as course content changes. Students must obtain permission from the course professor and their Program Advisor or Graduate Coordinator to repeat seminars for credit.

Of the 45 units, at least 24 must be in courses at the 6000 level. A minimum of 8 units must be theory courses, and a minimum of 24 units (six courses) must be in regular graduate seminars. Up to 12 units at the 4000 level may count toward graduation. Up to 12 units of Independent Study may be taken (by advisor approval). Not more than two Independent Study units may be taken as mentee or intern credit. Up to 12 units of graduate seminars outside the Communication Department may be taken (by advisor approval) above the 4000 level. All courses are four units unless otherwise specified. Substitutions for program requirements may be approved by the Graduate Coordinator in extenuating circumstances. In cases of transferred credit, a minimum of 32 units must be completed at CSU East Bay.

### **Curricular Requirements**

## **I. Required Courses (12 units)**

*A. Take both of the following (8 units)*

COMM 6000 Introduction to Graduate Study (4)

COMM 6010 Seminar in Theories in Communication (4)

*B. Select at least one course from the following (4 units):*

COMM 6040 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods (4)

COMM 6050 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods (4)

## **II. Cluster Courses (12 units minimum)**

Select at least three courses in the cluster of your choice (12 units; more may be taken).

### **Cluster 1: Communication Studies**

Any combination of 12 or more units taken from all clusters with advisor's approval.

### **Cluster 2: Media Studies**

**Required:** COMM 6300 Seminar in Media Studies (4)

*Select at least two courses from the following:*

COMM 6020 Communication, Media and Society (4)

COMM 6100 Topics in Communication (4) (may be repeated)

COMM 6450 Seminar in Globalization and Media (4)

COMM 6550 Seminar in Critical Cultural Studies (4)

COMM 6551 Critical Ethnic Media Studies (4)

COMM 6900 Independent Study (4)

### **Cluster 3: Organizational and Interpersonal Communication**

**Required:** COMM 6400 Seminar in Rhetorical Studies (4)

*Select at least two courses from the following:*

COMM 6100 Topics in Communication (4) (may be repeated)

COMM 6600 Seminar in Organizational Communication (4)

COMM 6800 Seminar in Interpersonal Communication (4)

COMM 6810 Seminar in Intercultural Communication (4)

COMM 6850 Professional Communication (4)

COMM 6900 Independent Study (4)

## **III. Electives (12-20 units)**

The number of elective units you take is determined by the Capstone Experience you choose in IV, below. Total units for Electives and Capstone Experience must be at least 21. Total units for the degree is 45. Qualifying 4000 and 6000 level departmental and non-departmental courses to be approved in advance of every quarter, as per the University course calendar.



## **IV. Capstone Experience (1-9 units)**

### **A. Special Project (5 units)**

COMM 6899 Project (1-5 units per quarter, may be spread over multiple quarters, must total 5 units to finish)

Prerequisites: COMM 6000, COMM 6010, COMM 6040 or 6050, 12 units of elective coursework.

### **B. University Thesis (9 units)**

COMM 6910 University Thesis (1-9 units per quarter, may be spread over multiple quarters, must total 9 units to finish)

Prerequisites: COMM 6000, COMM 6010, COMM 6040 or 6050, 12 units of elective coursework.

### **C. Comprehensive Examination (1 unit)**

COMM 6901 Comprehensive Examination Preparation (1)

Prerequisites: Completion or enrollment for completion of all required and elective courses in the quarter of or prior to the exam date

### **D. Grades**

Students must earn a B or better in all courses taken as a graduate students or post-baccalaureate student at California State University East Bay. If a lower grade is earned, the course must be re-taken to receive credit. Please note a B- is below a B. Additionally, students must earn a B or better in all courses that are to count toward the Master of Arts degree (45 units). If a lower grade is earned in any course, the course must be re-taken and a B or better earned to receive credit.

### **E. Advancement to Classified Standing**

To advance to Classified Standing, you must complete all prerequisite courses (if applicable) with grades of B or better and pass the Writing Skills Test. Notify your Program Advisor immediately upon completion, and request that s/he complete the necessary paper work to advance you to Classified Standing.

### **F. Advancement to Candidacy**

Whereas Classified Standing allows you to work toward qualifying for Candidacy, Advancement to Candidacy allows you to proceed toward qualifying for the Masters Degree. To be Advanced to Candidacy for the M.A. degree in Communication, the student must:

1. be a "Classified Graduate" student in good standing;
2. complete 12 quarter units beyond the prerequisites with at least "B" grades;
3. choose a program advisor;
4. submit a study plan for completion of the degree program to the program advisor;
5. have the thesis proposal or project proposal approved by their graduate adviser, if applicable;
6. show evidence of progress and ability to complete the program.

*Candidacy review:* Upon completion of these requirements, your Program Advisor will examine your record as a graduate student and will: 1) recommend you to the Graduate Coordinator for advancement; or 2) postpone your advancement until specific deficiencies have been corrected; or 3) reject your advancement to candidacy.

## **G. Completion of the Masters Degree**

The Masters Degree may be completed in one of the following ways:

1. Thesis
2. Special Project
3. Comprehensive Exam

The decision about which option is most appropriate for you must be made in consultation with your Graduate Program Advisor. In any case, you will be required to form a three-person Thesis, Special Project or Comprehensive Exam Committee. Typically your Graduate Program Advisor will serve as chair of the Committee and up to two other faculty members will be requested to join the committee. Committee members should be selected based on expertise in the area of the student's research. For Thesis or Special Projects, one committee member may be from outside the department of communication.

***Thesis:*** Students who request permission to write a thesis must submit a prospectus to be approved by their Thesis Committee before beginning to write the thesis. This choice commits you to carrying out research on a specific topic in communication and then submitting it to the University to be bound in the specified format. For submission requirements, refer to the Graduate Handbook Supplement and the CSUEB Catalog. With approval from your supervisor, you may enroll in COMM 6910 and develop a thesis prospectus. The committee members must approve the thesis project outlined in the prospectus, and formally agree to serve on your thesis committee. You may earn up to 9 units of thesis credit, spread over the quarters during which you are writing the thesis. It is the student's responsibility to check in regularly with committee members to seek guidance on their thesis work. You will be required to defend the thesis before your committee and other members of the University community. (See Appendix A for details.)

***Special Project:*** Students may request permission to produce a Special Project as a completion option. The special project lies between a thesis and a major research paper and is evaluated upon its scope, practicality, and quality. Whereas a Thesis is the undertaking of major research and/or analysis, the focus of the Special Project is on the production of a designed object, event, or product. With approval from your supervisor, you may enroll in COMM 6899 and develop a project prospectus. The committee members must approve the project outlined in the prospectus, and formally agree to serve on your project committee. You may earn up to 5 units of project credit, spread over the quarters during which you are working on the project. It is the student's responsibility to check in regularly with committee members to seek guidance on their work. You will be required to defend the project before your committee and other members of the University community. See Appendix B for more details.

**Comprehensive Examination:** A student may elect a program made up entirely of a minimum of 45 units of approved coursework, including COMM 6901 Comprehensive Examination Preparation. A comprehensive examination must be passed. The Comprehensive Examination is a written and oral examination covering material common to all Master's degree candidates and material specific to the courses the candidate personally took in his or her program of study. The intent of the comprehensive examinations is to provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the scholarship in the field and your capacity to think creatively in relevant areas of Communication.

Specifically, students are examined on their ability to demonstrate broad and deep knowledge of theories, concepts and their authors; to make relationships among ideas, including connections among materials in various courses; to apply scholarly ideas to practical situations; and to synthesize material presented during studies. The content of the questions will provide the student with an opportunity to demonstrate critical analysis, independent thinking, appropriate organization, theoretical development of ideas, and relationship of theory to practice. Many of the questions are integrative in nature (ei. drawing upon knowledge from more than a single course).

The written portion of the Comprehensive Exam is broken into two writing sessions. Students will be tested on the following areas:

1. Communication Theory & History (4 hours)  
Areas of examination may include: rhetoric, communication, or media history; rhetorical, communication, and media theory; persuasion; media studies; organizational communication; ethics in communication; intercultural communication theory and practice.
2. Communication Research Methods & Analysis (3 hours)  
Areas of examination may include: quantitative, qualitative, critical, and historical research methods.

With approval from your supervisor, you may enroll in COMM 6901 in the quarter you intend to take the exam, and begin preparing for your Comprehensive Exam. You may form your examining committee in consultation with your supervisor. Committee members must formally agree to serve on your examining committee. Your committee members will provide questions to your exam supervisor, who will then administer them to you during the time of your exam. You may consult with your committee members to help prepare for the exam. It is the student's responsibility to check in regularly with committee members to seek guidance on their preparation.

Within two weeks following the written examination, you must defend your answers in a two-hour oral examination before your committee and other members of the University community. The oral examination constitutes a follow up on the strengths and weaknesses evidenced in the written examination. (See Appendix C for details.)

## **H. Application for the Degree**

Students may file for graduation when they have no more than 12 units left to complete. You must submit an application for your degree in the Evaluations Office during the first two weeks of the quarter before the quarter you expect to have the

degree granted. The University publishes deadlines in the University Catalog and in the Schedule of Classes, and they are available in the Department of Communication or through the Division of Graduate Studies.

## **IV. Types of Study**

### **A. Graduate Seminars**

Much of your coursework in the graduate program will be taken in seminars. A graduate seminar is not a lecture course. It involves student and faculty interaction in a cooperative search for understanding, relying importantly on findings contributed by students. The faculty member acts as synthesizer and facilitator of the discussion based upon students' thorough reading and preparation of primary and secondary scholarly sources.

### **B. Independent Study**

Independent Study must be approved by your Program Advisor. Study is available to students whose demonstrated ability and background allow them to work with little direct supervision. Topics for Independent Study should spring from your special interest in an area of investigation. If you wish to pursue an Independent Study, present your idea to a professor who has relevant interests and background. You should make arrangements for the Independent Study well in advance of the deadline for registration, preferably the quarter before. Although other arrangements are possible, the typical arrangement calls for readings and weekly or bi-weekly conferences, with a paper as the culminating assignment. Two- and four-unit arrangements are most often indicated. The number of units is determined by the rigor and scope of the study as agreed upon by the student, advisor and graduate program coordinator. A total of twelve units of Independent Study may be applied to the Masters Degree.

### **C. Cognate Courses**

Cognate courses are offerings in other departments offering graduate degrees and which have clear relevance to a student's program. Credit toward graduation will be allowed, with the following provisions:

1. Approval of the course must be secured from your Program Advisor and Graduate Program Coordinator.
2. You may apply no more than 12 units towards the 45 units required for the degree.
3. The courses must carry graduate credit and/or be taught by a PhD holding instructor
4. You must receive a grade of B or better for each course taken to receive graduate credit.
5. If you take 8 units of cognate courses within a particular area, you can expect to be tested in that area in your written and oral exams.

## **V. Awards, Assistance & Associations**

### **A. Outstanding Graduate Student Award**

Starting in 1970, the graduate faculty has named each year the "Outstanding Graduate Student" completing the program. The person selected is honored at the Communication Banquet in the Spring. Scholarship, leadership and contribution to the program are basic criteria for selection.

### **B. Outstanding Graduate Teaching Associate**

Each year the faculty names "Outstanding Graduate Associate" to the student(s) demonstrating outstanding performance in teaching the basic course(s). The person selected is honored at the Communication Banquet in the Spring.

### **C. Communication Lab**

The Communication Lab assists all university students, teachers, and staff with oral and written presentations, research, organization, pronunciation, and interviewing. You are encouraged to volunteer in the Lab to gain valuable teaching experience and as a service to other students. You may sign up for 1-2 units of Speech 6200, with permission of Lab Director. Students may also apply to serve in paid positions as Lab Assistants.

### **D. Communication Connection Student Association**

The Communication Connection is organized by Dept. of Communication graduate students, and is open to all students with an interest in communication and media studies. The Communication Connection elects officers and meets regularly to socialize, to discuss research, and to exchange concerns and problems. It has traditionally played an important role in student life and has been the key to successful departmental events including awards ceremonies, special events, and student conferences.

### **E. Internships**

With the permission of your advisor and the graduate program coordinator, students may earn four units of internship credit by working in the Communication Lab, by tutoring/mentoring in COMM 1000 or 1004; and/or by internship activity through Co-op Education. For those who have already taken COMM 6250, COMM 6200 Internship in Speech Communication can be used with permission from the graduate program coordinator and a supervising faculty member to gain teaching experience working as a teaching assistant for credit with a full time faculty member for one quarter. Interested students may discuss this option with individual full time faculty members in the Dept. of Communication. Duties and pedagogical outcomes must be commensurate with the earning of four or less units of credit.

## **F. Teaching Opportunities**

Qualified students may be granted opportunities to teach or to assist in the Communication Lab. To be eligible for consideration to teach COMM 1000 and/or 1004, students must show satisfactory achievement in COMM 6250 (Teaching Speech Communication), have no outstanding incompletes, have completed appropriate coursework, successfully (with a B or better), and have mentored with a faculty member in the course(s) you wish to teach. To be included in the teaching pool, you must submit to the Department Chair a formal letter of application together with three letters of recommendation. In addition, to continue in the teaching pool, Interested students should consult with the Department Chair. Opportunities to teach will be decided on several factors: the number of graduate students in the pool, course availability, and student readiness. The faculty will make every effort to provide all qualified students with the opportunity to teach.

## **G. Work Study**

Information about the Work Study program can be found in the Financial Aid Office in Warren Hall 545.

<http://www20.csueastbay.edu/students/financing-your-education/fin-aid/index.html>

## **H. Financial Aid**

The University makes available financial aid in the form of student loans, graduate fellowships, writing assistantships, and pre-doctoral programs. Ask about opportunities in the Financial Aid Office, Warren Hall 545.

## **VI. Dept. of Communication Graduate Faculty**

Lonny Brooks, Ph.D. 2004, University of California, San Diego; M.L.I.S. 1995, University of California, Los Angeles: organizational communication, information technologies, critical ethnography, communication theory and research

Grant Kien, Ph.D., 2006, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, M.A., 2002, York University: technography, technology and organizational/social change, digital media and culture, qualitative research, globalization.

Robert Terrell, Ph.D., 1978 University of California, Berkeley, M.A., 1973, U.C. Berkeley: mass communication, journalism, photojournalism, media and social justice.

Terry West, Ph.D., 1994, Southern Illinois University, M.A., 1985, Southwest Missouri State University (now Missouri State University): communication education, argumentation, critical thinking, persuasion, forensics, debate.

Gale Young, Ph.D. 1978, University of California, Los Angeles; M.A. 1970, University of California, Los Angeles: intercultural communication, interpersonal communication, communication theory



## **APPENDIX A: THESIS GUIDELINES**

### **A. Description**

A master's thesis is a systematic study and analysis of a significant problem. It clearly 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. A thesis may take the form of testing a hypothesis containing two or more variables or related items, historical assessment, critical analysis, survey inquiry, case studies, qualitative primary research, or a content analysis. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation. It is authored by a master's candidate with guidance from a faculty thesis Chair and committee. Upon completion, it is defended before the thesis committee and university community and submitted for approval with the university thesis office.

### **B. General Guidelines**

The following are general guidelines for theses. Graduate faculty who have expertise and research background in the student's area of interest should be consulted for specifics.

- There must be a systematic, operative method appropriate to the topic and the questions being asked by the researcher.
- The question or topic to be addressed should have adequate justification illustrating its importance and contribution to the field. The researcher must satisfactorily answer the question, "so what?".
- A thesis must be more than a descriptive study; it must include significant analysis and interpretation of data that provides new insights, leading to a formulation of new theory or contributing to the validation of existing theory.
- Much of a thesis should be the result of primary research; secondary sources, in large part, should be restricted to the "Literature Review".
- A thesis, to be manageable, should be clearly focused on a specific question, proposition, or hypothesis.
- Narrative portions must be clearly written and illustrate a sophisticated understanding of the information being presented. The research may not be a task specifically assigned by the candidate's employer or a normal part of the individual's job responsibilities.
- Theses may be funded or sponsored by organizations, and candidates are encouraged to seek funding whenever possible. Results of research, however, are open to the public and sponsoring group cannot exercise proprietary control.
- The researcher is responsible for understanding and adhering to all guidelines for preparation of thesis manuscript as outlined by the University's Office of Graduate Studies.

- Although other structures may be chosen, a completed thesis typically has five basic chapters: (1) Introduction and Statement of the Problem, (2) Literature Review, (3) Method (4) Findings, (5) Summary and Conclusions. A complete reference section and appropriate appendices appear at the end of the manuscript. The length of a thesis may vary, depending on the nature of the research. Typically, a thesis may be anywhere from 80 to 130 pages in length.

## **C. Preparing to Write a Thesis**

Positioning oneself to conduct original research is a lengthy process that should be anticipated and prepared for far in advance of your anticipated completion date. Three necessary steps must be taken before a student is permitted to enroll for thesis units.

### **1. Advancement to Candidacy**

A student may not enroll in COMM 6910 until after Advancement to Candidacy. Thus, Advancement to Candidacy normally occurs the quarter prior to the first enrollment in COMM 6910.

### **2. Select a Thesis Chair and Committee**

The student is responsible for securing all faculty members to serve on their thesis committee. Committee members must formally agree to serve on the committee, have the right to refuse to serve on a thesis committee, and have the right to withdraw from the committee if they so choose at a later date. The committee chair must be a member of the Department of Communication Graduate Faculty and is usually selected first. This person is often the student's program advisor, but doesn't have to be. The chair normally serves as the director of the student's research and will be the person with whom the student works most closely. In rare circumstances, the role of thesis director may be filled by a committee member other than the chair, but must be a person qualified in the specific area of the thesis. Generally, the chair/thesis director is responsible for ensuring that the student has the proper preparation to pursue the proposed thesis, establishing guidelines and timetables, assuring that the appropriate editorial and format standards are followed, and directing the oral defense. Ideally, chair selection represents the mutual interests of both faculty and students, thus students are encouraged to interact with all faculty to determine with whom their interests overlap most.

After the committee chair is chosen, the remaining committee members are selected. Committee members must have a relevant PhD. This is done in consultation with the Chair as she or he will oversee the other committee members' work with the student. In most circumstances, no more than one regular tenure track faculty holding an appointment in another department at or outside of CSUEB may serve on a student's thesis committee. Before agreeing to serve on the thesis committee, the prospective members will review the thesis topic (minimally in the form of a 2-3 page abstract, ideally in the form of a complete or nearly complete prospectus, see below) and determine that they possess the requisite expertise and that they are reasonably available to the student to support the study.

### **3. Write a Thesis Prospectus**

A thesis prospectus provides a description of the focus and rationale for the research project, a review of related literature, procedures for conducting the research project, and the format of the final thesis. The research project should be more than a minor extension of a seminar project. It should constitute an original contribution to literature in communication and should develop a student's research abilities to a professional level. Although the precise content of each prospectus will vary, it must be a detailed plan for the conduct of a specific research project. As such, it functions as a contract between the thesis committee and a student regarding the scope of the proposed project. A detailed prospectus reduces the chance of misunderstandings between all parties involved, and thus enhances a student's opportunity for success.

The prospectus normally begins as an abstract of preliminary thesis ideas, in either narrative or outline format, that serve to guide preliminary talks with prospective committee members, especially the chair. In addition to faculty, consult published research, completed theses, and the University manual entitled *Master's Theses and Projects: Guide to Style and Format* for both ideas about and models for a thesis research project. An abstract is transformed into a prospectus normally in consultation with the thesis committee chair and other committee members. Its precise length and format may vary depending on the nature of the research project and the expectations of the committee. Even so, the prospectus typically translates as one or two nearly complete chapters of the final thesis (e.g., review of literature and methods sections in an empirical study). A candidate must have a completed prospectus approved by all members of her/his thesis committee before work on the research may begin. Note that it is not necessary for the committee to meet in order to grant approval of the thesis. Acceptance of the prospectus by members of the thesis committee certifies both the acceptability of the thesis research project and their willingness to direct the student's thesis.

## **Typical Outline for a Thesis Prospectus**

### **TITLE PAGE**

- Name of Thesis Topic
- Type, e.g., "An Empirical Study of Guilt as a Motivational Force"
- Name of student and date
- Names and e-mail addresses of the members of your committee

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is a brief statement summarizing the topic, purpose, and con the proposed research. It should discuss the significance and value of doing the research, and how the researcher plans to conduct the research. The introduction serves as an "executive summary" of the student' proposal. (Generally 5 plus pages.)

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

- This section summarizes all relevant studies as they directly relate to the research question. You should avoid the tendency to include materials that do not directly relate to the research question.
- The purpose of the literature review is to bolster the case for ding the planned research, and to give a conceptual context of what is a ready known about the topic.

- The literature review should lead logically to the statement of a hypothesis, question, or proposition. (Generally 25-30 plus pages)

## **METHOD**

- The proposed research method must be thoroughly explained defended.
- Sample frames, as well as time periods, must be clearly defined.
- Methods of (quantitative and qualitative) analysis should be discussed in detail. Control groups, questionnaires, number of interviews, coding of data, etc., must be explained in detail and included in the thesis (and the prospectus). The writer also should mention his/her ability and availability of sources for carrying out such analysis.
- The nature of fieldwork and primary research must be thoroughly outlined. It is often necessary to do some preliminary fieldwork research before you write the proposal.
- A timeline for completion of the research should be provided, and any budget considerations.
- Limitations of the study, as well as definition of terms, should be provided. (Generally 5 plus pages.)
- If your Project requires clearance from the University IRB. (ei, human subjects are required, interviews, or surveys.) You will be required to, prior to starting your project, attend a course and submit your project for approval. See the University website at: <http://www.csueastbay.edu/orsp/IRB/facilitate.html>

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- A complete list of references, following an accepted and approved style manual, should be provided.

## **APPENDICES**

- Preliminary questionnaires, consent forms, experimental stimuli, and other pertinent materials.

## **D. Completing the Thesis**

Once the thesis committee approves the thesis prospectus, the candidate must complete the research project detailed in the prospectus. At this point a student may not change to the comprehensive examination option except by special permission of the Graduate Committee. Beyond work on the project itself, completing the thesis also involves enrolling in COMM 6910, working with the thesis committee, adhering to University specifications and deadlines, and preparing for the oral defense of the thesis.

### **1. Enroll in COMM 6910**

Enrollment in up to nine (9) units of COMM 6910 represents the independent work a student conducts in completing his or her thesis. "Credit" will be awarded if satisfactory and continuous progress is made on the thesis research project. If a candidate does not demonstrate satisfactory and continuous progress on the thesis after

enrolling in COMM 6910, the Graduate Committee, on the recommendation of the thesis committee and/or the Graduate Coordinator, may terminate the student's graduate program. This action may be taken either while the student is enrolled in COMM 6910 (in which case a "No Credit" will be awarded), or afterward.

## **2. Work with the Thesis Committee**

Thesis Committee members are among the most important people in the candidate's academic life; thus consider the following suggestions. First, visit the committee members periodically and report on your progress. This helps both to maintain good relations and to uncover any potential trouble spots regarding members' approval of the thesis progress. Second, find resolutions to differences of opinions. A student does not have to agree with all suggestions, however a thoughtful and acceptable rationale should be provided in cases where a recommendation is not followed. Third, provide each committee member with his or her own copy of the next-to-last draft of the thesis by a mutually agreed upon date. Students (with the advice of the committee members) are responsible for determining a realistic schedule and adhering to it. Please note that neither the thesis committee nor the Department is responsible for advising or supervising thesis candidates when they are not enrolled in the graduate program.

## **3. Adhere to University specifications and deadlines**

The master's thesis is a formal document that is cataloged and stored in the University library for study by other scholars for years to come. Therefore, the form and style of the thesis is quite exacting. Students should secure a copy of *Master's Theses and Projects: Guide to Style and Format*. In addition, students should consult thesis guidelines available in the following manuals: Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*; *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*; or *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

## **4. Receive approval of the completed thesis**

Once a student's committee chair indicates that her or his thesis is ready for approval, an oral defense must be scheduled. An oral defense should be scheduled with the thesis committee at least two weeks prior to the deadline for depositing theses in the University Library in order to allow time for revisions. This advance time, coupled with the advance time necessary for the thesis committee to read the thesis before the defense means that a candidate should finish his or her next-to-last draft of the thesis ideally four or more weeks before the Thesis Office's deadline for deposit. The oral defense is a two-hour event that takes place before the thesis committee and is directed by the thesis committee chair. The defense is public, so other faculty and students may choose to attend. At the specified start time the student provides a brief summary of the thesis project and its highlights (lasting approximately 15 to 20 minutes); the committee then questions the candidate for the remainder of the time. Questions can cover any topics deemed relevant to the thesis and the candidate's knowledge of any other areas of his or her graduate studies. After the defense, the candidate and the audience will be asked to leave the room while approval of the thesis is decided. The decision requires a majority vote. The committee may decide one of four actions: 1) approve the thesis as submitted, 2) approve the thesis with specified changes to be approved by the thesis supervisor only, 3) approve the thesis with specified changes to be approved by the

entire committee, 4) not approve the thesis. The committee members will notify candidates of their decision immediately after it is made. A candidate whose thesis and/or defense does not receive approval may revise and resubmit the thesis and/or defend it no sooner than the following quarter. Resubmission or re-defense, however, may take place only once.

Among the four actions possible, the second option is the most frequent outcome. After the requisite signatures have been obtained, a completed draft must be submitted to the University. With approval, the thesis is deposited in the library and copies are given to the Department, the thesis chair, and usually to other committee members. This signals the official completion of the thesis!

## **APPENDIX B: SPECIAL PROJECT GUIDELINES**

### **A. Description**

Candidates for the M.A. Degree in Communication may complete their degree by completing a special project. This option requires a professional project and an oral presentation and examination to a faculty and student audience. The professional-quality project may take a variety of forms: a series of newspaper or magazine articles, a radio or television documentary, a photojournalism essay, an advertising or public relations campaign, design of a Web site or other professional work. A project proposal must be approved by the student's project committee (typically made up of your program advisor and two other faculty members). The work completed on the project must be greater than the work for two graduate seminars. The project must include a final report and must be presented in a format suitable for library storage; also included must be the professional product, such as an edited DVD, a public relations or advertising plan, published news articles, copies of Web pages, etc.

### **B. General Guidelines**

The following are general guidelines for special projects. Individual faculty who have professional expertise and background in the student's area of interest, should be consulted for any specific project guidelines relating to their discipline.

- The project will present a clear statement of a problem related to one or more professional areas in the programs of the Department (ie. advertising, reporting and editing, public relations, journalism, photojournalism, or broadcast news).
- The problem addressed should be in a professional area for which candidate has taken academic coursework or has professional experience. In some cases, it is required that students complete coursework in the professional area at CSUEB.
- The problem to be addressed in the project should have adequate justification illustrating its importance and its contribution to the field. If the project is undertaken on behalf of an organization, its value to the organization must be specifically stated.
- The project may not be a task specifically assigned by the candidate's employer or a normal part of an individual's job responsibilities.
- Projects may be funded or sponsored by organizations, and students are encouraged to seek funding whenever possible. The sponsoring organization, however, cannot control or censor the content of the student's project report.
- The product resulting from the project (report, videotape, articles, photo essay, advertising campaign, public relations program) must be of professional quality and represent a level of work equal to 8 academic units at the graduate level.
- The quality and effectiveness of the project must be documented by some form of evaluation. This evaluation may take the form of published articles, usage by broadcast stations or cable systems, gallery showings and other public displays, publication and distribution of printed materials, critique by a panel of professionals in the field, or

systematic feedback from sponsoring organizations and audience viewing or receiving project materials.

- Final presentation of the product must be in a form suitable for library storage (e.g., report professionally bound, edited DVDs, articles, brochures, or newsletters in published form). At least two copies must be submitted: one for the University Library, and a second copy for the Department.

## **C. Preparing for a Special Project**

### **1. Advancement to Candidacy**

A student may not enroll in COMM 6899 until after advancement to candidacy. Thus, advancement to candidacy normally occurs the quarter prior to the first enrollment in COMM 6899.

### **2. Select a Special Project Chair and Committee**

The student is responsible for securing all faculty members to serve on their project committee. Committee members must formally agree to serve on the committee, have the right to refuse to serve on a thesis committee, and have the right to withdraw from the committee if they so choose at a later date. The committee chair must be a member of the Department of Communication Graduate Faculty and is usually selected first. This person is often the student's program advisor, but doesn't have to be. The chair normally serves as the director of the student's project and will be the person with whom the student works most closely. In rare circumstances, the role of project director may be filled by a committee member other than the chair, but must be a person qualified in the specific area of the project. Generally, the director is responsible for ensuring that the student has the proper preparation to pursue the proposed project, establishing guidelines and timetables, assuring that the appropriate editorial and format standards are followed, and directing the oral exam. Ideally, chair selection represents the mutual interests of both faculty and students, thus students are encouraged to interact with all faculty to determine with whom their interests overlap most.

After the committee chair is chosen, the remaining committee members are selected. Committee members must have a relevant PhD. This is done in consultation with the Chair as she or he will oversee the other committee members' work with the student. In most circumstances, no more than one regular tenure track faculty holding an appointment in another department at or outside of CSUEB may serve on a student's project committee. Before agreeing to serve on the committee, the prospective members will review the project proposal and determine that they possess the requisite expertise and that they are reasonably available to the student to support the project.

### **3. Write a Project Prospectus**

Students must write a prospectus for a special project and have it approved by their project committee before work can commence. Note that it is not necessary for the committee to meet in order to grant approval of the project. Before writing such a proposal, it is important to consult faculty in the specific discipline to get their suggestions, comments, and ideas. Three copies of the prospectus must be submitted



(one for each member of the committee). It should be as detailed as possible, follow the guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, or *MLA*; the typical sections of a special project prospectus are as follows:

### **TITLE PAGE**

- Name of Project
- Type of Project, e.g., *Public Relations Campaign for the Contra Costa County Animal Control District*
- Name of student and date
- Names and email addresses of the members of your committee
- Your email address

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is a brief statement summarizing the nature and scope of the proposed project. It should discuss the value of the project to the sponsoring organization, the public, and the student. Toward the end of the introduction, you should briefly outline your qualifications (professional experience or coursework) for undertaking the project and how the work contributes to your education and career goals. (Generally 5 plus pages.)

### **BACKGROUND**

This section summarizes relevant information relating to the project:

- 1) Literature review. This varies according to the project. It may be a summary of current trends or contemporary issues; if the project is a public relations plan, or it may be a summary of the information already known about a topic. For example, a proposed series of newspaper articles on bilingual education or the North America trade agreement might summarize what has already been written about the topic.
- 2) Overview of organizational situation. If the project is being done on behalf of an organization, there should be BRIEF description of the organization (organization chart, revenues, products, services, primary publics, etc.) and anything that relates to your project. For example, why is your project a contribution to the organization?
- 3) Description of preliminary work undertaken. What have you done, to date, on the project? What organizational contacts have taken place? What research has been done? This is important primarily for those investigating a particular event or situation, such as researching documents to use in the production of newspaper articles about that event. (Generally 25-30 plus pages.)

### **LOGISTICS**

- Budget for the project (include costs to student and amount of funding from other sources).
- Timeline for completion of the project.
- Describe the actual "product" produced and how it will be utilized and audiences reached.
- If the project has several components, you should specify which parts are your responsibility. (Generally 3-5 pages.)

### **METHOD**

- Describe in detail how the project will be done. What primary and secondary sources will be utilized? Describe how you will use various quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- Describe how the effectiveness of the project will be evaluated. (Generally 7 plus pages.)
- If your Project requires clearance from the University IRB. (i.e., human subjects are required, interviews, or surveys.) You will be required to, prior to starting your project, attend a course and submit your project for approval. See the University website at: <http://www.csueastbay.edu/orsp/IRB/facilitate.html>

## **REFERENCES**

- An appropriate list of references, following accepted APA or MLA style (consult your special project committee for guidance about appropriate style).

## **APPENDIX**

- Include correspondence from any sponsoring organization or funding group involved.
- Include letters of "cooperation" from individuals or groups who are needed for completion of the project.
- Include a copy of questionnaires created.

## **D. Proposal Review Process**

- 1) The student's program advisor must endorse a pre-sign off sheet to indicate the student's basic readiness to undertake a special project. This sheet must be included with the project proposal (below the cover page) when it is submitted to the committee for review.
- 2) The committee will review the special project prospectus and inform the student within five weeks as to the outcome of their review.
- 3) A final proposal sign-off sheet (signed by the three committee members) must be obtained before work on the project can commence.

## **E. Completing the Project**

### **1. Enroll in COMM 6899**

Enrollment in up to five (5) units of COMM 6899 represents the independent work a student conducts in completing his or her project. "Credit" will be awarded if satisfactory and continuous progress is made on the project. If a candidate does not demonstrate satisfactory and continuous progress on the project after enrolling in COMM 6899, the Graduate Committee, on the recommendation of the project committee and/or the Graduate Coordinator, may terminate the student's graduate program. This action may be taken either while the student is enrolled in COMM 6899 (in which case a "No Credit" will be awarded), or afterward.

### **2. Work with the Project Committee**

Consult with your project chair and other committee members frequently to report on your progress. This helps both to maintain good relations and to uncover any potential trouble spots that may arise. Second, find resolutions to differences of opinions. A student does not have to agree with all suggestions, however a thoughtful and

acceptable rationale should be provided in cases where a recommendation is not followed. Third, provide each committee member with his or her own copy of the next-to-last draft of the project two weeks prior to the oral defense date. It is important to note that neither the project committee nor the Department is responsible for advising or supervising project candidates when they are not enrolled in the graduate program.

### **3. Schedule an Oral Defense of the Completed Project**

Once a student's committee chair indicates that her or his project is ready for approval, an oral defense must be scheduled. The oral defense is a two-hour event that takes place before the project committee and is directed by the committee chair. The defense is public, so other faculty and students may choose to attend. At the specified start time the student provides a brief summary of the project and its highlights (lasting approximately 15 minutes); the committee then questions the candidate for the remainder of the time. Questions can cover any topics deemed relevant to the project and the candidate's knowledge of any other areas of his or her graduate studies.

After the defense, the candidate will be asked to leave the room while approval of the project is decided. The decision requires a majority vote. The committee may decide one of three actions: 1) approve the project as submitted, 2) approve the project with specified changes, 3) not approve the project. The committee members will notify candidates of their decision immediately after it is made. A candidate whose project and/or defense does not receive approval may revise and resubmit the project and/or defend it no sooner than the following quarter. Resubmission or re-defense however, may take place only once.

Among the three actions possible, the second option is the most frequent outcome. The project committee often will have the project chair supervise the changes. After the requested changes have been made and all signatures obtained, at least two copies of the final project must be submitted.

## **APPENDIX C: THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

### **A. Steps in the Comprehensive Examination Process**

#### **1. Preparation for examination.**

Near the end of your program (early in the quarter before you plan to take the comprehensive examination), meet with your program advisor to schedule dates for the exam nations and present him/her with copies of a list of courses taken, grades earned, with whom, and when taken. Then you may meet with professors with whom you have studied, to ask for general guidance in preparing for examination.

#### **2. Status in Program.**

Students must be prepared to be examined on course work taken during their graduate study, including any in progress during the quarter of examination. Thus, students must have completed all or nearly all of their required coursework before taking the examination. Students may, in some cases, be in the process of finishing their last quarter of courses when they take the examination. In that case, students will be held responsible for the content of those courses in process. Students must have maintained a minimum of B grade in all graduate and prerequisite coursework in order to take the examination.

#### **3. Times and dates when the examination is offered.**

The written examination will take place during the last week of the quarter. Oral examination will normally take place the following week. No examinations will be administered during summer quarter.

#### **4. Length of the Examination.**

Students write four hours in Theory and History; three hours in Research Methods.

#### **5. Structure of the Examination (number of questions, etc.).**

For the written portion of the examination, the number of questions asked will vary depending upon the student's course of study. Your program advisor will solicit examination questions from faculty and committee members, to include questions in the appropriate areas. Your program advisor will work with the graduate faculty to compile the comprehensive examination from the received questions. Individual questions may be from one to three hours long. For the oral portion of the examination, questions will be asked by the professors who have written questions.

#### **6. Evaluation of the Examination.**

The authors of the written questions will be responsible for their evaluation. Students may be required to demonstrate competence in communication theory, media studies, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, rhetoric, media theory, communication history, and research methodologies in order to pass. This includes knowledge from cognate and elective courses.

#### **7. Comprehensive Examination Results**

Individual members of the comprehensive exam committee have three voting options: pass, fail, or rewrite. The comprehensive examination committee may render one of the following decisions:

1. PASS - three votes to pass
2. FAIL - three votes to fail
3. REWRITE - any other possible combination of votes

If students **PASS** the comprehensive examination, the recommendation is forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator by the comprehensive examination committee chair.

If students are required to REWRITE all or part of the comprehensive examination, they will be given the opportunity to rewrite only once in the area(s) of deficiency. Students will receive question(s) for revision within 5 working days of the oral exam. The committee may require a second meeting to review the student's rewrite and decide whether the student passes or fails the comprehensive examination.

If students **FAIL** their original attempt at the comprehensive examination, committee members shall make themselves available to explain their decision and to facilitate the preparation of the retake of the examination. The examination can only be retaken one time. Students may petition to retake the examination no earlier than the quarter following that in which they took the original comprehensive examination. Retakes of comprehensive exams must be completed within 2 quarters of when the original exam was taken.

## **B. Performance Expectations for Master of Arts Comprehensive Examinations**

### **1. General Requirements for Written and Oral Portions of the Examination**

- Develop a clear, cogent, and compelling case.
- Show you know the theorists, their concepts/constructs, are able to think with them and apply them in a variety of situations, engaging relevant issues.
- Employ examples and textual support to develop your claims.
- Cite sources—at least name and title of work.
- Write coherent essays, with proper use of grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and citation of sources.

### **2. Specific Requirements for the Written and Oral Examination**

#### ***a. Conceptual Knowledge***

- Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of conceptual knowledge.
- Know major theorists, their projects, principal constructs.
- Be able to analyze and evaluate theories, addressing benefits and limitations.
- Demonstrate the ability to work conceptually.
- Demonstrate knowledge of research methods.

#### ***b. Critical Analysis***

- Be able to conduct critical analysis.
- Know the issues in critical analysis of messages.

#### ***c. Application***

- Demonstrate ability to translate theory into practice and to think with the theories.
- Be able to relate concepts across the discipline.
- Demonstrate ownership of the material through ability to think with ideas and make practical applications.

#### ***d. Authentic Voice***

- Be able to speak from your own voice as a scholar.
- Make coherent, clear arguments and descriptions.
- Be willing and able to assess the limits of your own knowledge.
- Speak authoritatively.

### **3. Specific Expectations of Knowledge and Performance**

The following are the expectations of knowledge and performance in specific areas.

#### ***a. Theory and Research***

Students completing a Masters Degree in Communication must be able to:

*Show mastery of the major theories and contributions of theorist in rhetorical theory and criticism and communication theory and research methods by:*

- 1) Describing the key presuppositions, claims of relevant theories and the author(s) and major lines of research supported by each theory;
- 2) Describing the problem(s), question(s), or issue(s) particular theorists are grappling with and for which their theories were created;
- 3) Explaining the relationships among key ideas and being prepared to compare and contrast key ideas of major theories both within an area of study (e.g. rhetorical criticism) and across areas of study;
- 4) Identifying ways in which theories may work together to enrich analysis without violating epistemological and ontological assumptions of the theories; and
- 5) Applying the perspectives of relevant theories to some problem or issue in communication.

Show mastery of major lines of research in rhetorical theory and criticism and communication theory and research methods by:

- 1) Demonstrating knowledge of the history of theory and research in the study of communication;
- 2) Describing key studies that address issues related to the research question of theses and comprehensive examination;
- 3) Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses and the critiques of key research in an area; and
- 4) Designing your own research project that addresses and responds to published research in the area of study.

Show mastery of research methods in rhetoric and communication by:

- 1) Describing the ontological, epistemological, and axiological commitments of the major research methods used to study human communication;
- 2) Describing the key concepts of each major research method (e.g. sampling, independent variables, thick description, text, audience, situation, etc.);
- 3) Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of major research methods; and
- 4) Describe the kinds of data required for major research methods.

Demonstrate their ability to take a position on a question in communication and defend it, in both written and oral form by constructing clear and compelling arguments in defense of their scholarly opinions/positions. Arguments must include:

- 1) Use textual evidence from the body of theory and practice that bears on their research question (thesis) or examination question;
- 2) Respond to counter-positions posed by other theorists and practitioners studied in coursework;
- 3) Provide relevant communication-based examples to illustrate claims; follow the principles of sound argument, avoiding common fallacies of reasoning; and
- 4) Include names of key authors and works included in arguments made to defend positions taken.

### ***b. Demonstration of Knowledge***

Students completing a Masters Degree in Communication able to:

*Demonstrate the ability to write with the style and quality consistent with achieving a Masters Degree by:*

Writing thoughtful, concise, and clear essays in timed situations that display, at minimum, clear thesis statements, appropriate organization, cogent arguments and few errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure.

*Demonstrate the ability to be self-reflective and to articulate strengths and limitations as a scholar by:*

- 1) Developing your own "voice" as a scholar through writing and speaking with confidence and competently defending your position when challenged;
- 2) Acknowledging the limits of your knowledge and knowing ways to acquire additional knowledge; and
- 3) Conducting scholarly conversations with faculty about topics of importance in communication.

## **Comprehensive Examinations FAQs**

*1. Q: What is the purpose of the comprehensive examination?*

A: The purpose of the examination is twofold. First, it provides you the opportunity to consolidate, integrate, and think about what you have learned; and to evaluate your level of mastery.

*2. Q: What will I be tested on?*

A: You are responsible for mastery of rhetorical theory and criticism communication theory research methods.

*3. Q: How will I be evaluated?*

A: You will be evaluated on 1) your knowledge of the material, including theories, concepts, messages, and their authors; 2) your ability to think about and with the material by drawing inferences and making connections among ideas, and synthesizing ideas (see above for detail).

*4. Q: If I do well in my course work, isn't that enough to get my M.A. ?*

A: No. The comprehensive examination is a significant and integral achieving the M.A. degree.

5. Q: *How do I prepare for the examination?*

A: STUDY long and hard. Apply yourself diligently throughout your coursework. In the beginning of the quarter before you plan to write, talk with the professors with whom you have studied about what they may want you to focus upon. Organize the materials and your thinking in preparation for the examination. Specifically: review the readings for each class take notes on the readings (focus on theory, methods, and findings); review your class notes; prepare review sheets to allow you to sort and conceptualize the information in different ways; and, discuss the concepts with you classmates and professors.

6. Q: *How do I write the answers?*

A: Remember that in every case you are being called to make an argument. Therefore, in response to each question, you need to stat your claim (thesis) clearly up front, preview how you will develop your claim, and then let your reader know when you are addressing each argument (signpost).

7. Q: *What happens in the oral examination?*

A: This is your opportunity to defend, develop, and extend the claim arguments you made in the written part. You will be expected to be able to think about relationships between concepts across examination questions and to draw inferences and make connections among ideas that may or may not have appeared in the written questions.

8. Q: *Do I need to agree with the professors?*

A: No. You need to be able to think, to argue, to present a compelling case for your point of view, including drawing upon and citing authors of scholarly works.

9. Q: *How do I deal with my anxiety?*

A: Be well prepared.

10. Q: *What if I do not do well on parts of the examination?*

A: Your committee will decide which questions, if any, need further work. They will decide if you will be allowed to rewrite, in what form, and within what time frame. And their expectations will be considerably higher than the first time you wrote because you have had additional time to prepare for a specified area. Clearly, it is best to do your homework the first time around.

## **APPENDIX D: PROGRAM PROGRESS CHECKLIST**



**Applicable to all students:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Plan details of your program with your Program Advisor	
2. Take the University Writing Skills test	
3. Apply for Classified Standing	
4. Apply for Advancement to Candidacy	
5. Complete a "Major Check Sheet" and file with the Graduate Studies Office	
6. Apply to graduate the quarter before you intend to receive the degree	

**Thesis option:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Select Thesis Committee Chair and Committee members.	
2. Complete thesis prospectus, obtain signed approval by committee members.	
3. Schedule oral defense of thesis.	
4. Submit thesis to the graduate Studies Office.	

**Special Project option:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Select Project Committee Chair and Committee members.	
2. Complete project prospectus, obtain signed approval by committee members.	
3. Schedule oral defense of project.	
4. Submit project to the Department.	

**Comprehensive Exam option:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Consult with Program Advisor about exam areas.	
2. Meet to discuss exam questions with professors with whom you have studied.	
3. Schedule written exam.	
4. Schedule oral exam.	

**APPENDIX E: DEGREE PLANNING WORKSHEET**

	<b>Units</b>	<b>Qtr &amp;</b>	<b>Grade</b>
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	Year		
<b>1. Core Courses</b>			
<p><i>A. Take both of the following (8 units)</i>            COMM 6000 Introduction to Graduate Study (4)            COMM 6010 Theories in Communication (4)</p> <p><i>B. Select at least one course from the following (4 units):</i>            COMM 6040 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods (4)            COMM 6050 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods (4)</p>			
<b>2. Cluster courses</b> Select at least three courses in the cluster of your choice (12 units; more may be taken).			
<b>Cluster 1: Communication Studies (12 units)</b> Any combination of 12 units taken from all clusters with advisor's approval.			
<b>Cluster 2: Media Studies (12 units)</b> <i>Required:</i> COMM 6300 Seminar in Media Studies (4) Select at least two courses from the following: COMM 6020 Communication, Media and Society (4) COMM 6100 Topics in Communication (4) (may be repeated) COMM 6450 Seminar in Globalization and Media (4) COMM 6550 Seminar in Critical Cultural Studies (4) COMM 6551 Critical Ethnic Media Studies (4) COMM 6900 Independent Study (4)			
<b>Cluster 3: Organizational and Interpersonal Communication (12 units)</b> <i>Required:</i> COMM 6400 Seminar in Rhetorical Studies (Public Discourse) (4) Select at least two courses from the following: COMM 6600 Organizational Communication (4) COMM 6800 Seminar in Interpersonal Communication (4) COMM 6810 Seminar in Intercultural Communication (4) COMM 6850 Professional Communication (4) COMM 6100 Topics in Communication (4) (may be repeated) COMM 6900 Independent Study (4)			
<b>I. Electives (12-20 units)</b>			

<p>The number of elective units you take is determined by the Capstone Experience you choose in IV, below (e.g. 16 units of electives with a 5-unit Special Project). Total units for III. Electives and IV. Capstone Experience must be 21 units. Qualifying 4000 and 6000 level departmental and non-departmental courses to be approved in advance of every quarter, as per the University course calendar.</p>			
<p>I. <b>Capstone Experience (1-9 units)</b> Thesis, Special Project, or Exam</p>			
<p>Total units for completion of an MA degree is 45.</p>	<p><b>45</b></p>		