



**Department of Communication
Graduate Program Handbook**

Revised Fall 2022

Department of Communication Graduate Program Handbook

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I. M.A. in Communication Program Overview

The Department of Communication offers graduate study leading to the Master of Arts degree in Communication. We see our field as universally important, and our work as crucial to human thriving. The National Communication Association (NCA) states:

At its foundation, Communication focuses on how people use messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, and is the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media, and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific, and aesthetic inquiry... Communication cuts across contexts and situations; it is the relational and collaborative force that strategically constructs the social world.

www.natcom.org

The study of communication thus entails a multidisciplinary approach, contingent on which aspect of the field one is focused. It is truly interdisciplinary, incorporating research, theory, and methods from Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, Cultural Studies, English Literature, Linguistics, Business, Education, Political Economy, Cinema Studies, Women's Studies, Ethnic Studies, Performance Studies, Art, and numerous others.

Of course, Communication is also a scholarly discipline in its own right, reflected in areas of study such as Rhetoric, Media Studies, Advertising, and Public Relations. In addition to the study of communication, the field also entails production of media and messages (usually distinguished from the broader field by adding an 's,' indicating focus on products being communicated). Some familiar areas of Communications include Journalism, publishing, TV and documentary production, podcasting, blogging, social media, journalistic photography and video.

With such a broad range of influences and so many options one might choose within the field, we welcome students of all undergraduate backgrounds to consider pursuing our Master's degree in Communication. Students from many different academic backgrounds have succeeded in the program, including Art, Theater, History, Sociology, Anthropology, English, Multimedia Arts, Social Work, Hospitality, and more. Even a few students from Construction Management successfully took classes with us.

To summarize, the study of Communication includes interdisciplinary openness to theories and methods; critical analysis of processes, techniques, strategies, media and messages, in public, private, interpersonal, cultural, societal and organizational contexts; the study of audiences and users of media; and the media industries. The M.A. in Communication program focuses on relating theory to practice, recognizing and exploring the ways personal and cultural values and experiences, politics, ethics and morals all influence communication.

Requirements

Each candidate is responsible for their timely progress through the program, adhering to the Master of Arts degree general requirements stated in the Graduate and Post-baccalaureate Studies chapter in the CSUEB catalog, as well as departmental requirements stated in this program handbook (issued by the Dept. of Communication, copies available online and upon request).

University requirements include:

- 31 units total for degree completion
- 21 semester units of study completed in residence
- 16 units or more of 600-level courses
- Up to 8 units of independent study
- Maintain a 3.00 GPA (B or better average)
- Satisfactorily complete a capstone option (Thesis, Project, or Comprehensive Exam)
- The University Writing Skills Requirement (UWSR)
Please note: The UWSR is suspended for students beginning study in 2021, and moving forward will no longer be required for students who completed a bachelor's degree in the US.
 - For information on meeting the University Writing Skills Requirement see www.csueastbay.edu/academic/colleges-and-departments/apgs/testing/tests/wst/index.html
- Degree completion within 5 years of starting
 - Extendible by petition, most fulltime students finish in 2

The candidate shall also:

- Consult a program advisor to plan a program of study together, check in and revise as needed
 - See Chapter VI. Graduate Faculty
- Complete any outstanding prerequisites to the program (ex. BA degree) and meet all program requirements

Outcomes

Cal State East Bay's Communication program is known for excellence in preparing students for:

- Business
- Government
- Teaching and training
- Internal and external communication
- Online, print and broadcast journalism
- Social media content production and management
- Research
- Doctoral study

Students who complete the M.A. in Communication gain knowledge and expertise in:

- Media Studies
- content and audience analysis
- Organizational Communication
- Strategic Communication
- audience research
- Cultural Studies
- ...and more

Throughout, students are educated to speak, think, write and otherwise communicate clearly and effectively.

With these highly sought-after skills, graduates are valued as employees in many jobs in addition to the obvious specializations, such as:

- teaching and training
- consulting
- content creation and management
- project management
- human resources
- personnel management
- communication training in organizations
- management and administration
- real-estate
- banking and financial services
- sales
- politics

The degree is also excellent preparation for Ph.D. work and law degrees.

Students graduating with an M.A. in Communication from Cal State East Bay can:

- (1) Engage critical/creative thinking toward a convergent praxis of theory and applications to relevant to the communication discipline/field;
- (2) Conduct original research adding to the discovery of knowledge in the communication discipline/field;
- (3) Demonstrate results of original research in the communication discipline/field through presentation in written, oral, or mediated formats;
- (4) Develop critical and cultural perspectives for promoting social justice through communication;
- (5) Demonstrate mastery of the field/discipline of communication.

Students consult with advisors and construct individualized programs that meet their goals, based in communication theory and research. Specialized seminars may be selected from areas including:

- Rhetoric
- Organizational Communication
- Media Studies
- Political Communication
- Intercultural Communication
- Strategic Communication
- Audience Research
- Critical Methods

Students may also choose among special-topics seminars, upper division courses, and independent study.

In total, the 31 units of coursework may include:

- Core courses
- Graduate seminars

- Cognate courses
- Courses taken outside the department
- Independent study courses
- Internship credit
- Degree completion (thesis, project, or comprehensive exam)

The program encourages and supports student participation in regional and national academic conferences, and at department-sponsored communication forums. There are also CSU system-wide opportunities and competitions for graduate students to present their work.

II. Application and Admission

Incentives to apply:

- No GRE required
- Special consideration granted for relevant professional experience
- Undergraduate degrees in related fields are acceptable preparation
- Night classes to accommodate work schedules
- Comparatively low tuition
- Completion options adaptable to your goals
- Small class sizes, a supportive community, more contact with professors and classmates
- Flexible time to completion
- For graduates of our own BA in Communication program, a streamlined application process

A. Application

Application to the M.A. program in Communication must be fully completed and submitted on CalStateApply before it can be reviewed.

1. Submit the University application (online at <https://www2.calstate.edu/apply>) and pay the \$70 application fee. *There are currently no application fee waivers for graduate programs at CSUEB.*
2. You must request official final transcripts from all colleges and universities attended before and after your bachelor's degree.
 - Electronic transcripts must be sent from the institution directly to CSUEB for them to be considered official.
 - Electronic transcripts that originate from the applicant's personal email address will not be accepted, those are unofficial.
 - Institutions may send electronic transcripts to electronictranscripts@csueastbay.edu.
 - Hard copy official transcripts, test scores, and admission documents in their original sealed, unopened envelopes, should be mailed to:

Office of Admissions
Cal State East Bay
25800 Carlos Bee Blvd.
Hayward, CA 94542

- Any transcripts received in an open or tampered envelope will be considered unofficial.
 - All transcripts must be submitted to complete the application for review.
3. Minimum requirements for admission to graduate studies per university regulations and Title 5, Chapter 1, Subchapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations specify a student at the time of enrollment must:
 - I. Have completed a four-year college course of study and hold an acceptable baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association or have completed equivalent academic preparation as determined by appropriate campus authorities.
 - II. Be in good academic standing at the last college or university attended.

4. Have attained a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 in an acceptable earned baccalaureate degree, or a grade point average of at least 3.0 in the last 60 semester units (90 quarter units) attempted, or hold an acceptable post-baccalaureate degree earned at a regionally accredited institution.
5. Write and submit a 750-word essay-style Statement of Purpose that includes:
 - Your reasons for pursuing graduate study in communication.
 - Your area of subject interest and any faculty members whose interests align with yours
 - Your career goals
 - What draws you to our program
 - Any additional relevant information concerning your academic and/or professional work experience.

Your Statement of Purpose will be considered an example of your writing skills by the application review committee. It should be impeccably written and properly formatted. There are many helpful resources online to ensure you have written the best statement possible, such as:

<https://www.prepscholar.com/gre/blog/graduate-school-statement-of-purpose/>

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/graduate_school_applications/graduate_school_applications_statements_of_purpose/index.html

<https://www.byui.edu/Documents/geology/Grad%20School/How%20to%20write%20a%20Statement%20of%20Purpose.pdf>

6. Submit your resume or Curriculum Vita.
7. Include a 10-to-20-page scholarly writing sample.

Undergraduate term papers are appropriate writingsamples. Your writing sample should demonstrate that you are capable of writing a good scholarly essay. Revising and polishing your writing sample is advised, even if it received a high grade in the course you wrote it for.

- Applicants with media-related experience may send clippings or samples *in addition to*—not in place of—a scholarly writing sample.
 - Contact the department M.A. program coordinator if providing an academic writing sample is not possible due to mitigating circumstances, such as time or a catastrophic event. An acceptable alternative might be possible.
8. Contact information for your letters of recommendation. A recommendation request and form will be automatically sent by us to the email addresses you provide. Letters of recommendation must be received before an application will be considered complete and ready for review.
 - **Regular** applicants require **three** letters of recommendation from people familiar with your academic preparedness and ability to succeed in a graduate program (usually former professors).
 - **Applicants with B.A. in Communication from CSUEB** require only **one** letter from a faculty member you took classes with during your undergraduate program. Department application.

9. Transcripts from all academic institutions attended.
 - **Applicants with B.A. in Communication from CSUEB** do not need to submit transcripts with the Department application, but rather should indicate on the application form that your transcripts are on file.
10. Regardless of citizenship, those who do not possess a bachelor's degree from an institution where English is the principal language of instruction must receive a minimum score of 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), 213 on the computer-based TOEFL, or 80 on the internet (TOEFL iBT) version. Alternatively, you may submit an overall test score on the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) exam of 6.5 or above.

Our International Admissions Office works with international applicants for evaluation of degree and class equivalencies, and to acquire the authorizations for study and residency in the USA.

For further international application assistance:

Email CAL State Apply calstateapply@liaisoncas.com

Email CSUEB International Admissions Office iao@csueasstbay.edu

****US Military Veterans and family members:** We are committed to offering admission opportunities to current and former members of the military.

- Veterans, the dependent child, spouse, or unmarried surviving spouses of a service-connected disabled or deceased veteran may be entitled to tuition and Cal Vet Fee Waiver benefits at any campus of the California State University system.
- The Cal State East Bay Veteran Student Services office is dedicated to providing services to veterans interested in pursuing educational goals and applying for benefits. Services include (1) one-on-one academic counseling, and (2) processing educational benefits and benefits coaching/guidance on the effective use of VA benefits and/or other resources.
- For more information visit <https://www.csueastbay.edu/registrar/register/veteran-benefits.html>

B. Application Deadlines

New students are admitted in Fall and Spring semesters. Application deadlines are:

| Starting Semester | Application Submission Period | Notification of Decision |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Fall | Early review, Oct. 1 to Feb. 25 | March 25 |
| Fall | Regular review, Feb. 26 to May 1 | June 1 |
| Spring | Aug. 1 to Nov. 1 (no early review) | December 1 |

C. Application Review

Applications are reviewed by a three-person Graduate Application Review Committee comprised of full-time graduate faculty members from the Department of Communication (see chapter VI). The Committee takes each element of the application into consideration when deciding on candidates. Each application is evaluated as a whole; no single indicator is used to determine admission.

The Graduate Committee will only review complete applications.

To expedite the application review process please submit all Department application materials together online at <https://www.csueastbay.edu/communication/comm-grad/admission.html>

D. Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Graduate Coordinator
Department of Communication, MI 3011
California State University, East Bay
25800 Carlos Bee Blvd.
Hayward, CA 94542

Phone:

(510) 885-3292

Email:

Grant Kien, Program Coordinator, Grant.Kien@csueastbay.edu
L.D. Larkins, Department Secretary, LD.Larkins@csueastbay.edu

E. Admission

Upon successful review of your application, you may be offered admission under one of two 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 before they can become a regularly classified student and advance to candidacy. Student status will remain conditional until the work is completed with a minimum of "B" or better grades and the Writing Skills Test requirement has been met. (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, a meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator, and some familiarity with the Department of Communication, you may invite a Communication Graduate Faculty Member to be your Program Advisor (see chapter V). Your advisor will help you plan your program and choose courses appropriate to your goals. The specific nature of your program of study should reflect your academic and professional background, and 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. The University Writing Skills Requirement

The State of California requires that all students graduating from a state university to successfully complete the University Writing Skills Requirement (UWSR). If you graduated from the California State University, you have probably taken the UWSR (depending upon when you received your undergraduate degree). If you are not sure if you have taken the test, check with the Office of Assessment & Testing to see if you need to take it. To register for the UWSR or explore options for satisfying the requirement see

<http://www.csueastbay.edu/academic/colleges-and-departments/apgs/testing/uwsr/>.

International students are also required to take the TOFEL exam and submit your score with your application. <http://testing.csueastbay.edu/>

C. Course Work

The Master of Arts program requires completion of 31 semester units of academic credit in an approved program of study, with a B or better grade in all classes that are to count towards the degree. Some courses, such as COMM 697, 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 31 units, at least 23 must be in courses at the 600 level. A minimum of 8 units must be theory courses. Up to 8 units at the 400-level may count toward graduation with department approval. Up to 8 units of Independent Study may be taken (by advisor approval). No more than two Independent Study units may be taken as mentee or intern credit. Up to 8 units of graduate seminars outside the Communication Department may be taken (with advisor approval) above the 400 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 23 units must be completed at CSU East Bay.

Course Load

It is possible to earn this master's degree in two years by enrolling in 8 units per semester (16 units per year in a 31-unit master's program). Please note 8 units per semester is the minimum for financial aid and reporting purposes.

Please note that most classes you might take in the Dept. of Communication are 4 units (not 3). Each unit represents one contact class hour, so a 4-unit class will meet for roughly 4 hours per week (or entail equivalent learning experiences outside the scheduled class meeting). You can expect to devote

an additional 2 or 3 hours **per unit** for reading and assignments outside the class meetings. In other words, a 4-unit class may take up 12 to 16 hours of your time every week. Please plan accordingly. The most commonly-heard reason students fall behind is the burden of trying to take too many classes at the same time.

D. Curricular Requirements

I. Required Courses (13 units)

Take **both** of the following (5 units):

- COMM 600 Introduction to Graduate Study (1)
- COMM 601 Seminar in Theories in Communication (4)

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

- COMM 604 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods (4)
- Or**
- COMM 603 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods (4)

Select **one** of the following (4 units):

- COMM 602 Critical Cultural Methods
- COMM 605 Contemporary Rhetoric

II. Electives (12-16 units)

Depending on the capstone experience you choose, select three or four 4-unit courses (more may be taken).

Total minimum units for the degree is 31, including qualifying 400-level or transfer courses approved in advance by the department.

Graduate electives:

- COMM 620 Internship in Communication, 1 – 4 units
- COMM 625 Teaching Communication, 4 units
- COMM 630 Media Studies, 4 units
- COMM 640 Advanced Rhetorical Studies, 4 units
- COMM 655 Communication, Media, and Society, 4 units
- COMM 665 Identity and Difference in Media, 4 units
- COMM 670 Communication Campaigns, 4 units
- COMM 675 Digital Organizational Communication, 4 units
- COMM 680 Moral Economies of Digital Media, 4 units
- COMM 685 Future of Media and Society, 4 units
- COMM 690 Independent Study, 1 – 4 units
- COMM 697 Topics in Communication, 4 units

III. Capstone Experience (1-6 units)

1. University Thesis (6 units)

COMM 691 University Thesis (1-6 units per semester, may be spread over multiple semesters, must total 6 units to finish)

Prerequisites:

COMM 600, COMM 601, COMM 603 or 604, COMM 602 or 605, Completion or enrollment for completion of 12 units of elective coursework.

2. Special Project (6 units)

COMM 693 Project (1-6 units per semester, may be spread over multiple semesters, must total 6 units to finish)

Prerequisites:

COMM 600, COMM 601, COMM 603 or 604, COMM 602 or 605, Completion or enrollment for completion of 12 units of elective coursework.

3. Comprehensive Examination (2 units)

COMM 692 Comprehensive Examination Preparation (2)

Prerequisites:

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

E. Grades

The typical grading pattern for courses graduate students will take is “A-F”; the use of “+” and “-” is at the discretion of each instructor. Grades lower than “B-” may not be used to satisfy our master’s degree requirements. A graduate student may use courses taken on a “CR/NC” basis to meet the degree requirements only if the courses are offered exclusively on that basis. Typically, these courses are restricted to fieldwork and internships and a “CR” grade indicates that the student’s work is at least of “B-” quality. In post-baccalaureate (500-level) courses, a “CR” grade also indicates that the work is at least of “B-” quality.

Graduate Course Symbols & Grade Points Earned

| Academic Grade | Standard of Work | Grade Points |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| A | Superior | 4.0 |
| A- | Superior | 3.7 |
| B+ | Adequate | 3.3 |
| B | Adequate | 3.0 |
| B- | Adequate ¹ | 2.7 |
| C+ | Substandard | 2.3 |
| C | Substandard | 2.0 |
| C- | Unacceptable | 1.7 |
| D+ | Unacceptable | 1.3 |
| D | Unacceptable | 1.0 |
| F | Failing | 0.0 |
| CR | Credit ² | not applicable |
| NC | No Credit ² | not applicable |
| | | |

¹Note: A “B-” grade, though described as “adequate,” generates fewer than 3.0 grade (quality) points and must be balanced by a grade of “B+” or higher to maintain a 3.0 GPA.

²Note: These grades cannot be selected by students. They are only available in graduate courses offered exclusively on a “credit/no credit” basis.

F. Advancement to Classified Standing

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

G. 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:

- I. be a "Classified" graduate student in good standing;
- II. complete at least 9 semester units of 600-level coursework with a minimum 3.0 GPA;
- III. design a formal plan for completion of the degree program that is approved by their program advisor and submitted to the graduate coordinator;
- IV. have a thesis proposal or project proposal approved by their graduate adviser, if applicable;
- V. 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.

H. Completion of the Master's Degree

The Master's Degree must be completed in one of three ways:

- I. Thesis
- II. Special Project
- III. 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 your supervisor and chair of your committee, and you will request two other faculty members join your 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. See Chapter IV for complete descriptions of each option.

I. Application for the Degree

Students must apply for graduation in the semester before they intend to graduate. You must submit an application for your degree in the Evaluations Office during the first two weeks of the semester before the semester 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.

<https://www.csueastbay.edu/registrar/graduation/before-applying-for-graduation.html>

Major Checks

When a student applies for graduation, we must also submit a Major Check form listing all the courses the student has taken which are to be applied to the degree requirements, any substitutions to degree course requirements, and other information. In particular, a Graduate GPA must be calculated over all coursework which is to be applied to degree requirements. You can initiate a Major Check by request to the department secretary, or the graduate coordinator.

J. Declassification from the Program

A student may be declassified (dropped) from a graduate degree or credential program if he/she/they has been deemed unsuitable to continue in the program for a range of reasons, including, but not restricted to: unprofessional conduct; failure to abide by Institutional Review Board human subject research guidelines; behavioral issues that interfere with the learning of others; failure to make progress toward the degree or program as set forth by the University and program policies; unsatisfactory progress in coursework (defined as a grade of B- or lower for 2 consecutive quarters); failure to meet grade requirements to maintain good standing in the program and/or University; and/or if the department/program faculty determine that the student is incapable of completing degree requirements at the level expected of a graduate student in the discipline even if the GPA is above a 3.0.

IV. Types of Study

Graduate courses deal with more complex ideas, materials, techniques or problems than undergraduate courses, and demands searching and exhaustive analysis. Satisfactory completion of a graduate course requires more creative thinking than an upper division course.

It is assumed that students who enroll in graduate courses possess:

- a. Maturity, responsibility, and scholarly integrity appropriate to study beyond the baccalaureate level.
- b. A broad base of knowledge, usually represented by the possession of the bachelor's degree.
- c. Competence in the specified field, usually represented by a substantial body of upper division study in the field or in a closely related field.
- d. A command of basic techniques and skills essential for independent, self-directed study in the field.

Graduate courses typically require:

- a. The identification and investigation of theory or principle.
- b. The application of theory to new ideas, problems, and materials.
- c. Extensive use of bibliographic and other resource materials with emphasis on primary sources of data.
- d. Demonstration of competence in the scholarly presentation of the results of independent 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.

Typically, a graduate seminar:

- a. Is organized around a series of related problems significant to the discipline.
- b. May have a focus which varies from semester to semester within the framework of the general objectives.
- c. Limits the lecture, when it does occur, to setting the stage and clarifying issues.
- d. Requires that students assume primary responsibility for an investigation that will contribute to the objectives of the seminar and that they report, interpret, and defend their findings orally as well as in writing.
- e. Within the framework of general goals, may allow student participation in course planning and in course evaluation.
- f. Has class meetings primarily to develop, share, and critically examine independent investigations by members of the group. Time devoted to individual or small-group conferences under the direction of the professor may on occasion replace general class meetings.

B. Independent Study (up to 4 units)

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.

In sum, Independent Study...

1. Has a specific objective related to the student's educational goals and their graduate program.
2. Is precisely defined as a result of joint planning by the professor and the student.
3. Requires periodic and final demonstration of competence in scholarly presentation of the result of the independent study.

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 semester 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 four units of Independent Study may be applied to the Master's Degree.

C. Internship (up to 6 units)

An internship may help you gain integral, advanced, hands-on experience that enhances your education and prepares you for professional and personal success. Students may pursue internship opportunities on or off campus. An internship for graduate credit must be a structured, formal advanced work opportunity that integrates your academic program with your career aspirations. It must be a supervised experience, entered into with a signed agreement that outlines expectations and outcomes. Students seeking internships for credit will need their advisor's input and evaluation of their performance at the end of the semester. This is often accomplished through a reflection paper that summarizes the experience, and analyzes it through a Communication lens. Internships may be taken for CR/NC grading only.

D. Double-listed and Upper Division Classes

Graduate students may take classes along with undergraduates in two ways. Double-listed classes are classes that carry both a graduate and undergraduate course number. M.A. students should enroll with the graduate course number, which is how it will appear on their transcript. Double-listed classes will cover the same topic or issue for all students, with appropriately augmented reading and assignments for 600-level study.

Up to 8 units of 400-level classes may be taken towards the M.A. degree. Approval from your advisor and graduate coordinator is required prior to enrollment. Please note that enrolling in classes bearing a 400-level prefix will appear on your transcript as such.

Performance expectations for graduate students enrolled in undergraduate-level courses normally are such that students complete at least one additional assignment, and additional reading. The quality of written and oral performance in the course normally should be at least one grade point higher than that of an undergraduate.

E. Cognate Courses (up to 8 units)

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 8 units towards the 31 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.

F. Completion Options (2 or 6 units)

1. Thesis

Choosing to write a thesis as your completion option commits you to carrying out research on a specific topic in communication, and then submit it to the University to be bound and uploaded to our library 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 691 in your third or fourth semester, and develop a thesis prospectus (research proposal) that describes the research you will conduct, your theoretical grounding, your method, the logistics of the project in detail, a calendar for completion, and anything else your supervisor deems necessary. Your prospectus is used to solicit two additional faculty members to your thesis committee. Committee members must each approve the thesis project outlined in the prospectus, and formally agree to serve on your thesis committee. Please note it may be necessary to modify your prospectus to address committee members concerns prior to embarking on primary research.

You may earn up to 6 units of thesis credit, spread over the semesters during which you are researching and 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 (All M.A. oral exams are public). (See Appendix A for details.)

2. 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 693 in your third or fourth semester, and develop a project prospectus (project proposal) that describes what you will produce and why, your theoretical grounding and what guides your project design, the logistics of the project in detail, a calendar for completion, and anything else your supervisor deems necessary. Your prospectus is used to solicit two additional faculty members to your project committee. The committee members must approve the project outlined in the prospectus, and formally agree to serve on your project committee. Please note it may be necessary to modify your prospectus to address committee members concerns prior to commencing work on your project.

You may earn up to 6 units of project credit, spread over the semesters 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 (all M.A. oral exams are public). See Appendix B for more details.

3. Comprehensive Examination

Students may elect a program made up of a minimum of 31 units of approved coursework, including COMM 692 Comprehensive Examination Preparation for two units. The Comprehensive Examination has two components: first a written exam, which is followed by an oral examination by your exam committee. Each part covers material common to all Master's degree candidates, plus material specific to the courses the candidate personally took in their program of study.

The comprehensive exam is meant to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the scholarship in the field, and your capacity to think critically and creatively in relating your acquired knowledge to phenomena in our world. Therefore, the results of the exam should demonstrate your ability to integrate knowledge of the field/discipline of Communication, conduct critical and independent thinking, theoretically develop ideas, relate theory to practice, organize and clearly communicate your responses, and in general show mastery of the subject matter.

More 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 you were exposed to during your studies. Questions typically draw on knowledge from more than a single course.

There are two options for carrying out the written portion of the comprehensive exam: at home, or in the department. In either case, Students have 72 hours to complete questions in the areas of Theory, Research methods, and an area of concentration from the student's course work.

The take-home exam will be delivered to students by 9 a.m. on Day 1 and must be returned via email or in person to the Department administrator and their committee chair no longer than 72 hours later (9am three days after starting). Students who choose the at-home option may start and end their exam on any regular campus business day, which makes it possible to do it over a weekend by starting on a Friday and turning it in before 9am Monday.

Students who opt to take the test in the Department must complete it during business hours on weekdays, in coordination with the Department administrator and their committee chair.

The expected writing standards with an at-home exam are commensurately higher, given the considerable additional time at your disposal. The content covered is the same:

1. Communication Theory & History (4-hour session if on campus)

Adjusted accordingly for your personal program of study, areas of examination may include:

- Communication and media history
- Communication and media theory

- Persuasion and Rhetoric
- Media Studies
- Organizational communication
- Communication and media ethics
- Critical Cultural Studies
- Strategic Communication

2. Communication Research Methods & Analysis (3-hour session if on campus)

Adjusted accordingly for your personal program of study, areas of examination may include:

- Quantitative Research Methods & Analysis
- Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis
- Critical Cultural Research Methods and Analysis

With your advisor's approval, you may enroll in COMM 692 in the semester you intend to take the exam, and begin preparing. Your examining committee should be established in consultation with your supervisor. It will be your responsibility to invite committee members (usually graduate faculty members you have taken classes with). Each must formally agree to serve on your examining committee. You should consult with each committee member 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.

To conduct the exam, you will advise the department secretary of your chosen exam date. They will assist you with booking a room if you are choosing to write your exam on campus. Your committee members will provide questions to your exam supervisor and department secretary ahead of time, who then administers them to you at the start time of your exam.

Within two weeks following the written examination, you must defend your answers in a two to three-hour oral examination before your committee and other members of the University community (all M.A. oral exams are public). Usually, the oral exam is booked at the same time as the written. The department secretary may be able to assist you with coordinating schedules of your examining committee and settling on a date. They will also help you book the room for the chosen date and time. The oral examination constitutes a follow-up on the strengths and weaknesses evidenced in the written examination. The committee members take turns asking questions that will provoke you to elaborate on your written answers. (See Appendix C for details)

V. Awards, Assistance & Associations

A. Departmental Graduate Student Awards

Annually since 1970, the graduate faculty has named an "Outstanding Graduate Student" completing the program. Since then, awards for "Outstanding Master's Thesis," "Outstanding Master's Project," "Outstanding Graduate Media Studies Student," "Outstanding Critical Cultural Scholar," and "Outstanding Social Justice Scholar" have been added. Winners are honored at the Communication Banquet in the Spring. Scholarship, leadership, excellence, and contributions 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) (see section F). The winner is honored at the Communication Banquet in the Spring.

C. The Speech Lab

The Speech 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. Students may also apply to serve in paid positions as Lab Assistants.

D. Communication Graduate Student Society (GSS)

The Communication Graduate Student Society is organized by Dept. of Communication graduate students, and is open to all students with an interest in communication and media studies. The GSS elects officers and meets 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 up to four units of internship credit by working in the Communication Lab, by tutoring/mentoring in COMM 100 or 104; and/or by internship activity through Co-op Education. For those who have already taken COMM 625, COMM 620 Internship in 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 semester. 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 fewer) 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 100 and/or 104, students must show satisfactory achievement in COMM 625 (Teaching 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

- Your resume or curriculum vita
- Three letters of recommendation

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 the Student Services and Administration Building.

<https://www.csueastbay.edu/financialaid/types-of-aid/federal-work-study.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 Student Services and Administration Building.

I. California State University Opportunities

California State University, East Bay offers numerous forms of financial support for current graduate students. The Academic Programs and Services (APS) Student Services office coordinates the many programs which provide financial resources and educational opportunities in support of CSU students' graduate education.

Graduate Equity Fellowship

The Graduate Equity Fellowship Program seeks to increase the diversity of students completing graduate degree programs at Cal State East Bay, encourages continuation towards doctoral programs, and promotes consideration of university faculty careers. It provides fellowships for economically disadvantaged Cal State East Bay students who have had success in overcoming educational disadvantages and promotes faculty mentoring and research opportunities. Graduate Equity Fellowships are grants ranging from \$500 to \$2000 per year.

Program Eligibility

To apply for a Graduate Equity Fellowship, students must meet the following conditions:

- Be a legal California Resident.
- Be admitted to CSUEB and to a state-supported Master's program as a classified or conditionally classified student. (Not available to Doctoral program students.)
- Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by June 1st and have financial need of at least \$1,000.
- Enroll in at least 8 units of graduate work related to the master's degree for each of the fall and spring semesters.
- Demonstrate the potential to succeed in graduate school and to complete a master's degree program, as evidenced by undergraduate coursework and letters of recommendation.
- Have not received more than one previous Graduate Equity Fellowship.

Information and Application

Information about the program and application forms are available each spring on the Office

of Graduate Studies website. Questions should be directed to the Office of Graduate Studies at gradstudies@csueastbay.edu.

Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive (Forgivable Loan) Program (CDIP)

Through the Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP), the California State University (CSU) provides financial assistance in the form of a student loan to a limited number of individuals pursuing doctoral degrees. The program seeks to provide loans to doctoral students who are interested in applying and competing for CSU instructional faculty positions after completion of the doctoral degree. The program is designed to increase the diversity of persons qualified to fill instructional faculty position in the CSU.

Through the Doctoral Incentive Program, students may borrow up to \$10,000 per year (up to a total of \$30,000 within a five-year period). Students who complete their doctoral studies and teach in the CSU system as full-time faculty members will have their loans forgiven at the rate of twenty percent for each year of teaching; those who do not obtain a CSU faculty position are required to repay the loan at an interest rate comparable to other graduate student loans. Employment at a CSU campus, however, is not guaranteed. Applicants are not required to be accepted into a doctoral program at the time of applying but must enroll the following Fall to receive the award.

Information and Application

Detailed information about the CDIP program and applications for the program are available on the CSU Chancellor's Office CDIP website.

Appointments are available for faculty and students with questions about the program. Please call the Office of Graduate Studies at (510) 885-3716 to schedule an appointment.

California Pre-Doctoral Program

The California Pre-Doctoral Program, jointly developed by the California State University and the University of California, seeks to increase the pool of potential California State University faculty by supporting the doctoral aspirations of economically and educationally disadvantaged students. This program provides students with \$3,000 to explore and prepare to succeed in doctoral studies through faculty mentoring, scholarly and research opportunities, travel to visit doctoral-granting institutions, membership in professional associations, and attendance at professional conferences.

California Pre-Doctoral Scholars receive \$3,000 which may be used to:

- Attend or present research at professional conferences,
- Visit doctoral-granting institutions in the U.S.,
- Pay for graduate school application fees, the GRE, or GMAT preparation.

In addition, each Pre-Doctoral Scholar is eligible to apply for:

- A fully-funded summer research experience with a faculty member in his or her discipline at a Ph.D.-granting university in the U.S.

Applications are available each year in late December and due in February.

More information about this program is available on the CSU Chancellors Office website.

Program Eligibility

CSU juniors, seniors, or graduate students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents are eligible to apply. Students must be enrolled at CSUEB as of Spring and also be enrolled for at least one semester of the academic year 2018-2019.

Applicants will be selected on the basis of three major criteria: the potential for success in completing a doctoral program, probable effectiveness of the student/faculty plan, and level of economic and educational disadvantage. Applicants work with a faculty sponsor to develop an overall plan, which will ultimately lead to enrollment in graduate school. The program provides an opportunity for summer internships and funds for travel and other related activities.

Application Process

To prepare an application to the California Pre-Doctoral Program, students must:

1. Seek a CSUEB faculty sponsor.
2. In collaboration with a faculty sponsor, develop a 'Faculty Sponsor/Student Plan' for the funded activities they will engage in to prepare for entering a doctoral program.
3. Complete and submit the Sally Casanova Scholarship application online.

Completed applications will be composed of the application, three essay questions, transcripts, budget, and faculty letter of recommendation (all submitted online).

Appointments are available for faculty and students with questions about the program. Students interested in applying are encouraged to make an appointment to review their application prior to submission.

All materials must be submitted in by the CSUEB application deadline (February). Their applications will be reviewed, and feedback provided. Once any changes have been made, the amended application will be submitted online, reviewed, and submitted by the Office of Graduate Studies to the CSU Chancellor's Office by the application deadline.

J. Pioneer Scholarships

Admitted students and current students are eligible to complete the Pioneer Scholarship Application. Students can search for scholarship opportunities by major, academic program, interests, and more. You can monitor the submission of letters of recommendation and send electronic reminders to your references. Students can view scholarship offers and accept scholarship awards online. Students are able to submit thank you letters online and learn more about our scholarship donors.

<https://www.csueastbay.edu/financialaid/scholarships/index.html>

K. Mary Harrington Outstanding University Thesis Award

Every spring professors across the University have the opportunity to nominate students for the Harrington Thesis Award, which comes with a cash prize. To qualify, the nominated student's thesis must have been completed, defended, and filed with the university within the previous 1.5 calendar years. Students from the M.A. in Communication program have built an impressive record of success winning this very competitive award.

V. Dept. of Communication Full-time Graduate Faculty

Katherine M. Bell, Associate Professor

Ph.D. (2012) University of Washington

M.A. (2006) York University

Critical cultural studies, journalism, media studies, celebrity & consumer culture; race, gender, class, and sexuality in media; postrace and the new era of overt racism.

Lonny Brooks, Professor

Ph.D. (2004) U.C. San Diego

M.L.I.S. (1995) U.C.L.A.

Afrofuturism, organizational communication, information technologies, critical ethnography, communication theory and research

Mary Cardaras, Associate Professor

Ph.D. (2012) Northeastern University

M.S. (1980) Northwestern University

Public and International Affairs, Political Communication, the American presidency, Journalism, Journalism education

Anita Chang, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. (2016) U.C. Santa Cruz

M.F.A. (1999) San Francisco State University

Digital publics, online cultural representation, documentary, expanded documentary, experimental/avant-garde media, transnational film and media, Third Cinema, Indigenous cinema and media, ecomedia, feminist film theory

Grant Kien, Professor

Ph.D. (2006) University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana

M.A. (2002) York University

New Digital Media Studies, Critical Cultural Studies, Communication and Media Theory, Qualitative Research Methods, media memes and social media

Yung-I Liu, Associate Professor

Ph.D. (2008) The Ohio State University

M.A. (1998) The Ohio State University

Political campaign communication, strategic communication, quantitative and statistical research methods, media effects on different ethnic groups

Benjamin K. Smith, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. (2018) University of California, Santa Barbara

M.S. (2014) Portland State University

Public opinion, informal learning, mass communication, quantitative and computational research methods; public perceptions of terrorism, extremism, and terrorist organizations, and public perceptions of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

APPENDIX A: THESIS GUIDELINES

A. Description

A master's thesis is an original, 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. A master's candidate authors the thesis with guidance from a faculty thesis Supervisor who chairs a 3-person thesis committee.

Upon completion, the student defends the thesis before the thesis committee and university community. After the thesis committee's approval, the student submits a final version to the university thesis office. See Academic Programs and Graduate Studies formatting guidelines and deadlines:

<https://www.csueastbay.edu/graduate-studies/university-thesis.html>

B. General Guidelines

The following are general guidelines for theses. Throughout the process, you shall consult graduate faculty who have expertise and research background in your area of interest.

- 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 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 planned and prepared for far in advance of your anticipated completion date.

Three 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 691 until after Advancement to Candidacy. Thus, Advancement to Candidacy normally occurs the semester prior to the first enrollment in COMM 691.

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 supervisor of the student's research and will be the person with whom the student works most closely. In rare circumstances, the role of thesis supervisor 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.

Once the committee chair has agreed to work with the candidate, the remaining committee vacancies can be filled in consultation with the Chair. Committee members must have a relevant PhD. The thesis supervisor will oversee the other committee members' work with the student. In most circumstances, thesis committees are comprised of graduate faculty from the department. However, the committee may have one member who is a regular tenured or tenure-track faculty member holding an appointment in another department at or outside of CSUEB. It is typical to write a thesis prospectus supervised by the committee chair, which can then be used to give prospective committee members an overview of what they are being asked to participate in. Before agreeing to serve on the thesis committee, the prospective members will review the thesis prospectus (or minimally a 2-3 page abstract if a prospectus has not yet been completed) 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 and logistics for conducting the research project, a project calendar, any ethical issues that might arise if doing human-subject research and how they will be dealt with (i.e. seeking Institutional Review Board approval), and the format of the final thesis. The research project must be more than a minor extension of a seminar project. It must constitute an original contribution to literature in communication and 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 consulting faculty, you may 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/their 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 prospectus. 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 content of 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's 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 doing the planned research, and to give a conceptual context of what is already 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 and 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/their 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. (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/forms-policies-procedures/irb/>

PROJECT CALENDAR

- A project calendar should be included in the prospectus, with all major steps serving as benchmarks along the way.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A complete list of references, following an accepted and approved style manual, must 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 691, working with the thesis committee, adhering to University specifications and deadlines, and preparing for the oral defense of the thesis.

1. Enroll in COMM 691

Enrollment in up to six (6) units of COMM 691 represents the independent work a student conducts in completing her/his/their 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 691, 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 691 (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; consider the following suggestions:

- 1) Visit your 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;
- 2) 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;
- 3) Provide each committee member with his/her/their 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: 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. 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 their 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 Office of Graduate Studies' deadline for format review 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/her/their next-to-last draft of the thesis **four or more weeks before** the format review deadline. See deadlines:

<http://www.csueastbay.edu/academic/colleges-and-departments/apgs/office-graduate-studies/university-thesis.html#Deadlines>

The oral defense is a two to three-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, and you may invite friends and family if you choose.

At the specified start time the student provides a brief summary of the thesis project and its highlights (lasting 10 to 15 minutes maximum). The committee then questions the candidate for the remainder of the time or until all the committee's questions are exhausted. Questions can cover any topics deemed relevant to the thesis and the candidate's knowledge of any other areas of his/her/their graduate studies.

After the questioning has ceased, the candidate and audience will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates over the thesis and the candidate's responses during the defense. The decision requires a majority vote. The committee may decide one of four outcomes:

- 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

When the committee has made a decision, the candidate and others in attendance will be invited back into the room. The committee chair will then announce the decision to the candidate. 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 semester. 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 submitted for formatting and deposited in the library. 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

A Special Project is a significant undertaking appropriate to professional fields of communication and media studies. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology and a conclusion or recommendation. An oral presentation and defense of the project is required in front of 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 video documentary, a podcast series, a photojournalism essay, an advertising or public relations campaign, applied social science research, design of a Web site or other professional work as approved by your committee. A project proposal must be approved by the student's project committee (made up of your program advisor and two other faculty members). The work completed on the project must be equivalent to the work for six units of graduate seminar work.

The completed project must include a final report, and must be presented in a format suitable for library storage; it must also include the professional product, such as an edited DVD, a public relations or advertising plan, published news articles, copies of Web pages, a documentary-style video etc.

Note that the M.A. Program in Communication does not teach skills (for example video production, photojournalism, podcasting, or advertising campaign design) at the graduate level. Students who select the Special Project capstone must have these skills through their professional work experience and/or undergraduate degree, or acquire the necessary skills prior to proposing the project by taking the needed classes while in residence in the graduate program.

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 (i.e. advertising, reporting and editing, public relations, journalism, photojournalism, podcasting, teaching, documentary).
- The problem addressed should be in a professional area for which the candidate has taken academic coursework or has professional experience. In some cases, it may be 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, video, articles, photo essay, advertising campaign, public relations program) must be of professional quality and represent a level of work equal to 6 semester 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, cable or other digital distribution systems, gallery showings and other public displays, publication and distribution of 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 693 until after advancement to candidacy. Thus, advancement to candidacy normally occurs the semester prior to the first enrollment in COMM 693.

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, and may refuse to serve on a thesis committee. They 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. One tenured or 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. The prospectus should be as detailed as possible, follow the guidelines of the *Publication*

Manual of the American Psychological Association, MLA or Chicago style;
the typical sections of a special project prospectus are as follows:

A project prospectus provides a description of the focus and rationale for the project, a review of related literature, procedures and logistics for project, a project calendar, any ethical issues that might arise and how they will be dealt with, and the format of the final project to be submitted with the required summary paper. The special project must be more than a minor extension of a class project. It must constitute an original production and develop a student's 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 project. As such, it functions as a contract between the project 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 ideas, in either narrative or outline format, that serve to guide preliminary talks with prospective committee members, especially the chair. In addition to consulting faculty, you may consult published research, completed projects, and the University manual entitled *Master's Theses and Projects: Guide to Style and Format* for both ideas about and models for a special project. An abstract is transformed into a prospectus normally in consultation with the project committee chair and other committee members. Its precise length and format may vary depending on the nature of the project and the expectations of the committee. Even so, the prospectus typically translates into a substantial portion of the final project summary (e.g., review of literature and methods sections).

A candidate must have a completed prospectus approved by all members of their project committee **before** work on the project may begin.

Note that it is not necessary for the committee to meet in order to grant approval of the prospectus. Acceptance of the prospectus by members of the project committee certifies both the acceptability of the special project and their willingness to direct the student's work.

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 (if applicable), 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

- Explain the theoretical and guiding parameters of the project, and why they are appropriate to address the issue your project responds to.
- Describe in detail how the project will be done. What primary and secondary sources will be utilized? Describe if/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/forms-policies-procedures/irb/>.

PROJECT CALENDAR

- A project calendar should be included in the prospectus, with all major steps serving as benchmarks along the way.

REFERENCES

- An appropriate list of references, following accepted APA, MLA or Chicago 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. A Plan of Study form will suffice for this requirement.
- 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 693

Enrollment in up to six (6) units of COMM 693 represents the independent work a student conducts in completing his/her/their 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 693, 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 693 (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/her/their 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 their project is ready for approval, an oral defense must be scheduled. An oral defense should be scheduled with the project committee **at least two weeks prior** to the Office of Graduate Studies' deadline for format review in order to allow time for revisions. This advance time, coupled with the advance time necessary for the committee to review project and read the summary before the defense means that a candidate should finish his/her/their project **four or more weeks before** the format review deadline. See deadlines:

<http://www.csueastbay.edu/academic/colleges-and-departments/apgs/office-graduate-studies/university-thesis.html#Deadlines>

The oral defense is a two to three-hour event that takes place before the committee and is directed by the project committee chair. The defense is public, so other faculty and students may choose to attend, and you may invite friends and family if you choose.

At the specified start time the student provides a brief summary of the project and its highlights (lasting 10 to 15 minutes maximum). The committee then questions the candidate for the remainder of the time or until all the committee's questions are exhausted. Questions can cover any topics deemed relevant to the project and the candidate's knowledge of any other areas of their graduate studies related to their work.

After the questioning has ceased, the candidate and audience will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates over the project and the candidate's responses during the defense. The decision requires a majority vote. The committee may decide one of four outcomes:

- 1) approve the project as submitted
- 2) approve the project with specified changes to be approved by the supervisor only
- 3) approve the project with specified changes to be approved by the entire committee
- 4) not approve the project

When the committee has made a decision, the candidate and others in attendance will be invited back into the room. The committee chair will then announce the decision to the candidate. 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 semester. 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, the completed project and summary must be submitted to the University. With approval, the project is submitted for formatting and deposited in the library. Copies are given to the Department, the chair, and usually to other committee members. This signals the official completion of the project.

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 semester **before** you plan to take the comprehensive examination), meet with your program advisor to schedule dates for the examinations and present him/her/them 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 semester of examination. Thus, students must have completed all or nearly all of their required coursework before taking the examination. Students may be in the process of finishing their last semester 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.

When a student is ready to move on to the comprehensive exam, they should discuss scheduling and other options with their advisor well in advance of the planned exam date. Students typically begin this discussion late in the semester before they plan to finish the program. Written comprehensive examinations take place over 72 continuous hours of time. The student and their committee chair decide together in advance if the student will write the exam either in the department or as a take-home exam. The student thus has the option to take the exam on campus or off, and can move along to consulting the remaining committee members for their availability in order to schedule it. If writing in the department, a room must be booked in advance for the duration of the writing sessions. The oral exam will normally take place two weeks following, and normally the room is booked at the same time that the written exam is scheduled. The scheduling and booking of rooms must be handled with the department secretary, who puts the events on the department calendar and reserves the room(s). No examinations are administered during summer semester.

4. Length of the Examination.

Students have 72 hours to complete questions in the areas of Theory, Research methods, and an area of concentration that the student has studied in course work. The take-home exam will be delivered to students by 9 a.m. on Day 1 and must be returned via email or in person to the Department administrator and their committee chair no longer than 72 hours later (9am three days after starting). *Students who opt to take the test in the Department, must complete it during business hours on weekdays*, in coordination with the Department administrator and their committee chair. Students who choose the at-home option may start and end their exam on any regular campus business day, which makes it possible to do it over a weekend by starting on a Friday and turning it in before 9am Monday.

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

For the written portion of the examination, the number of questions will vary depending upon the student's course of study. Your committee chair will solicit examination questions from faculty and committee members to include questions in the appropriate areas. Your committee chair will work with the graduate faculty to compile the comprehensive examination from the received questions. Students can normally expect 2 to 4 questions per committee member. Answers will typically require 5-9 pages each (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-pt font). Suggested

length of the answer may be indicated on the exam by the professor who contributed the question.

6. Evaluation of the Examination.

All written exam answers will be distributed to all Committee members, although the authors of the written questions will be responsible for evaluating responses to their own contributions. Students may be required to demonstrate competence in communication theory, media studies, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, rhetoric, media theory, communication history, and research methods in order to pass. This includes knowledge from cognate and elective courses.

The oral exam is a two to three-hour event that takes place before the committee and is chaired by the advisor. The defense is public, so other faculty and students may choose to attend, and you may invite friends and family if you choose. At the specified start time the student may provide a brief overview of their work (lasting 10 to 15 minutes maximum), including challenges they faced, and possibly expanding on some of their written answers. The committee then questions the candidate for the remainder of the time or until all the committee's questions are exhausted. Questions can cover any topics deemed relevant to the exam answers and the candidate's knowledge of any other areas of their graduate studies related to their work.

7. Comprehensive Examination Results

After the questioning has ceased, the candidate and audience will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates over the project and the candidate's responses during the defense. The decision requires a majority vote. The committee may decide one of four outcomes:

- 1) Pass the candidate without caveat.
- 2) Pass the candidate requiring specified changes to their written answers be approved by the supervisor only, and/or a follow-up discussion to demonstrate mastery of concepts.
- 3) Pass the candidate requiring specified changes to be approved by the entire committee, and/or a follow-up discussion to demonstrate mastery of concepts.
- 4) Fail the candidate.

When the committee has made a decision, the candidate and others in attendance will be invited back into the room. The committee chair will then announce the decision to the candidate. A candidate who fails will have one opportunity to retake the exam.

Among the four actions possible, the second option is the most frequent outcome. If a student passes the comprehensive examination without revision, the recommendation is forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator by the comprehensive examination committee chair.

If required to revise 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 be given specific directions regarding question(s) for revision within 5 working days of the oral exam (though it is often done immediately). The committee may or may not require a second meeting to review the student's rewrite and decide whether the student passes or fails the comprehensive examination.

A failure of the comprehensive examination will be accompanied by detailed explanation by committee members, who will make themselves available for consultation in 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 semester following that in which they took the original comprehensive examination. Retakes of comprehensive exams must be completed within 2 semesters 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 these 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 communication theory and research methods, including rhetorical and/or critical cultural studies approaches.

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 semester 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 state 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. Meet with your committee members.

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.

C. Steps in the Comprehensive Examination Process

1. Preparation for examination.

Near the end of your program (early in the semester before you plan to take the comprehensive examination), meet with your program advisor to schedule dates for the examinations 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 semester 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 semester 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 in the department at a time agreed by the student and committee chair. The oral exam will normally take place two weeks following. No examinations are administered during summer semester.

4. Length of the Examination.

Students have 72 hours to complete questions in the areas of Theory, Research methods, and an area of concentration that the student has studied in course work. The take-home exam will be delivered to students by 9 a.m. on Day 1 and must be returned via email or in person to the Department administrator and their committee chair no longer than 72 hours later (9am three days after starting). *Students who opt to take the test in the Department, must complete it during business hours on weekdays*, in coordination with the Department administrator and their committee chair. Students who choose the at-home option may start and end their exam on any regular campus business day, which makes it possible to do it over a weekend by starting on a Friday and turning it in before 9am Monday.

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.

Examiners are responsible for evaluation and inquiries regarding their own questions. Students may be required to demonstrate competence in communication theory, media studies, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, rhetoric, media theory, communication history, and research methods 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:

- PASS - three votes to pass
- FAIL - three votes to fail
- REWRITE - any other possible combination of votes

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

If the verdict is 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 a student fails 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 semester following that in which they took the original comprehensive examination.

Retakes of comprehensive exams must be completed within 2 semesters of when the original exam was taken.

APPENDIX D: PROGRAM PROGRESS CHECKLIST

| ALL STUDENTS | |
|---|-----------------|
| Task | Completion Date |
| 1. Familiarize yourself with Grad Program Faculty & invite one to be your advisor | |
| 2. Plan details of your program with your Program Advisor | |
| 3. Take the University Writing Skills test in semester 1 | |
| 4. Apply for Classified Standing | |
| 5. Apply for Advancement to Candidacy | |
| 6. Complete a "Major Check Sheet" and file with the Graduate Studies Office | |
| 7. Apply to graduate the semester before you intend to receive the degree | |

| THESIS OPTION | |
|---|-----------------|
| Task | Completion Date |
| 1. Select Thesis Committee Chair and Committee members. | |
| 2. Complete thesis prospectus, obtain signed approval by committee members. | |
| 3. Schedule oral thesis defense (2 weeks after final to committee) | |
| 4. Submit thesis to the graduate Studies Office (note deadline) | |

| SPECIAL PROJECT OPTION | |
|--|-----------------|
| Task | Completion Date |
| 1. Select Project Committee Chair and Committee members. | |
| 2. Complete project prospectus, obtain signed approval by committee members. | |
| 3. Schedule oral defense (2 weeks after submitting to committee) | |
| 4. Submit project to the Department. | |

| Comprehensive Exam Option | |
|---|-----------------|
| Task | Completion Date |
| 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 (two weeks later) | |

APPENDIX E: DEGREE PLANNING WORKSHEET

| 1. Core Courses (13 Units) | Units | Sem & Year | Grade |
|--|-----------|------------|-------|
| <i>Take both of the following (5 units)</i> | | | |
| COMM 600 Introduction to Graduate Study (1) | | | |
| COMM 601 Theories in Communication (4) | | | |
| <i>Select at least one from the following (4 units)</i> | | | |
| COMM 604 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods (4) | | | |
| COMM 603 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods (4) | | | |
| <i>Select one from the following (4 units)</i> | | | |
| COMM 602 Critical Cultural Methods (4) | | | |
| COMM 605 Contemporary Rhetoric (4) | | | |
| 2. Electives | | | |
| <i>Select 12-16 units (more may be taken)</i> | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| 3. Capstone Experience (2-6 units) | | | |
| <i>Thesis (6), Special Project (6), or Exam (2)</i> | | | |
| Total Units for completion of M.A. Degree (minimum) | 31 | | |

APPENDIX F: PROGRAM ADVISOR APPOINTMENT FORM

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
|  CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EAST BAY | | Department of Communication 25800 Carlos Bee Boulevard, Hayward, CA 94542-3050 510.885.3292 * 510.885.4099 (fax) * www.csueastbay.edu |
| GRADUATE PROGRAM IN COMMUNICATION APPOINTMENT OF PROGRAM ADVISOR/ADVISORY COMMITTEE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN COMMUNICATION | | |
| Full Name (Last, First, Middle) | Date | |
| Street Address | Student Identification Number | |
| City, State, ZIP | E-mail Address | |
| Home Telephone Number | Office Telephone Number | |

| | |
|--|------|
| REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF PROGRAM ADVISOR/ADVISORY COMMITTEE <input type="checkbox"/> New Program Advisor <input type="checkbox"/> New Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Change of Program Advisor <input type="checkbox"/> Change of Committee | |
| The Advisor must be a Communication faculty member and a Regular Member of the Graduate Faculty. The Advisory Committee consists of at least two members, including the Program Advisor. At least two members of the Advisory Committee must be Regular Members of the Graduate Faculty and a majority must be from Communication. A change of Program Advisor or Advisory Committee may be requested at any time. | |
| Advisor _____ (COMM Regular Member of Graduate Faculty) | |
| Committee Members (at least two must be Regular Members of Graduate Faculty) | |
| Member _____ (COMM Member of Graduate Faculty) | |
| Member _____ (COMM Member of Graduate Faculty) | |
| Member (optional) _____ (Member of Graduate Faculty) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I agree to serve as Program Advisor and recommend the Advisory Committee listed above. | |
| Signature of Program Advisor | Date |

Approved Not Approved

Signature of Graduate Coordinator _____ Date _____

Return Completed Form to Graduate Coordinator for Processing
 Department of Communication
 3011 Meiklejohn Hall
 California State University, East Bay
 Hayward, CA 94542
 Phone: (510) 885-3292