SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

GRADUATE STUDIES HANDBOOK

PhD in Mass Communications
MA in Journalism

Revised Fall 2015
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The University of Iowa values diversity among students, faculty, and staff, and regards Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action as tools to achieve diversity. The University believes that a rich diversity of people and the many points of view they bring serve to enhance the quality of the educational experience at The University of Iowa.

For Additional Information

Visit our web site at http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/graduate-programs

E-mail for questions: sjmc-grad@uiowa.edu

By telephone at (319) 335-3401

For information about the Graduate College go to http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/
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INTRODUCTION

The PhD program in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication provides training in research methods, communication theory and teaching skills. The School is the home of the first PhD program in the field of mass communication. Graduate courses are small and many students collaborate with faculty members in their research.

Students in the PhD program prepare for careers as teachers and industry researchers. The Master’s program provides a foundation that can lead to doctoral studies, as well as to a career as a teacher or researcher.

The School has six areas of particular strength to support graduate student research in both traditional and digital media. Graduate students typically work in one of these areas:

- Critical and cultural studies
- Sports and media
- International/development studies
- Health and science communication
- Journalism studies
- History of media and media institutions

Students pursue their research through qualitative and quantitative methods, applying social science and critical/cultural theories. They build teaching skills through coursework and from the faculty mentoring they receive in their teaching assistantship work.

In using this handbook, students should note that the School of Journalism and Mass Communication adheres to the rules and regulations of The University of Iowa Graduate College as published in the latest edition of the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College.

Students may refer to the Manual on-line at the Graduate College web site http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/. The Graduate College web site includes resources on thesis and dissertation preparation, including formatting requirements and calendars of academic deadlines.
Paths Toward The Graduate Degree

Students may elect one of three paths for their graduate studies:

- Enter the PhD program with a completed relevant master’s degree, transferring up to 30 hours of graduate credit from academic courses, including up to 3 credit hours for the thesis.

- Enter the PhD program directly without a master’s degree, complete the master’s curriculum with one additional course (rather than a thesis) to reach 31 hours. Successfully pass a qualifying exam in the fourth semester. If the exam outcome is successful, the student continues in the PhD program. If not successful, the student is awarded a master’s degree and exits the program (provided that the student is in good academic standing for the Graduate College requirement of at least a 2.75 gpa).

  - Masters students wishing to apply to a PhD program—either our own or another—may choose to complete a thesis instead of a qualifying exam. Students interested in this option must consult with the Director of Graduate Studies, and apply to the PhD program in the thesis semester.

- Enter the master’s program with the specific objective of receiving the MA, and complete the master’s curriculum including the thesis.
HOW TO APPLY

New students in the PhD in Mass Communication and Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication programs are admitted in the fall semester only. We begin reviewing applications on January 10 for the upcoming fall admission. To be considered for an assistantship you should apply by January 10. The application process and online applications are available at [https://apply.admissions.uiowa.edu/admissions/login.page](https://apply.admissions.uiowa.edu/admissions/login.page). Be sure to check the School of Journalism and Mass Communication application requirements linked from the application page.

Applicants must provide Admissions with current Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores and, in the case of international applicants, TOEFL or IELTS scores.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to e-mail sjmc-grad@uiowa.edu or phone (319) 335-3401. We look forward to reviewing your application.

*How Admissions Decisions are Made*

We examine five components of each application. These include:

- The *academic record*, for indicators of success in graduate study, and a minimum GPA of 3.0 (on a 4-point scale) in keeping with the requirements of The University of Iowa;

- The *Graduate Record Examination*, especially the verbal and analytical writing components, because of the SJMC’s emphasis on writing. Students should score at least 150 on the verbal section; analytical writing scores should be at least 4.0;

- The *statement of purpose*, where we look for a clear focus, as well as a good fit to the program’s strengths;

- *Related work experience* helps us assess an applicant’s understanding of the field. It also helps us understand the skills and knowledge that an applicant could bring to an assistantship;

- In *letters of reference*, we look for indicators of an applicant’s professional and academic achievements and abilities.

For international applicants, we also look for indicators of an applicant’s ability to work effectively in a verbally oriented graduate program. For this reason, we require a TOEFL score of at least 108 or at least a score of 7.5 on the IELTS. The TOEFL or IELTS is required from all international students applying to the PhD program whose first language is not English, including those who have completed a master’s degree in the US or UK.
Funding and Time Limits

Teaching assistantships are the main form of financial support offered by SJMC. A few research assistantships are offered when funding is available. Selections of research assistants are made taking into account a number of factors such as departmental and faculty needs and matched student qualifications. When available, typically they are given to students with one or more years in the program. There are no scholarships that provide full tuition costs or living expenses.

International applicants who receive an assistantship position must pass a test of spoken English through the University’s English as a Second Language (ESL) office before they may work as teaching assistants. (This test is administered the week before the start of the fall semester and at several other times during the year.) For this reason, we generally offer assistantship positions to those international applicants who have previously studied in the United States. International students whose first language is English are exempt from this testing requirement.

After three consecutive semesters of inactivity or if the five-year time limit for completing the doctoral dissertation lapses, graduate students must reapply to the program. The Graduate College specifies that SJMC must reevaluate the student in light of the requirements of the current graduate program. The Application for Readmission form is available at the following link on the Graduate Admissions webpage: http://grad.admissions.uiowa.edu/apply/returning-graduate-students

Communication With SJMC

Once admitted, graduate students are responsible for meeting relevant deadlines and for learning about special events in their graduate program. All official electronic communication between the SJMC, the Graduate College and graduate students will only be sent through their Hawkmail account. This email address is the students’ primary source of information about deadlines, SJMC activities, job opportunities, and other important topics. Students should also subscribe to the graduate student listserv, which is managed by the Managing Editor of the Journal of Communication Inquiry (jci-editor@uiowa.edu). SJMC cannot send official correspondence to students through commercial email portals like Yahoo, Gmail, or others.
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IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Graduate students are responsible for meeting the deadlines of the Graduate College and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

For PhD Students:

- By May 1 of the first year of study, students must select and formally ask a graduate faculty member from SJMC to be their Adviser.

- By October 15 of the second year of study (or after 18 s.h. of coursework), students must submit a Candidacy Petition.

- Within one year after completion of coursework, students must successfully pass the Comprehensive Examination and have an approved Dissertation Proposal.

- Within five years after passing the Comprehensive Examination, students must successfully defend and deposit the dissertation. If the dissertation is not defended by this time, the School must submit a petition to the Graduate College for a one-year extension.
  - An extension can only be requested one time, unless a student has encountered extenuating circumstances, such as serious health problems.

- In the semester of graduation, students must:
  - Apply to graduate on ISIS;
  - Submit the completed version of their dissertation to their adviser and the Graduate College by the Graduate College’s first deposit deadline;
  - File the Request for Final Examination (scheduled by adviser);
  - Schedule all final exams before the Graduate College deadline. The adviser must file the Report on Final Examination.

For Master’s of Arts Students:

- By May 1 of the first year of study, students must select and formally ask a graduate faculty member from SJMC to be their Adviser.

- In the semester of graduation, students must:
  - Apply to graduate on ISIS;
  - File the Plan of Study (signed by the adviser and SJMC Director);
Submit the completed version of their thesis to their adviser and the Graduate College by the Graduate College’s first deposit deadline;

File the Request for Final Examination (scheduled by the adviser);

Schedule all final exams before the Graduate College deadline. The adviser must file the Report on Final Examination.
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PhD DEGREE
IN MASS COMMUNICATIONS

The PhD requires 72 s.h. Students may transfer a maximum of 30 s.h. from their master's degree (including up to 3 hours of master’s thesis credits) with the approval of the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee also considers requests from a student wishing to gain acceptance for academic credits earned in a PhD program elsewhere.

Transfer courses must be relevant to the student’s PhD plan of study and may not include professional skills courses. All transfer work submitted to The University of Iowa is subject to approval by the Graduate College. Transfer students must meet registration requirements. At least 39 of the 72 hours must be earned while registered in the UI Graduate College.

To meet the Graduate College academic registration requirement, a student must enroll for at least two semesters at full-time (at least 9 s.h.) enrollment or three semesters with 6 s.h. after completing an initial 21 s.h. at UI. Graduate assistants in SJMC are required to carry at least 7 s.h. each semester until the comprehensive examination has been passed. At the end of the first year of doctoral study, a student must have attained a g.p.a. of at least 3.25.

Course Requirements

Students in the PhD program must complete the following curriculum and are required to take at least 2 courses in SJMC in addition to Approaches to Media Communication – these courses can be from the Methods, Theory or Electives areas:

- Approaches to Media Communication – 3 hours
- Methods area – 6 hours
- Theory area – 6 hours
- Outside concentration – 9 hours
- Relevant electives – 6 hours
- PhD Seminar – registered during entire program of study (typically 8+ hours)
- Dissertation – 4 hours
- Transfer credit from master’s – 30 hours maximum. (Students entering without a master’s will need to take an additional 30 hours of coursework.)

Courses outside SJMC may be taken with satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading with the consent of the instructor and the adviser.
**PhD Seminar**

PhD students must be continuously enrolled in the PhD Seminar throughout their entire graduate studies (unless they are not in residence on campus). The seminar is intended as a forum for the discussion of substantive theoretical and methodological problems and issues. It is also a forum for formal presentation of PhD dissertation proposals, along with guest speakers from other departments, universities and organizations.

**The Academic Adviser**

Given the highly individualized nature of the PhD program, the advising function is critical. Each entering PhD student will be advised by the Director of Graduate Studies until the student chooses a permanent academic adviser. In consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, the first-year student should plan the initial program of study and determine who on the faculty can best serve as permanent academic adviser.

Students should select a permanent adviser by May 1 of their first year. It is expected that the student will work closely with the permanent adviser in drawing up the plan of study required for the student's candidacy petition.

**Admission to PhD Candidacy**

By October 15 of the second year of study (or after completing 18 graduate hours of doctoral studies), a student must petition for candidacy. The Director of Graduate Studies will hold a meeting at the start of each semester to explain the candidacy process and preparation of the Candidacy Petition. The Candidacy Petition is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies.

The Candidacy Petition outlines a program of study that meets program requirements and that is appropriate to the dissertation topic.

The granting of candidacy is based not merely on successful completion of course work during the first year, but also on the evaluation of the student's ability to successfully complete an approved program of study, including the dissertation. Failure to gain candidacy prohibits a student from continuing in the program.

The petition for candidacy is organized by the following sections:

1. General area of dissertation research, including:
   - the general topic area;
   - the basic conceptual/theoretical foundations to be drawn on;
   - the likely research method(s) that will be employed.

2. Outside area of concentration. An outside area can be built from a single discipline or from two or more related disciplines.
   - describe the outside area
- explain how that area fits the likely dissertation research.

3. Potential committee members for the comprehensive examination/dissertation. A committee is composed of 5 UI tenure track faculty. At least one must come from an outside department; at least three must be faculty members in the School.
   - Suggest likely and alternate committee members. A student must gain the consent of likely committee members before listing them.
   - List the department for outside members.

4. Plan of study. Organize coursework (including transfer coursework) according to the program requirement areas. Coursework must be identified by number, title, credit hours, semester taken/planned (list university for transfer courses) and description for courses not taken within SJMC. Alternative courses should be listed to allow flexibility.
   - Methods
   - Theory
   - Outside concentration
   - Relevant electives

5. Comprehensive exam areas, with a title for each and a brief paragraph summarizing the content. For example, a Primary Area might be titled “Gender & Media”; the Outside Area might be called “Identity.”
   - Theory
   - Methods
   - Primary Area of communication study (from a member from SJMC)
   - Outside Area
   - Area of the Student’s Choice (requires consent of the adviser)


7. At the end of the petition, the adviser must sign the following statement “I have read and approved this candidacy petition. I support the dissertation description provided.”

The Graduate Committee must approve the petition in the same semester in which it was submitted. In many cases, the committee may ask for revisions before approval. A student should work with the advisor to revise and resubmit the petition. A cover letter explaining the nature of the revisions should be included with the resubmission.

If the student substantially changes his or her research interests after the petition has been approved, a new petition must be submitted.
Requirements for the Comprehensive Examination

Comprehensive examinations are taken during or after the semester in which the student completes coursework. Each semester, the Director of Graduate Studies meets with students planning to take the comprehensive examination, providing guidelines about the examination process.

The candidate and his or her academic adviser select the other members of the examining committee according to Graduate College rules. A committee is composed of 5 UI tenure track faculty. At least one must come from an outside department; at least three must be faculty members in the School. By special request, the program may request permission from the Graduate College to replace one of the five members of the Graduate Faculty by a recognized scholar of professorial rank from another academic institution.

It is the student’s responsibility to file the Request for Doctoral Comprehensive Examination form with the Graduate College. This form is available at the following link: http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/content/publications-and-forms-for-students. The student’s adviser and the SJMC Director or Director of Graduate Studies must sign the form. It is the adviser’s responsibility to schedule the oral examination. The date for the oral examination must be provided on the Request for Doctoral Comprehensive Examination to the Graduate College.

With the request for the comprehensive examination, the student should file a Doctoral Plan of Study with the chairperson of the examining committee. This form is available at the following link: http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/content/publications-and-forms-for-students. Invitations to serve on the committee come from the chairperson. The committee is formally appointed by the Dean of the Graduate College upon recommendation of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

- Because several students take comprehensive examinations each semester, a student should contact the Graduate Program in the SJMC main office as soon as the dates for writing the examination answers have been chosen. This is important to ensure that a room and computer will be available on those dates.

- At least one week before the planned examination dates, the student’s adviser should invite committee members to submit questions to the adviser, who will submit them to the Graduate Program in the SJMC main office. Committee members should be made aware of the planned examination dates. Questions can be submitted on paper or by e-mail.

The comprehensive examination consists of both written and oral parts. Each member of the comprehensive examination committee writes one question. The written part consists of five four-hour written examinations in the following areas:

- Theory
- Methods
- Primary Area of communication study (from a member from SJMC)
Outside Area

Area of the Student’s Choice (requires consent of the adviser)

With the approval of the committee, international students whose native language is not English may take six hours to answer each question. The written examination is taken in a room set aside by SJMC. A computer for word processing will be provided. If the student needs any special accommodations for test taking, these arrangements should be made when the examination is scheduled.

The candidate is allowed to bring a printed bibliography to the examination room for each question. A paper copy of each examination question will be provided to the candidate and will be attached to the printed copy of examination answers. A copy of each question (and the related bibliography) will be attached to the student’s answers provided to each committee member. No other materials may be brought into the examination room.

- Answers will stand as they are submitted at the end of each examination period. No additional time will be allowed for proofing or editing.

Following the written examination, an oral examination will be conducted by the student's committee, usually within two weeks of the completion of the written examination. Normally, oral examinations are not scheduled during the last week of classes, the final examination period, or during the summer. Invitations to the defense are issued by the adviser.

- The adviser, in consultation with the student and committee members, shall set an oral defense date. The adviser will issue an invitation to committee members.
- Committee members will be provided with a copy of each question, along with the student’s answers and bibliography.
- All committee members must participate in real time. With permission from the Graduate College, one member of the committee may participate in the form of video or audio conferencing.

Performance on the examination is judged "satisfactory," "unsatisfactory," or "satisfactory with reservations" by each member of the committee. If the performance is deemed "satisfactory with reservations" by two or more members of the committee, the committee must stipulate the manner in which the candidate may remove the reservations.

Two “unsatisfactory” votes result in an outcome of unsatisfactory. In the case of a report of unsatisfactory on a comprehensive examination, the committee may grant the candidate permission to present him- or herself for reexamination not sooner than four months after the first examination. The examination may be repeated only once, at the option of SJMC.

Upon completion and evaluation of the candidate's examination by the Committee, the adviser reports the results to the candidate and to the Graduate College. The comprehensive examination may be retaken only once, not sooner than four months after the first examination.
On the Purpose and Content of the Comprehensive Examination

The following points provide a foundation for planning comprehensive examination questions in a way that serves both the student and the SJMC's doctoral program:

- For the student, the examination is an important juncture in his or her graduate studies. The examination helps the student look back over coursework and build a sense of how coursework adds up to a larger whole. At the same time, the examination helps the student look ahead to see how coursework and other scholarly experiences can lead toward future dissertation research and beyond. It provides a sense of vision and sharpens the focus on future directions.

- For SJMC's doctoral program, the comprehensive examination provides a quality assurance checkpoint. In this role, it assesses the student's competence in the areas where he or she hopes to work. The examination also provides a means of assessing whether the student is ready for dissertation work and ultimately, to embark onto a career in research.

In writing examination questions, each question should:

- represent a synthesis of coursework across the student’s program, rather than drawing heavily on new material beyond coursework that has been completed;

- serve as an exercise for the student to demonstrate thinking abilities in his or her research areas;

- grow from a discussion between the student and each committee member that clarifies the dimensions of the question area;

- guide the student in considering the relationship between coursework and the likely areas of dissertation research;

- provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate clear competence in his or her important areas of scholarly work;

- provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate methodological readiness to successfully accomplish the likely areas of dissertation research.

PhD Student Semester Evaluation

At the close of the fall and spring semesters, the graduate faculty meets to evaluate the progress of each PhD student. This process specifically considers assessments of performance in formal coursework, assistantship positions, independent research, and scholarly activity, as well as the PhD Seminar, scholarly and professional meetings and organizations, and service activities in SJMC.
The Graduate Faculty assesses each student's progress in the program and the likelihood of successful completion of the degree. A determination will be made whether the student's overall progress is satisfactory or unsatisfactory:

- The determination of progress will be made from the program’s GPA requirement (3.25) and from meeting the timeline for choosing an adviser, for attaining candidacy, for passing the comprehensive examination, for attaining an approved dissertation proposal and for completing the dissertation.

If progress is deemed unsatisfactory by these indicators, the Graduate College will place the student on probation in accordance with the policy of the Graduate College. Students whose progress is deemed unsatisfactory will receive a letter from the Director of Graduate Studies within two weeks of the graduate faculty’s meeting. A copy will be placed in the student's academic file.

The evaluation meeting will also consider the success of the student’s assistantship assignment, including feedback from the faculty supervisor and consideration of the student’s teaching evaluations. Students who do not perform their TA or RA assignments satisfactorily in terms of quality and quantity will not be considered for re-appointment.

If a student has any questions regarding the matters specifically dealt with in the evaluation, he or she is encouraged to discuss them with the Director of Graduate Studies. If a student feels that aspects of the evaluation are inaccurate or that the evaluation fails to take into account significant information, the student is encouraged to respond in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies. If necessary, any matter can be referred back to the graduate faculty for reconsideration.

**The Doctoral Dissertation**

The doctoral dissertation should be an original, in-depth work of scholarship that adds to knowledge in a specific area in the field of journalism and mass communication.

The candidate, with the advice of his or her adviser, will prepare a dissertation proposal. This may only be done after successful completion of the comprehensive examination. The student must present the dissertation proposal to the PhD Seminar and to the student’s dissertation committee. The dissertation proposal should be presented to the PhD Seminar first.

Selection procedures for the dissertation committee are the same as those for the selection of the comprehensive examination committee. Typically, the same committee may serve both functions, but is not required to be so. The committee is officially appointed by the Dean of the Graduate College upon recommendation of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

The dissertation proposal must indicate clearly the logical steps necessary for the completion of the project and suggest a plan of action. Generally, a dissertation proposal will include these areas:

- Introduction, which provides the general premise for the research, along with an overview of what will be done for the research. The large question driving the research
should be provided in the introduction, but specific research questions should appear after
the Conceptual/Theoretical Foundation. This section should also address the “So What?”
question.

- Context for the Study, which provides an overview of the problem to be studied. This
section should draw on related research findings, as well as factual information from
government or industry reports where appropriate.

- Conceptual/Theoretical Foundation, which presents a carefully crafted and integrated
discussion of key concepts and theoretical dimensions, presented in a way that leads
toward research questions and guides design of the research method. This section should
provide essential references, but need not be exhaustive. A more comprehensive
foundation will be included as part of the dissertation research.

- Research Questions, which follow logically from the Study Context and the
Conceptual/Theoretical Foundation. There should also be a clear linkage to the research
problem presented in the Introduction.

- Research Method(s), which provides a clear discussion of what will be done for the
dissertation research. Considerations should include:
  - a rationale for the data to be collected;
  - a description of the likely scope and nature of the data;
  - assessment of any human subjects considerations necessary to collect the data;
  - a discussion of data analysis procedures.

- Bibliography of items cited in the proposal.

- Chapter Outline, with a brief description of what each proposed chapter will contain.

- Tentative Timeline, including plans for committee approval, data collection, writing and
final defense.

Before beginning work on the dissertation, the student must secure approval of the dissertation
proposal by his or her committee. The committee must meet with the student to discuss the
proposal after the adviser has determined it complete. The adviser will call the meeting of the
committee. A form certifying this approval must be filed with the Graduate Program in the
SJMC main office as part of the student's permanent record.

To be eligible to enroll in Dissertation JMC:6999, the student must have completed all the
regular coursework in his or her plan of study. A minimum of 4 hours of Dissertation credit must
be included in the minimum 72-hour degree requirement.

The student is required to register each fall and spring semester after satisfactorily completing
the comprehensive examination until the degree is awarded. If a student fails to register, the
student may not be readmitted to candidacy until the student has submitted an application that
has been approved by the student's adviser, the departmental executive, and the Graduate College
dean.
After taking the necessary number of Dissertation credits, students register for Doctoral Continuous Registration and pay tuition for at least 1 s.h each semester until the dissertation is defended (the student then registers for Doctoral Final Registration instead).

In planning a dissertation defense, the student is responsible for checking Graduate College deadlines for first deposit, final examination, and final deposit. The thesis must be prepared according to the “Minimum Formatting Requirements,” which can be found at the Graduate College web site.

The completed dissertation is submitted to members of the dissertation committee after it has been approved by the chairperson. Copies of the dissertation must be available to committee members at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the final examination. The examination consists of an oral defense of the completed dissertation and is open to the public. SJMC will announce the time and place of dissertation defenses in advance. All committee members must participate in real time. With permission from the Graduate College, one member of the committee may participate in the form of video or audio conferencing.

The final examination may not be held until after the first check of the dissertation by the Graduate College. Final examinations should not be held during the last week of classes, the University's final examination period, or in the summer. The final examination may not be held in the same semester as the comprehensive examination. A request for the final examination must be filed in the Graduate College office at least three weeks before the examination is to be held.

When doctoral students plan to defend their dissertations, students will register for Doctoral Final Registration (GRAD:6003:0001). During this final registration semester, all students will be required to pay for at least 1 s.h. of tuition. Final registration may be repeated if the degree requirements are not completed in this session.

The examination will be evaluated as "satisfactory," or "unsatisfactory." Two unsatisfactory votes results in the examination being a failure. If the oral examination is failed, the candidate may not make a second attempt until the following semester. The examination may be repeated only once.

A student must pass the final examination no later than five years after passing the comprehensive examination. Failure to meet this deadline will require a reexamination of the student to determine his or her qualifications for taking the final examination. In a particularly compelling case, the department may request a one-year extension from the Graduate College, but no further extensions will be allowed.

The PhD candidate must deposit one bound copy of the thesis in SJMC's Resource Center. This requirement is in addition to the electronic copy required by the Graduate College. Both a scholarly abstract and a public abstract are to be deposited with the thesis or dissertation. The scholarly abstract should not exceed two, double-spaced pages. The public abstract can be up to 250 words. It should be written for a non-academic, lay audience, avoiding jargon and technical
language as much as possible. The goal of the public abstract is to explain how the research advances knowledge and addresses solutions to problems facing society.
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MASTER’S DEGREE IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication offers an MA degree in journalism and mass communication. This is an academically-oriented degree that prepares students for doctoral studies or a career in research. The journalism and mass communication program requires 31 s.h. and completion of a thesis.

- A student planning to continue on to doctoral studies in SJMC can complete the required credit hours for the master’s and then successfully pass a qualifying examination. In that case, a thesis would not be required.

Course Requirements

Students in the MA thesis program must complete the following curriculum and are required to take at least 2 courses in SJMC in addition to Approaches to Media Communication – these courses can be from the Methods, Theory or Electives areas:

- Approaches to Media Communication – 3
- Methods area – 3 hours
- Theory area – 3 hours
- Outside concentration – 9 hours
- Relevant electives – 6 hours
- Master’s Seminar – registered during entire program of study (typically 4+ hours)
- Thesis – 3 hours

Master’s Seminar

Master’s students must be continuously enrolled in the Master’s Seminar throughout their entire graduate studies (unless they are not in residence on campus). The seminar is intended as a forum for the discussion of substantive theoretical and methodological problems and issues. It is also a forum for formal presentation of PhD dissertation proposals, along with guest speakers from other departments, universities and organizations.

The Academic Adviser

In consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, first-year students should plan an initial program of study and determine who on the faculty can best serve as permanent academic adviser.

Students should select a permanent adviser by May 1 of their first year.
**MA Student Semester Evaluation**

At the close of the fall and spring semesters, the graduate faculty meets to evaluate the progress of each graduate student. This process specifically considers assessments of performance in formal course work, assistantship positions, independent research, and scholarly activity, as well as the Master’s Seminar, scholarly and professional meetings and organizations, and service activities in SJMC.

The Graduate Faculty assesses each student's progress in the program and the likelihood of successful completion of the degree. A determination will be made whether the student's overall progress is satisfactory or unsatisfactory:

- The determination of progress will be made from the program’s GPA requirement (3.25) and from meeting the timeline for choosing an adviser, for attaining an approved thesis proposal and for completing the thesis.

If progress is deemed unsatisfactory by these indicators, the Graduate College will place the student on probation in accordance with the policy of the Graduate College. Students whose progress is deemed unsatisfactory will receive a letter from the Director of Graduate Studies within two weeks of the graduate faculty’s meeting. A copy will be placed in the student's academic file.

The evaluation meeting will also consider the success of the student’s assistantship assignment, including feedback from the faculty supervisor and consideration of the student’s teaching evaluations. Students who do not perform their TA or RA assignments satisfactorily in terms of quality and quantity will not be considered for re-appointment.

If a student has any questions regarding the matters specifically dealt with in the evaluation, he or she is encouraged to discuss them with the Director of Graduate Studies. If a student feels that aspects of the evaluation are inaccurate or that the evaluation fails to take into account significant information, the student is encouraged to respond in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies. If necessary, any matter can be referred back to the graduate faculty for reconsideration.

**The Master’s Thesis**

All students are required to complete a scholarly thesis to fulfill MA degree requirements. The student is required to have a thesis adviser and a thesis committee composed of two additional graduate faculty members. One member of the committee may be from outside the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

The thesis proposal is prepared in consultation with the academic adviser. When the adviser determines that the proposal is complete, he or she will schedule a meeting with the committee to discuss and approve the proposal. Copies of the thesis proposal must be provided to the committee no less than one week prior to the proposal meeting. A form certifying the committee’s approval must be filed as part of the student's permanent record. No more than 3 hours of credit for the thesis shall be counted toward the minimum degree requirements.
The student must submit a complete version of the thesis to his or her adviser by the date of the First Deposit of the thesis is due to the Graduate College. When the adviser has approved the completed thesis, he or she will schedule the final examination meeting, also known as the thesis defense. The student must submit a copy of the Final Exam Request form to the Graduate College by the College’s deadline for that semester. This form is available at the following link: http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/content/publications-and-forms-for-students. Final examinations are not scheduled during the final week of classes or the University's final examination period.

The final examination consists of an oral defense with the committee of the completed thesis. Before scheduling the final examination, a Plan of Study must be signed by the faculty adviser and the Director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and submitted to the Graduate College. This form is available at the following link: http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/content/publications-and-forms-for-students. Plans of Study are due to the Graduate College by the specified deadline in the semester of graduation.

The student must distribute copies of the thesis to the committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled final examination.

Students are responsible for checking Graduate College deadlines for first deposit, final examination, and final deposit. The thesis must be prepared according to the “Minimum Formatting Requirements,” which can be found at the Graduate College web site.

The final examination is evaluated on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Two unsatisfactory votes make the examination a failure. The final examination, if failed, may be repeated only once, not sooner than during the following semester or summer term.

The master’s candidate must deposit one bound copy of the thesis in SJMC's Resource Center. This requirement is in addition to the electronic copy required by the Graduate College. Both a scholarly abstract and a public abstract are to be deposited with the thesis or dissertation. The scholarly abstract should not exceed two, double-spaced pages. The public abstract can be up to 250 words. It should be written for a non-academic, lay audience, avoiding jargon and technical language as much as possible. The goal of the public abstract is to explain how the research advances knowledge and addresses solutions to problems facing society.

**Applying To The PhD Program From The Master’s Program**

The School offers two paths to the PhD for those students who do not have a master’s degree.

- Enter the PhD program directly without a master’s degree, complete the master’s curriculum with one additional course (rather than a thesis) to reach 31 hours. Successfully pass a qualifying exam in the fourth semester. If the exam outcome is successful, the student continues in the PhD program. If not successful, the student is awarded a master’s degree and exits the program (provided that the student is in good academic standing).

- Complete a thesis instead of a qualifying exam. Students interested in this option must consult with the Director of Graduate Studies, and apply to the PhD program in the thesis
semester. This application process is similar to that for students outside the SJMC, except that students do not need to re-apply to the University.

Qualifying Exam to the PhD Program

Students who are admitted directly to the PhD program without a master’s degree must complete the master’s curriculum plus one additional course (rather than a thesis) to reach 31 hours. In the fourth semester of study a student must successfully pass a qualifying exam.

The qualifying exam consists of three written sections: methods, theory, and primary area of specialization.

- The student has three hours to complete each answer. All three questions must be completed in a one-week period.
- The School will provide a computer and examination room.

Answers will be read by a three-person committee, followed by an oral examination taking place no more than two weeks after completion of the examination. During this examination, the student will have the opportunity to respond to committee members’ questions.

- The result of the examination will be either pass or fail. The examination may taken only once.
- If the exam outcome is successful, the student continues into the PhD program.
- If not successful, the student is awarded a master’s degree and exits the program (provided that the student is in good academic standing for the Graduate College requirement of at least a 2.75 gpa).
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APPOINTMENTS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Most of the financial support provided for graduate students by SJMC comes in the form of teaching assistantships, although research assistantships are sometimes available.

Teaching and research assistantship appointments are made by the Director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. They are based upon students' academic and professional records. Announcements of successful applications are generally made on or before April 15. All assistantship positions are subject to the agreement between the University and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America Local 896/COGS (see http://www.cogs.org for contract information).

Assistantship appointments are made for the nine-month academic year. Continuing students who already have an appointment and who are performing well (maintain a GPA of at least 3.0) in their studies and in their position will be asked each spring whether they wish to be considered for an assistantship appointment the following year. Continuation of financial aid is contingent upon satisfactory progress in the program, satisfactory performance of duties in the assistantship, availability of funds, and needs of the program.

The guaranteed duration of assistantship appointments is four years for PhD student and one year for MA students. Additional one-year appointments may be possible if the student has made appropriate progress in his or her academic program and has performed well in required duties. Reappointment for additional years is contingent on availability of funding and specific needs of SJMC's programs.

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication encourages students to apply for outside funding of their studies. The Graduate College and the Office of Sponsored Programs provides current listings of potential sources. The Graduate College maintains an online listing of available assistantships, along with providing fellowships designed to facilitate graduate student research. These can be viewed at this link: http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/funding-your-education.

Support For Student Travel

Graduate students who are active on campus and presenting a refereed paper will receive up to $500 in travel funding for one trip to a national or international conference (e.g., AEJMC, ICA and NCA) and up to $200 for one regional or other conference (e.g., MAPOR, PCA) when presenting a refereed paper.

Invited presentations and moderator or discussant duties do not qualify for this funding.

A Request For Professional Development Funds form must be obtained from the SJMC office and submitted to the Director before going on the trip.
HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Harassment

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

Sexual harassment and other unwelcome sexual behaviors involving persons of the same or opposite sex are reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the University. Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University, and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. In both obvious and subtle ways, sexual harassment is destructive to individual students, faculty, staff, and the academic community as a whole. When, through fear of reprisal, a student, staff member, or faculty member submits, or is pressured to submit, to unwanted sexual attention, the University's ability to carry out its mission is undermined.


Employees should make reports or complaints about unwelcomed sexual behavior or sexual harassment to the Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator (319-335-6200), to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (319-335-0705), or to any academic or administrative officer of the University, as defined in the policy (see section II-4.1-c1).

Any member of the University community or a third party, may also make a report or complaint that an employee has been the victim of unwelcomed sexual behavior or sexual harassment by contacting the Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator (319-335-6200), the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (319-335-0705), or any academic or administrative officer of the University.

Students should make reports or complaints about unwelcomed sexual behavior or sexual harassment to the Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator (319-335-6200). Any member of the University community, or a third party, may also make a report or complaint that a student has been the victim of unwelcomed sexual behavior or sexual harassment by contacting the Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator.

POLICY ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT INVOLVING STUDENTS, INCLUDING SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

The University of Iowa strives to create a respectful, safe, and non-threatening environment for its students, faculty and staff. This sexual misconduct policy sets forth resources available to students, describes prohibited conduct, and establishes procedures for responding to sexual misconduct incidents (including sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other unwelcome sexual behavior). When a staff or faculty member is victimized by a UI student, or when a student is
victimized by a UI student, the investigation is undertaken by the Office of the Dean of Students. UI student conduct rules defining sexual misconduct are spelled out in the Policy on Sexual Misconduct Involving Students, Including Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/iv/02.htm. For assistance in making a report, contact the Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator at (319-335-6200).

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY:

The University is committed to maintaining an environment that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and that fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect. This commitment requires that the highest value be placed on the use of reason and that harassment in the University community be renounced as repugnant and inimical to its goals. Harassment destroys the mutual trust which binds members of the community in their pursuit of truth. The Anti-Harassment Policy addresses harassment based on any protected classification (race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity) as well as harassment based on other factors. To review the complete Anti-Harassment Policy, please see http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/ii/14.htm.

POLICY ON CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVING STUDENTS:

Romantic and/or sexual relationships where one member of the University community has evaluative responsibility for the other create conflicts of interest and perceptions of undue advantage. Sexual and/or romantic relationship between individuals in inherently unequal positions of power (such as teacher and student) may undermine the real or perceived integrity of the supervision and evaluation provided, and the trust inherent particularly in the student-faculty relationship. They may, moreover, be less consensual than the individual whose position confers power believes. To review the complete Policy on Consensual Relationships Involving Students, please see http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/ii/05.htm.

POLICY ON VIOLENCE:

The faculty, staff, and students of The University of Iowa form a community whose common commitment is to learning. This commitment requires that the highest value be placed on the use of reason and that violence be renounced as inimical to the University's goals. Violence, whether actual or threatened, destroys the mutual trust which must bind members of the community if they are to be successful in pursuing truth, and therefore undermines the University's status as a community of learning. To review the complete Policy on Violence, please see http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/ii/10.htm.

ANTI-RETALIATION POLICY:

The University of Iowa encourages its faculty, staff, and students to make good faith disclosures of University-related misconduct. The commitment to improve the quality of the University through such disclosures is vital to the well-being of the entire campus community. Retaliation as a response to such disclosure will not be tolerated. Retaliation, whether actual or threatened, destroys a sense of community and trust that is central to a quality environment. To review the complete Anti-Retaliation Policy, please see http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/ii/11.htm.
Failure to Meet Academic Standards

To be considered in good academic standing, master’s students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 and make satisfactory progress in coursework.

Doctoral students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.25 and make satisfactory progress in coursework. Unsatisfactory progress means having a GPA of less than 3.25. Unsatisfactory progress also is determined if a student does not meet the deadline for selecting an adviser, for attaining candidacy, for defending the dissertation proposal, for completing the comprehensive examination or defending the dissertation.

Students who fail to meet the academic standards set by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication will be notified in writing in accordance with the Manual of Rules and Regulation of the Graduate College. (Doctoral students failing to gain admittance to candidacy will not be permitted to continue in the program.)

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication has developed the following appeal procedures in compliance with Graduate College regulations:

1. Prior to the formal initiation of the academic dismissal review process, a student should discuss any grievances with the Director.

2. If the student believes his or her dismissal was improper and was not resolved by meeting with the Director, the student shall forward a written request for review of his or her dismissal to the Director. The student's letter should outline his or her grievances in reasonable detail. The student should recommend two graduate faculty members to the Director to serve on the student's review committee.

3. SJMC’s Director will select three faculty members to serve on an academic dismissal review committee. The Director shall designate a chairperson of the committee from those committee members identified by the student.

4. The review committee chairperson shall convene the committee as soon as possible. Normally it is expected that the review process will be completed within two weeks of its formal initiation by the student.

5. The student requesting the review shall have the opportunity to discuss his or her grievances directly with the committee and provide any supporting material relevant to the review.

6. The review committee shall then determine what additional information or consultation is necessary to complete its review.

7. Upon completion of the review, the committee shall communicate its findings and recommendations in writing to the Director. SJMC shall then inform the student in
writing of the result of his or her appeal, including a summary of the major considerations in the decision.