

# Communication Studies

Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication

**Chair: Bernardo Alexander Attias**

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## Faculty

Bernardo Attias, Don Brownlee, Sakilé Camara, Jim Hasenauer, John Kephart III, Daisy Lemus, Rebecca Litke, Christie Logan, Peter Marston, Jeanine Marie Mingé, Peter O. Nwosu, Kathryn Sorrells

## Faculty Emeritus

Elizabeth Berry, Donald Cameron, James Cleary, William Freeman, Alan Harris, Jim Hasenauer, Paul Krivonos, Christie Logan, Mary McEdwards, Fred McMahon, Charles Mudd, Donald Salper, Leonard Wurthman

## Programs

Undergraduate

**B.A., Communication Studies**

Graduate

**M.A., Communication Studies**

## Accreditation

The Department of Communication Studies at California State University, Northridge is a member of the Western States Communication Association (WSCA), the National Communication Association (NCA), and the International Communication Association (ICA).

## What We Do

Communication is central to the ongoing processes of culture and society and thus is vitally important to study. The field has a rich and diverse foundation of specializations, ranging from public address, to critical and cultural studies, to interpersonal and small group communication, to organizational communication, to intercultural and international communication, and to performance studies. At CSUN, the Department of Communication Studies offers a strong curriculum that embraces a range of traditions in the discipline.

We use humanistic, aesthetic, and social scientific methods to examine communication processes and patterns in a variety of contexts, and the promises and challenges people experience when they use language and other symbolic systems to work with and influence others. We provide instruction in the knowledge and skills people need to communicate and function effectively in business, law, government, the ministry, teaching, the performing arts, politics, international relations, and numerous other areas. The knowledge and skills offered in this department help our students to build satisfying and productive relationships in their careers as well as in their personal lives, and to become active and reflective global citizens.

Faculty members participate actively in regional, national and international associations and organizations focusing on communication and human relations, communication training and development, communication and cultural studies, and communication and social justice. Several serve in leadership positions in professional associations.

As part of a learning-centered university, the department supports several service learning projects that involve our students in the community, such as the Communicating Common Ground Project and the Communication for Youth Institute. The department also has a nationally competitive Forensics Team, an active Performance Ensemble program, and a vibrant student Communication Association. Communication majors take advantage of internship opportunities at a wide variety of businesses and not for profit organizations in the Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley regions.

## Careers

Professionals in all career paths generally find a background in Communication Studies rewarding, as there are communication needs in every field. Our graduates generally find employment in various fields including the media industries, business, law, entertainment, public relations, marketing, advertising, government, performance art, social and human services, the ministry, international relations, management, and education.

## Academic Advisement

All full-time faculty are involved in undergraduate advising. Contact any full-time faculty member during office hours for assistance. Graduate students should contact the Graduate Coordinator, Dr. Peter Marston.

## Student Learning Outcomes of the Undergraduate Program

1. Articulate the role of communication in the social construction of reality
2. Demonstrate the ability to analyze and critically evaluate communication practices, structures, messages, and outcomes
3. Articulate the reciprocal relationship between communication and culture
4. Demonstrate competency for effective and ethical written communication
5. Demonstrate competency for effective and ethical oral communication
6. Demonstrate competency for effective and ethical mediated communication.
7. Understand and apply communication competencies in civic engagement for a multicultural, global society.

## Requirements in Major for Bachelor of Arts Degree (42 Units)

### 1. Department Core Requirements (15 Units)

COMS 301	Performance, Language, and Cultural Studies (3)
COMS 321	Rhetorical Discourse (3)
COMS 327	Rhetorical Theory (3)
COMS 351	Communication Theory (3)
COMS 356	Intercultural Communication (3)

### 2. Communication Practices and Methods (3 Units)

#### Select 3 units from the following:

COMS 303	Narrative in Performance (3)
COMS 309	Advanced Public Speaking (3)
COMS 425	Theories of Argumentation and Deliberation (3)
COMS 430	Rhetorical Criticism (3)
COMS 450	Communication Research Methodology (3)

### 3. Communication Contexts (3 Units)

#### Select 3 units from the following:

COMS 325	Legal Argumentation (3)
COMS 443	Rhetoric of Business (3)
COMS 444	Political Rhetoric (3)
COMS 451	Interpersonal Communication (3)
COMS 453	Organizational Communication (3)
COMS 454	Communication and Technology (3)

### 4. Communication, Language and Meaning (3 Units)

#### Select 3 units from the following:

COMS 304	Poetry in Performance (3)
COMS 320	Communicative Functions of Language (3)
COMS 350	Nonverbal Communication (3)
COMS 404	Theories of Interpretation (3)
COMS 420	Language and Symbolic Processes (3)
COMS 431	Persuasion (3)

### 5. Communication, Culture and Society (3 Units)

#### Select 3 units from the following:

COMS 345	Rhetoric of Popular Culture (3)
COMS 360	Communication and the Sexes (3)

COMS	428	Freedom of Speech (3)
COMS	435	Rhetoric of Women (3)
COMS	442	Rhetoric of Peace and Conflict (3)
COMS	446	Rhetoric of Crime and Punishment (3)

### 6. Communication and Community Leadership (3 Units)

Select 3 units from the following:

COMS	323	Group Communication (3)
COMS	400C	Directing Oral Performance (3)
COMS	401	Performance and Social Change (3)
COMS	437	Communication for Youth Institute (3)
COMS	495	Internship in Organizational Communication (3)

### 7. Electives (12 Units)

Select 12 units from upper division courses in Communication Studies or from approved electives in other departments. At least six of these units must come from Communication Studies.

Total Units in Department Major	42
General Education Units	48
Additional Units	30
<b>Total Units Required for Degree</b>	<b>120</b>

### Special Option (42 units)

The requirements for a Communication Studies major, Special Option are:

1. a statement of the objectives of the proposed program,
2. at least 42 semester units of which 33 semester units are upper division,
3. more total units in Communication Studies and more upper division units in Communication Studies than in any other discipline, and
4. the evaluation and approval of the proposed program by the Chair and the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Department of Communication Studies. The students may develop the proposed option by consulting with a faculty member of the Department of Communication Studies.

Students must submit proposed option before earning 95 units.

Total Units in Special Major	42
General Education Units	48
Additional Units	30
<b>Total Units Required for a B.A. Degree</b>	<b>120</b>

### Minor in Communication Studies

#### 1. Department Core Requirement: (15 units)

COMS	301	Performance, Language, and Cultural Studies (3)
COMS	321	Rhetorical Discourse (3)
COMS	327	Rhetorical Theory (3)
COMS	351	Communication Theory (3)
COMS	356	Intercultural Communication (3)

#### 2. Upper Division Electives (9 Units)

Select from upper division courses in Communication Studies as approved by department advisor.

<b>Total Units Required for Minor</b>	<b>24</b>
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### Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree

University standards for admission to graduate study will normally be a determining factor in granting a student classified status in the program. Department admission requirements are higher than university criteria. Students with limited background in communication studies may be admitted on a Conditionally Classified basis until preparatory undergraduate coursework (to be determined in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator) has been completed. No more than 12 units of work taken prior to attaining fully Classified status will be applied to a

student's Master's program. Students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average in all work completed while Conditionally Classified in order to progress to fully Classified status.

#### A. For the Degree

A minimum of 33 units of approved graduate work comprised of the following:

1. COMS 600: Core Seminar in Communication Studies (3 units)
2. Electives (24-27 units)

In consultation with the Graduate Coordinator, this elective coursework may be selected from 400, 500 and 600-level courses in Communication Studies or related disciplines. No more than 6 units of course work below the 600-level are permitted as part of the student's 33-unit program.

3. Thesis or Graduate Project candidate (24 units)
4. Comprehensive Examination candidate (27 units)
5. Required Culminating Experience
  - a. COMS 697: Directed Comprehensive Studies (3)
  - b. COMS 698: Thesis or Graduate Project (3,3)

#### B. Thesis

1. A public presentation of a thesis prospectus, and
2. An acceptable thesis, and
3. An oral examination on the thesis. *or*

#### C. Graduate Project

1. A public presentation of a graduate project prospectus, and
2. An acceptable written report of the candidate's application of communication theory and principles to a practical or career problem, and
3. An oral examination on the written report. *or*

#### Directed Comprehensive Studies

- a. A successful completion of a 6-hour examination covering the breadth of the student's program, and
- b. An oral examination on the comprehensive exam.

### Course List

#### COMS 104/L. Literature in Performance and Lab (2/1)

*Corequisite:* COMS 104L. Introduction to principles, techniques, and practices in solo performance of poetry, fiction and drama. (Available for General Education, Arts and Humanities)

#### COMS 150. Process of Communication (3)

Analysis of the contemporary behavioral view of the scope and purposes of human communication, the factors involved in the process, and the role of language in human behavior. (Available for General Education, Lifelong Learning)

#### COMS 151/L. Fundamentals of Public Speaking and Lab (2/1)

*Prerequisite:* EPT score of 151 or better. *Corequisite:* COMS 151L. Introduction to the study of the human communication process with an emphasis on effective public communication. Includes intensive practice in public speaking, reasoning, and critical listening. 15 hours of communication experience outside the class are required. (Crosslisted with CHS 151 and PAS 151) (Available for General Education, Analytical Reading/Expository Writing) (IC)

#### COMS 195. Forensics (1-1-1-1)

Supervised activity in competitive intercollegiate forensics.

#### COMS 198. Speaker's Bureau (1-1-1-1)

Supervised activity in the various forms of speech communication; observation and experience in speaking to community and college groups.

**COMS 199. Performance Ensemble (1)**

Supervised activity in group performance of literature; participation in readers theatre programs before campus audiences. Course is repeatable for a maximum of three completions of credit.

**COMS 225/L. Argumentation and Lab (2/1)**

*Prerequisite:* EPT score of 151 or better. *Corequisite:* 225L. Studies of the strategies used for rhetorical argument; emphasis is given to ways of finding issues, using evidence, and detecting fallacies in rhetorical communications; practice is given in the formulation and critical analysis of argument in rhetorical communications. 15 hours of communication experience outside of class are required. (Available for General Education, Basic Skills, Critical Thinking)

## Upper Division

**COMS 301. Performance, Language, and Cultural Studies (3)**

Study of the complex relationships among culture, language, and performance in communication. Examination of theory, behavior, practice and criticism from aesthetic and sociocultural perspectives, with emphasis on contemporary research in language, culture, and performance studies.

**COMS 303. Narrative in Performance (3)**

Theory and practice in performing narrative fiction and nonfiction. Analysis of the role of narrative in the communicative life of the individual and society. Solo and group performances.

**COMS 304. Poetry in Performance (3)**

Theory and practice in performing poetry. Analysis of the role of poetry and poetic language in the communicative life of the individual and society. Solo and group performances.

**COMS 305. Children's Literature in Performance (3)**

Principles, techniques and practice in performing children's literature, including choral reading and storytelling. Not allowed for credit in the Communication Studies major.

**COMS 309. Advanced Public Speaking (3)**

*Prerequisite:* COMS 151/L or 225L. Application of the principles of audience analysis to the preparation, presentation and evaluation of persuasive messages. (Available for General Education, Analytical Reading/Expository Writing) (IC)

**COMS 320. Communicative Functions of Language (3)**

Study of the form and structure of the language of persuasive discourse, including semantics, syntax, usage, lexicography, and style.

**COMS 321. Rhetorical Discourse (3)**

*Prerequisite:* COMS 151/L or 225/L; *completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Study of the language and principles of human communication through the production, analysis, and evaluation of rhetorical messages. Satisfies the teacher credential program requirement for competence in writing.

**COMS 323. Group Communication (3)**

*Prerequisite:* *Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Principles and methods of small group communication. Development of individual and group skills through application of theory to practice. Emphasis is on intra-group behavior. (Available for General Education, Lifelong Learning)

**COMS 325. Legal Argumentation (3)**

Study of courtroom argument with emphasis on issues, evidence, forms of argument, and language in lawyers' pleadings and judicial opinions.

**COMS 327. Rhetorical Theory (3)**

Theories of rhetoric from classical Greece and Rome to the present. Critical methodologies inherent in rhetorical theories of each period are applied to typical examples of public discourse of that period.

**COMS 345. Rhetoric of Popular Culture (3)**

*Prerequisite:* *Completion of lower division writing requirement.* Rhetorical analysis of symbolic behavior, with emphasis on 20th century popular cultural forms. Regular written assignments are required.

**COMS 350. Nonverbal Communication (3)**

Discussion and examination of nonverbal communication and its effects upon the individual's attitudes and verbal communication.

**COMS 351. Communication Theory (3)**

Survey of multiple theoretical perspectives on the study of human communication. Examination of the relationships among communication theory and other areas of study within the field of communication studies.

**COMS 356. Intercultural Communication (3)**

*Prerequisite:* *Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Cultural factors in interpersonal communication, such as perception, roles, language codes, and nonverbal communication. Students will apply and evaluate theories of intercultural communication. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies)

**COMS 360. Communication and The Sexes (3)**

*Prerequisite:* *Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* An examination of the communication styles of males and females in a variety of settings. Emphasis is given to gender-related communication behavior and its implications for the ability to maintain effective personal and professional relationships. Strategies for fostering communication competence will be discussed. (Available for General Education, Lifelong Learning)

**COMS 400ABC. Directing Oral Performance (1-3)**

Faculty-supervised students direct other students' oral performances. Available only to upper division students who have completed a minimum of two units of any of the following: COMS 195, Forensics; COMS 198, Speaker's Bureau; or COMS 199, Readers Theatre, and who have the consent of the instructor. May be taken for a maximum of six units.

**COMS 401. Performance and Social Change (3)**

Examination and application of contemporary theories of performance as a means of change in individual and communal life. Students employ performance methodologies to examine complexities of various communication contexts and situations, and enact various strategies for working through these complexities. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 404. Theories of Interpretation (3)**

Examination of psychological, social, cultural, literary, and hermeneutic theories of interpretation, with an emphasis on the interaction of text, context, and audience. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 420. Language and Symbolic Processes (3)**

*Prerequisite:* *Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Study of the structural, psychological, and semantic facets of language and their implications for the study of rhetorical communication. Regular written assignments will be required. Available for graduate credit. (Available for Section C of the Multicultural Requirement for Credential Candidates)

**COMS 425. Theories of Argument and Deliberation (3)**

Exploration of theories of argument and their application to decision making. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 428. Freedom of Speech (3)**

Exploration of freedom of speech in American society. Emphasis given to a communication studies approach to issues in freedom of speech. Focus on contemporary problems of free speech in the United States including sedition, obscenity, advocacy of illegal action, libel, words of provocation, copyright, academic freedom, and national security. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 430. Rhetorical Criticism (3)**

*Prerequisite: Completion of lower division writing requirement.* Instruction in the methods and applications of rhetorical criticism, focusing upon the analysis and evaluation of rhetorical discourse. Regular written assignments are required. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 431. Persuasion (3)**

Logical and psychological principles used by writers and speakers to effect social control. Analysis and evaluation of recent research in attitude modification. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 435. Rhetoric of Women (3)**

*Prerequisite: Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Analysis and evaluation of the rhetoric of women involved in political, social, and economic reforms. Regular written assignments are required. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 437. Communication for Youth Institute (3-3)**

*Prerequisite: COMS 151/L and prior approval of the CYI Program Coordinator.* Instruction is provided in communication education. Faculty-supervised students will teach communication skills to area youth in a community service-learning program. Students work closely with the instructor in course preparation, delivery of course content, oral and written assignment evaluation, and curricular assessment. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 442. Rhetoric of Peace and Conflict (3)**

*Prerequisite: Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Exploration of the rhetorical implications of conflict and struggle as performed in subcultural, national, and international contexts. Regular written assignments are required. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 443. Rhetoric of Business (3)**

*Prerequisite: Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Critical analysis of the rhetoric used in executive speaking, advertising, and labor negotiations. Regular written assignments are required. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 444. Political Rhetoric (3)**

*Prerequisite: Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Study of rhetoric of recent United States political campaigns, local and national: persuasive techniques, ethical considerations, effectiveness. Practice in planning and developing rhetorical messages for political campaigns. Regular written assignments are required. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 446. Rhetoric of Crime and Punishment (3)**

*Prerequisite: Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Study of rhetoric of crime, criminal procedure, punishment, and justice in different societies and cultures. Regular written assignments are required. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 448 Rhetoric of Extraordinary Claim (3)**

*Prerequisite: Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Examination of rhetorical strategies used to advance extraordinary claims and of rhetorical methods of analysis that may be used to identify irrational appeals. Specific consideration of rhetorical discourse dealing with the paranormal, pseudoscience, cryptozoology and conspiracy theories. Regular written assignments are required. Available for graduate/credit. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 450. Communication Research Methodology (3)**

*Prerequisite: Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Examination of the strategy and methodology of contemporary research in communication. Emphasis is on scientific process, the derivation and verification of hypotheses in communication and persuasion, and basic communication research design. Regular written assignments

are required. Available for graduate credit.

**COMS 451. Interpersonal Communication (3)**

Explorations of the face-to-face reciprocal transactions that occur in everyday communication. Emphasis is given to the study of recent research findings and their application to business and personal situations.

**COMS 453. Organizational Communication (3)**

Application of the principles of human communication in the formal organizational setting: communication channels, networks, climate, and relationships.

**COMS 454. Communication and Technology (3)**

Study of the impact of new communication technologies on communication and culture. Information technologies are examined from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

**COMS 495. Internship in Organizational Communication (3-3)**

*Prerequisite: COMS 453.* Upon prior approval by the Program Coordinator, a student may earn up to 3 units credit per semester and up to six units total for practical experience in public or private formal organizations in dealing with communication problems and concerns. Academic Internship course. (Credit/No Credit Only)

**COMS 496A-Z. Experimental Topics Courses in Speech Communication (3)**

Experimental courses in Communication Studies with course content to be determined.

**COMS 497. Supervised Projects in Speech Communication (1-1-1-1)**

Introduction to rhetorical research and writing through supervised projects and field study. Academic Internship course.

**COMS 499A-C. Independent Study (1-3)****COMS 499X-Z. Independent Study (1-3)****Graduate****COMS 580. Communication Education (3)**

Available to graduate and upper division undergraduate students. Exploration of the communication dimensions of adult education and critical pedagogy. Application of theory in a wide range of instructional settings including teaching college and university classrooms, training in non-profit and for-profit business environments, and facilitating educational programs for community organizations.

**COMS 600. Core Seminar in Communication (3)**

Introduction to graduate study in communication theory, rhetorical theory, performance, language, and cultural studies.

**COMS 603. Seminar in Performance Studies (3)**

Study of performance as communication. Examination of theory, practice, and criticism from aesthetic and sociocultural perspectives, with emphasis on contemporary research in performance, language, and cultural studies.

**COMS 604. Seminar in Textual Studies (3)**

Study of performance implications of varying critical approaches to text.

**COMS 610. Current Research in Performance Studies (3-3)**

Study of current research in literature in performance. May be repeated once for credit.

**COMS 620. Seminar in Communication and Language (3)**

Study of contemporary theories of language and linguistics as applied to principles of communication. Emphasis on language and social interaction, linguistic pragmatics, and systems of symbolic representation.

- COMS 631. Studies in Classical Rhetoric (3)**  
Advanced study in rhetorical theory, ancient Greece through the Renaissance.
- COMS 632. Studies in Contemporary Rhetoric (3)**  
Advanced study in contemporary rhetorical theory.
- COMS 633. Studies in Postmodern Rhetoric (3)**  
Advanced study in postmodern rhetorical theory.
- COMS 635. Feminist Perspectives on Communication (3)**  
Study of contemporary feminist theories applied to communication research.
- COMS 640. Current Research in Rhetorical Studies (3-3)**  
Study of Current Research In Rhetorical studies. May be repeated once for credit.
- COMS 650. Seminar in Communication Theory (3)**  
Study of historical and contemporary trends in theory and research on communication and communication processes.
- COMS 651. Seminar in Interpersonal Communication (3)**  
Study of advanced principles of communication as applied to interpersonal communication theory. Special emphasis on research in the area of interpersonal communication.
- COMS 652. Seminar in Group Communication (3)**  
Study of advanced principles of communication as applied to small group communication theory and research.
- COMS 653. Seminar in Organizational Communication Research (3)**  
Study of advanced principles of communication as applied to the organizational setting, with special emphasis on research in organizational communication.
- COMS 654. Seminar in Communication and Technology (3)**  
Advanced study of the principles of communication technology with emphasis on theory and research.
- COMS 656. Seminar in Intercultural Communication (3)**  
Study of advanced principles of communication as applied to intercultural communication. Special emphasis on research in the area of intercultural communication.
- COMS 660. Current Research in Communication Theory (3-3)**  
Study of current research in communication theory. May be repeated once for credit.
- COMS 695A-Z. Experimental Topics Courses (1-3)**
- COMS 696. Directed Graduate Research (3)**  
Application of knowledge to a project in a practical setting or in preparation for the completion of a thesis.
- COMS 697. Directed Comprehensive Studies (1-3)**  
Enrollment is required in the semester in which the comprehensive examination is taken.
- COMS 698. Thesis or Graduate Project (6)**  
*Prerequisites: Classified graduate status and the consent of the graduate advisor.* Open by special permission to students electing to do a thesis or graduate project in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.
- COMS 699. Independent Study (1-6)**