

## DIRECTOR, M.A. IN COMMUNICATION

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### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Master of Arts in Communication is a fully online 30-credit graduate degree designed to develop and refine communication skills for multiple audiences. With a strong emphasis on theory, research, analysis, and writing, students develop a sense of the varied communication needs of organizations. Our diverse student population brings experience of many organizational settings to our classes, which allows rich discussions of how differences in organizational structure and culture impact communication. As students move through our curriculum, they are introduced to leadership styles, take on leadership roles in project development, and develop strategies for dealing with conflict. Through a combination of group and individual projects, students are encouraged to develop expertise in their area of interest, connecting theory to real-world situations from day one.

The strong leadership content in this degree sets it apart from many other graduate degrees in Communication. It infuses the values and skill sets needed to build relationships and act as a catalyst for change, enabling graduates to transform their environments. The balance of theory and application coupled with Marist's thesis/non-thesis option provides the educational flexibility for students seeking professional advancement as well as those continuing on to doctoral work in Communication.

At the end of this program students should be able to:

- Address communication questions from a variety of theoretical perspectives.
- Write effectively for multiple audiences.
- Conduct research in communication.
- Demonstrate strong analytical skills.
- Understand leadership styles.
- Develop strategies for dealing with conflict.
- Evaluate communication questions from multiple ethical perspectives.

### FORMAT

**Part-Time Option** – The part-time option is offered fully online, with 8-week intensive courses, allowing students to complete their M.A. in two years.

**Full-Time Option** – The full-time option is offered fully online, allowing students to complete their M.A. in one year.

The application deadline for the full-time option is May 1. The application deadline for the part-time option is August 1.

### THESIS/NON-THESIS OPTION

The Master's thesis represents a guided research effort by a graduate student seeking to demonstrate mastery of the theoretical and applied knowledge he or she has gained in the Master's program. The thesis option at Marist is highly competitive and requires a formal approval by the Graduate Committee. Students who wish to apply for this option must notify the graduate director of their intent to pursue a thesis by October 1 of their first year. Students will submit a formal proposal for a thesis and must be granted permission to proceed by the Graduate Committee. Upon approval of the proposal, research will be conducted and, once completed, will be approved, presented, and defended before a thesis committee. A limited number of students will be accepted into the thesis track each year.

For those not seeking research opportunities or transition to a Ph.D., the non-thesis option requires a final seminar course and comprehensive examination.

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

Comprehensive exams will cover three areas: Communication Theory, Research Methods, and an Applied Area in Communication. The Graduate Committee will grade the exams. Full- and part-time students will take exams in the third week of August after completing all coursework. If a student fails, he/she can petition the Graduate Committee to retake the exam during the first week of February.

### ADMISSION

Admission to the M.A. in Communication is competitive and based on undergraduate performance, a satisfactory score on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), and a candidate's professional credentials or demonstrated interest in the Communication field. The Admissions Committee is committed to looking at the whole student and will evaluate professional and academic qualifications holistically.

#### **Applicants to the Master of Arts in Communication must submit:**

- a completed application for graduate admission;
- a \$50 non-refundable application fee;
- official transcripts from all undergraduate (including two-year colleges) and graduate institutions including evidence of an earned BA or BS degree in Communication or a related field from an accredited college or university with a cumulative GPA of 3.0;
- an official score report showing an acceptable score on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE);
- a current résumé;
- a written statement of purpose;
- three letters of recommendation.

**NOTE:** *Marist graduate programs require a minimum of a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an accredited college or university.*

**DEGREE CONFERRAL REQUIREMENTS**

To qualify for the Master of Arts in Communication, a student must:

- complete a total of 30 credits as described in the curriculum requirements with a passing grade on the comprehensive exams or a successful defense of the thesis;
- maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade-point average.

**STUDENT ADVISEMENT**

The Director of the Graduate Program in Communication will assign an advisor to students in the M.A. program. Students are encouraged to contact their advisor to discuss academic progress and planning.

**ACADEMIC STANDING**

The maintenance of a minimum cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0 is required for good academic standing. Students must have a cumulative 3.0 GPA after completion of one semester of full-time study or its equivalent. Any student whose index falls below that required for good standing, or who receives a letter grade of F, will be subject to academic review and may be placed on probation or dismissed from the program. Students placed on probation will receive a statement of requirements necessary to achieve good standing and will be given a limited time period in which to meet these requirements. Failure to achieve probationary requirements will result in dismissal.

**THE MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION**

**Curriculum Summary**

COMG 500	Communication Theory	3 credits
COMG 501	Research Strategies & Methods	3 credits
COMG 502	Persuasion	3 credits
COMG 503	Media Relations	3 credits
COMG 600	Organizational Communication	3 credits
COMG 601	Interpersonal Communication	3 credits
COMG 620	The Role of Communication in Conflict and Negotiation	3 credits
COMG 621	Leadership Communication	3 credits
MPA 530	Managing Organizational Change	3 credits
		<b>27 credits</b>

**Choose one from:**

COMG 602	Seminar in Communication OR	3 credits
COMG 700	Thesis*	3 credits
		<b>3 credits</b>

\* The thesis option is very competitive. Students must submit a formal proposal and be accepted into the thesis track by the Graduate Committee. All others will take COMG 602 and will be required to take comprehensive exams.

## PROGRAM OPTIONS AND CLASS SCHEDULES

**The Full-Time Option** is a fully online program allowing students to complete their MA in one year. Full-time students enroll in four courses in the fall and spring semesters, with the final two courses scheduled during the summer session. All courses are offered in eight-week formats with students participating in two courses at a time. All coursework, comprehensive exams, or thesis writing and defense will be completed during the summer.

### Fall

COMG 500	Communication Theory	3 credits
COMG 501	Research Strategies & Methods	3 credits
COMG 600	Organizational Communication	3 credits
COMG 601	Interpersonal Communication	3 credits

### Spring

COMG 502	Persuasion	3 credits
COMG 503	Media Relations	3 credits
COMG 620	The Role of Communication in Conflict and Negotiation	3 credits
MPA 530	Managing Organizational Change	3 credits

### Summer

COMG 621	Leadership Communication	3 credits
COMG 602	Seminar in Communication OR	
COMG 700	Thesis	3 credits

**The Part-Time Option** is entirely online, enabling students to complete the degree in two years. Part-time students enroll in two intensive eight-week courses in the fall & spring semesters, and one course during the summer sessions. Comprehensive exams are scheduled for the third week in August after the completion of the final seminar. Those writing a thesis will complete and defend their work during the second summer of their studies.

### Fall I

COMG 500	Communication Theory
COMG 501	Research Strategies & Methods

### Spring I

COMG 502	Persuasion
COMG 503	Media Relations

### Summer I

COMG 621	Leadership Communication
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**Fall II**

COMG 600 Organizational Communication

COMG 601 Interpersonal Communication

**Spring II**

COMG 620 The Role of Communication in  
Conflict & Negotiation

MPA 530 Managing Organizational Change

**Summer II**

COMG 602 Seminar in Communication & Comprehensive Exams OR

COMG 700 Thesis

# Graduate Courses in Communication

## **COMG 500**

### **Communication Theory**

*3 Credits*

This course examines a variety of communication theories, how they are constructed, tested, and revised. Several theories are examined and critiqued (e.g., systems, discourse analysis, critical) with reference to their theoretical traditions. Connections between theory and research methods are explored, as well as the need for consistency across theoretical and methodological approaches.

## **COMG 501**

### **Research Strategies and Methods**

*3 Credits*

This course provides a solid foundation for students to understand the process of fact-finding as well as knowledge creation. Students are provided with an in-depth understanding of data analysis and data-collection methods (qualitative and quantitative) commonly used by communications researchers as well as ways of synthesizing and analyzing scholarly literature.

## **COMG 502**

### **Persuasion**

*3 Credits*

This course examines theories of persuasion and reviews persuasion's role in society. Students will gain increased familiarity with concepts, theories, methods, and research findings; increased ability to apply theories in persuasion; increased ability to compare and evaluate approaches; increased sensitivity to problems of ethics in persuasion; and increased sophistication as persuader and persuadee.

## **COMG 503**

### **Media Relations**

*3 Credits*

This course will provide students with an understanding of how organizational rela-

tionships with news media influence management of issues and public relations, and how these communication functions are essential to effective strategic management and leadership of organizations. The course will focus on analysis of advanced cases in media relations.

## **COMG 600**

### **Organizational Communication**

*3 Credits*

This course will provide students an historical and thematic overview of organizational communication theory and research. It will provide a systematic but critical basis on which to discuss communication in complex organizations and will analyze assumptions and pragmatic solutions associated with these theories. It will also enhance students' research, analysis, writing, and presentation skills.

## **COMG 601**

### **Interpersonal Communication**

*3 Credits*

This course will introduce students to basic patterns of human communication in order that they may develop a better understanding of the interpersonal-communication process. Through exploration of theories of communication, perception, self-perception, language, and nonverbal interaction, students will develop their theoretical and practical understanding of how interpersonal relationships are achieved through communication in a variety of settings, including family, friendship, romantic, workplace, and intercultural encounters.

## **COMG 602**

### **Seminar in Communication (Rotating topics)**

*3 Credits*

This course is intended to provide students with an advanced understanding of a specific communication dynamic, context, or

other aspect deemed worthy of focus by the faculty of the School of Communication and the Arts.

### **COMG 620**

#### **The Role of Communication in Conflict and Negotiation**

*3 Credits*

This course examines the role of communication in managing conflict in various relationships: interpersonal, inter-organizational, and international. Special emphasis is given to how the application of communication processes like negotiation can influence outcomes. Current cases are studied to reveal how organizational leaders in corporate ethical decisions and strategic communication in conflict and change management.

### **COMG 621**

#### **Leadership Communication**

*3 Credits*

This course examines both the theoretical and applied dimensions of leadership, focusing on the communicative aspects of leaders and leadership. Course content covers: managing group members and tasks, models of leadership, situational dynamics of leadership, charismatic-versus-emergent leadership, team theory, trait-versus-situation orientations toward leadership, leadership ethics, and cultural differences in leadership style and identification.

### **COMG 700**

#### **Thesis**

*3 Credits*

Students accepted for the thesis option will work very closely with his/her thesis director. The student will have to examine a theoretical model related to communication, supported by an in-depth review of the relevant literature; the student should come up with research hypotheses or research questions. These hypotheses or questions will be examined/tested through primary quantitative or qualitative research methods. The final draft of the thesis will be read and approved by a thesis committee. After the thesis is

approved, it will have to be orally defended. All Marist faculty will be invited to attend the thesis defense. The final submitted thesis must be written in accordance with the style guidelines for APA publication.

### **MPA 530**

#### **Managing Organizational Change**

*3 Credits*

Managing Organizational Change covers the theory and practice of improving organizational effectiveness through planned, systematic interventions and change. Typical topics include analyzing organizational cultures, structures, processes, and capabilities; designing needed interventions; and assessing the motivational, educational, and other tools needed for successful implementation.

# Faculty

**MARY S. ALEXANDER** Associate Professor, 2001. *Degrees:* B.A., Hunter College; M.A., Hunter College; Ph.D., New York University

**DANIEL COCHECE DAVIS** Assistant Professor, 1998. *Degrees:* B.A., San Francisco State University; M.A., San Diego State University; M.A., University of Southern California; Ph.D., University of Southern California

**AARON JOHNSON** Assistant Professor, 1990. *Degrees:* B.S., University of Wisconsin-Whitewater; M.A., West Virginia University; Ph.D., West Virginia University

**SUE LAWRENCE** Assistant Professor, 1979. *Degrees:* B.S., University of Missouri-Columbia; M.A., University of Missouri-Columbia; Ph.D., University of Missouri-Columbia

**CAROLYN LEPRE** Associate Professor, 2008. *Degrees:* M.A., Miami University; M.S., Ohio University; Ph.D., University of Florida

**LAURA LINDER** Associate Professor, 2003. *Degrees:* B.A., University of North Carolina at Greensboro; M.A., University of North Carolina at Greensboro; Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**CAROL PAULI** Assistant Professor, 1994. *Degrees:* B.A., University of Evansville; M.S., Columbia University; J.D., Benjamin Cardozo Law School

**BRETT PHARES** Assistant Professor, 2006. *Degrees:* M.A., State University of New York at Stony Brook; M.F.A., Hunter College

**SHANNON ROPER** Associate Professor, 2001. *Degrees:* B.A., Marist College; M.A., William Paterson University; Ph.D., Rutgers University

**SUBIR SENGUPTA** Associate Professor, 1998. *Degrees:* B.A., Jadavpur University; M.A., University of Georgia; Ph.D., University of Georgia

**KEITH STRUDLER** Assistant Professor, 2000. *Degrees:* B.A., Cornell University; M. Ed., University of St. Thomas; Ph.D., University of Florida

**MARK VAN DYKE** Associate Professor, 2004. *Degrees:* B.S., U.S. Naval Academy; M.S., Syracuse University; Ph.D., University of Maryland

**PAULA WILLOQUET-MARICONDI** Associate Professor, 2001. *Degrees:* B.A., University of Hawaii; M.A., University of California, Santa Barbara; Ph.D., Indiana University