Handbook of Graduate Study
Department of Communication

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Overview of Graduate Program

The Department of Communication at the University of Colorado Boulder offers a highly respected, top-rated graduate program that leads to the Master of Arts (MA) and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees, with emphases in (a) discourse & society, (b) organizational communication, and (c) rhetoric. Graduate students craft individualized programs of study within those areas or that cut across them.

Graduate study within and across those areas focuses on engaged scholarship (research and teaching) that addresses communication-based issues and problems arising from recent social and technological changes, especially those associated with interaction, collaboration and participation, deliberation, and decision making. Using both social-scientific and humanistic research methodologies, graduate students study a variety of social phenomena to develop distinctly communication-based theories and explanations about complexities of human interaction. The array of scholarship conducted in the department is integrated by cross-cutting themes that include design and practice, culture and democracy, and community and justice. Running throughout the program is an exploration of new technologies and emergent forms of communication (e.g., social media), a critical/cultural studies approach, and a commitment to help students become engaged citizens and social change agents.

CU-Boulder’s communication graduate program emphasizes development of students as scholars and as professionals, which involves graduate students, faculty advisors, committee members, and the faculty as a whole. This document conveys the spirit of the graduate program and outlines expectations held by the faculty for graduate study. This document contains important rules and information, but it is not exhaustive. Specific aspects of students’ programs are negotiated among students, their advisor, and committee members. Student also should be aware, and are responsible for following, rules and regulations of CU-Boulder’s Graduate School (which are extensive; see http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool).

Graduate Areas of Study and Faculty Members

The department offers three areas of study for graduate students: Discourse & Society, Organizational Communication, and Rhetoric. Those areas and the tenured and tenure-track faculty members comprising them are explained below (there are other department faculty members, such as instructors, who hold various levels of graduate faculty status).

Discourse & Society

Faculty and students in this area consider ways that communicators’ discourse expressions (e.g., language, talk, interactional devices, semiotic practices, and written texts) reflect and construct societal practices and institutional scenes, and how discourse expression varies across speech communities. For theses and dissertations, students select a theoretical issue about discourse that crosses contexts and/or study discourse within a societal site; sample foci include use and circulation of communication ideas in society, communication activism for social justice, cultural resources for public participation, training programs for mediation or parenthood, local
and international governance bodies, and courts and policing. Tenured and tenure-track area faculty members are:

David Boromisza-Habashi (PhD, University of Massachusetts, Amherst), Assistant Professor, specializes in the ethnography of communication and cultural theory, with a focus on use of cultural resources for participation in the public life of speech communities.

Robert T. Craig (PhD, Michigan State University), Professor Emeritus, specializes in communication theory and philosophy, discourse analysis, and argumentation, with a current focus on the discourse of “communication” in contemporary society.

Lawrence R. Frey (PhD, University of Kansas), Professor, specializes in applied communication, communication activism for social justice, and group communication, focusing on how communication scholars intervene into discourses to promote social justice.

Leah Sprain (PhD, University of Washington), Assistant Professor, uses the ethnography of communication and discourse analysis to study local practices of democracy, including deliberation, activism, and environmental governance.

Karen Tracy (PhD, University of Wisconsin, Madison), Professor, is a discourse analyst who specializes in theories of language and social interaction, and face and identity processes, studying problems in institutional interaction, with recent research focused on local governance and appellate court disputes.

Cindy H. White (PhD, University of Arizona), Associate Professor, studies interpersonal communication and discourse around relationships, examining how social expectations shape relational processes and the connection between communication training programs and enactment of communicative practices.

Organizational Communication

Faculty members teaching and researching in this area are widely recognized for critical and interpretive scholarship on the constitutive role of communication in human organizing. Theorizing communicating and organizing through constitutive, cultural, and material perspectives, and integrating qualitative, critical, and quantitative methodologies, connections among organizational change, power, culture, technology, gender, identity, knowledge, and discourse are explored across a variety of organizing contexts (e.g., corporate, nonprofit, community, and government). Faculty members are especially committed to reforming organizing practices to serve the greater common good. Tenured and tenure-track area faculty members are:

Karen Lee Ashcraft, Professor (PhD, University of Colorado Boulder), studies organizational forms and occupational identities, with a particular interest in gender and race relations, and a specialty in qualitative methods.
Jody Jahn (PhD, University of California, Santa Barbara), Assistant Professor, uses mixed methods to examine how members of hazardous organizations communicate to negotiate action and interface with organizational safety policies and documents.

Matt Koschmann (PhD, University of Texas), Assistant Professor, focuses on organizational collaboration and cross-sector partnerships, especially in the civil society sector, studying how stakeholder interactions constitute collaborative partnerships and enable collective action.

Tim Kuhn (PhD, Arizona State University), Associate Professor, seeks to reframe commercial organizations in distinctly communicative terms, by examining how knowledge, authority, identities, and conceptions of value emerge in sociomaterial and power-laden communicative practices.

Bryan C. Taylor (PhD, University of Utah), Professor, specializes in cultural studies of organizational communication and qualitative methods.

**Rhetoric**

This area offers a distinctive program that integrates contemporary rhetorical approaches with cultural studies and the interpretive turn in social science. Area members are linked by a common interest in historical and historically inflected studies of rhetoric and its media, including discourses, technologies, and bodies. Rhetoric is studied in the context of popular, public, and intellectual cultures, via historical, ethnographic, textual, and critical methods and frameworks of analysis. The program, thus, combines traditional rhetorical education with a contemporary focus, offering diverse methodological training to produce cutting-edge critical work and innovative theory development. Tenured and tenure-track area faculty members are:

John M. Ackerman (PhD, Carnegie Mellon), Associate Professor and Ineva Baldwin Chair of Arts and Sciences, blends community design, public memory, policy archives, and participant-observer methodology.

Lisa A. Flores (PhD, University of Georgia), Associate Professor, conducts critical race studies and employs gender/feminist theory to make sense of rhetorical logics of race, whiteness, gender, and nation coverage.

Laurie Gries (PhD, Syracuse University), Assistant Professor, forges connections among visual rhetoric, new materialism, digital humanities, and actor–network theory to support circulation studies research. She also has expertise in rhetorical theory, historiography, and cultural rhetorics.

Phaedra C. Pezzullo (PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Associate Professor, has expertise in a range of interdisciplinary and intersectional topics, including environmental communication, environmental justice studies, tourist studies, public advocacy, qualitative research in rhetorical studies, embodied performances of social change, and cultural studies.
Peter Simonson (PhD, University of Iowa), Associate Professor, has interests in pragmatism and U.S. social thought, mass communication, religion, ethnographically inflected studies of rhetoric, and theories and practices of rhetorical invention.

Ted Striphas (PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Associate Professor, studies the history, culture, and politics of technology, focusing on the relationship between emergent technologies and patterns of social and linguistic change in everyday life.

Bryan C. Taylor (PhD, University of Utah), Professor, has expertise in critical and cultural communication studies, ethnography, and technology studies, with research focusing on U.S. national security rhetoric and culture, and emphasizing nuclear and (post) Cold War rhetoric.

**Graduate Courses**

**COMM 5210:** Readings in Communication Theory: Critical overview of leading theoretical traditions in communication studies, with attention given to metatheoretical issues, including epistemological foundations, structure of communication theory as a field, and reflexivity between communication theory and cultural practice.

**COMM 5220:** Seminar: Functions of Communication: Topical seminar on the functions of communication across interpersonal, group, organizational, and public contexts that reviews current theory and research on topics such as communication and conflict, persuasion, and ethical dimensions of communicative practices.

**COMM 5225:** Environmental Communication: Investigates key concepts in environmental communication and considers which theoretical frameworks and practical actions can inform the effects of various constituents to address environmental issues.

**COMM 5230:** Applied Communication: Examines the study of applications of communication concepts, theories, methods, interventions, and other practices to address real-world issues and problems, discussing conceptual issues framing applied communication, examining purposes and methods informing such scholarship, and providing opportunities to evaluate and propose research.

**COMM 5300:** Seminar: Rhetoric: Reviews current theory and research on topics such as rhetoric and publics, rhetoric as an interpretive social science, and rhetoric of social movements and political campaigns.

**COMM 5310:** Contemporary Rhetorical Criticism: Advanced critical analysis of rhetorical texts in terms of how they shape issues and appeals for judgment, create identities for speakers and their audiences, and construct perceptions of time, space, and the human condition.

**COMM 5320:** Readings in Rhetoric: Survey of classical and contemporary readings in rhetoric.
COMM 5425: Readings in Discourse and Social Practices: Examines the way communicators' discourse expressions (language, talk, interactional devices, semiotic practices, written texts) reflect and construct interpersonal exchanges, societal activities, and institutional scenes, as well as how discourse expression varies across different speech communities.

COMM 5600: Seminar: Organizational Communication: Reviews current theory and research on topics such as communication and organizational decision making, organizational culture, gender relations, communication technology, and power and control in organizations.

COMM 5610: Organizational Culture and Symbolism: Focuses on relationships between ideological elements (e.g., norms, values, and beliefs) and symbolic practices (e.g., metaphor, ritual, and storytelling) of organizational culture, analyzing topics from viewpoints of academic theory and managerial practice, and reviewing interpretive methods of researching workplace culture and symbolism.

COMM 5620: Readings in Organizational Communication: Survey of historical and contemporary readings in organizational communication, treating theory, research, and application from a variety of perspectives.

COMM 5720: Readings in Communication and Technology: Survey of multidisciplinary research that examines various relationships between communication and technology, with students developing critical skills in perceiving assumptions and perspectives that motivate major theories in this area, and examining how these phenomena have changed over time.

COMM 5930: Internship: Offers opportunities for graduate-level communication-related work projects. Limited to 3 hours in spring and fall semesters, 6 hours in summer. The 6-hour limit at the MA level and 9-hour limit at the PhD level applies to any combination of independent study and internship credit (see Internship Contract, page 29).

COMM 6010: Communication Research and Theory: Provides an introduction to graduate study of communication, offering an overview of the discipline and its scholarship.

COMM 6020: Quantitative Research Methods: Introduction to the practice of quantitative research in communication: conceptualization and critique of research projects, measurements, methods (e.g., experimental and survey), statistical data analysis, and written reports.

COMM 6030: Qualitative Research Methods: Introduction to epistemology, methodology, and representational practices associated with qualitative communication research; fieldwork methods emphasized include participant observation, interviewing, and document/artifact analysis.

COMM 6200: Seminar: Selected Topics*: Facilitates understanding of current and past theory and research on a selected topic in communication and the ability to develop new theory and research on that topic.
COMM 6310: Rhetorical Criticism*: Reviews current critical methods and issues related to rhetorical criticism, such as contemporary theory of rhetorical criticism, continental discourse theory, and critical theory

COMM 6320: Rhetorical Theory*: Reviews current theory and research on topics such as contemporary rhetorical theory, rhetoric and public life, rhetoric as an interpretive social science, and rhetoric of social movements and political campaigns

COMM 6330: Rhetoric of Inquiry: Surveys foundational texts and contemporary research in the rhetoric of inquiry, focusing on the role of persuasion in the production of knowledge, and critical analysis of major theoretical and methodological traditions and topics, with an emphasis on social dimensions of inquiry

COMM 6340: Rhetoric and Civic Community: Considers performances of public life as rhetorical inducements of civitas; topics include negotiation of self-regulation among interdependent partners, rhetorical exclusions and/or counterpublics, and dialectical tensions of public/private as these contribute to and have civic consequences for publicness, community, and social will

COMM 6350: Seminar in Argumentation: Surveys foundational texts and contemporary research in argumentation, analyzes distinctions between philosophical and rhetorical approaches to argument, and critical analysis of major theoretical and methodological traditions and topics, with an emphasis on social dimensions of argument

COMM 6360: Social and Cultural Theory: Traces select traditions in social and/or cultural theory, emphasizing how those traditions affect and are affected by the field of rhetoric studies, examining origins and resolutions of major debates in social and/or cultural theory from a rhetorical perspective

COMM 6410: Discourse Analysis: Acquaints students with the main types of discourse analysis—conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis, and rhetorically informed discourse approaches—teaching how to conduct discourse analysis, including transcribing, selecting excerpts, documenting inferences, and linking findings to scholarly controversies

COMM 6420: Interaction Analysis: Examines one of a selected set of methodological specializations used in the study of human interaction.

COMM 6440: Grounded Practical Theory: Examines theory, method, and application of grounded practical theory, an approach to building normative theory through description, critique, and theoretical reconstruction of situated communicative practices; semester project involves analysis of a sample of discourse from a public or field observation setting

COMM 6445: Communication and Culture: Focuses on cultural diversity in human communication, covering classic and contemporary readings that articulate relationships between communication and culture, and introducing methodologies used to develop a cultural approach toward a variety of observable forms and practices of communication
COMM 6470: Meetings, Their Practices and Problems: Explores the history, routine communicative practices, common interactional troubles, crosscultural differences, and expectations about “ideal” communicative conduct for workplace and public meetings; seminar project involves field study of a meeting group.

COMM 6730: Collaboration and Decision Making in Organizations: Explores theory and research on communication processes associated with collaboration and decision making in contemporary organizations, particularly as they are influenced by participation programs, technology, and team structures.

COMM 6740: Theory and Philosophy of Organizing and Organizations: Reviews theory and philosophy of organizations and organizing where communication processes are seen as constitutive, focusing on discursive and material practices in the formation and change of organizational structure, culture, and operation.

COMM 6750: Communication and Organizational Change: Addresses the role of communication in cultural change efforts in organizations; topics include the nature and function of organizational cultures, role of leadership, ethical issues, and member involvement in change processes, with specific organizational cases highlighted throughout.

COMM 6780: Roles, Relationships, and Identities in Interaction: Examines how social roles influence communicative practices, the development of relationships, and the impact of relationships on identity, considering these processes in contexts, such as personal relationships and institutional settings, with topics varying.

COMM 6840: Master’s Independent Study (see Independent Study Contract, page 30)
COMM 6940: Master’s Degree Candidate
COMM 6950: Master’s Thesis
COMM 8840: Doctoral Independent Study (see Independent Study Contract, page 30)
COMM 8990: Doctoral Dissertation
(*Variable-topic courses; may be taken twice for credit on different topics)

The Master’s (MA) Degree

General Information

The MA degree provides students with knowledge of selected bodies of communication scholarship and develops their ability to analyze complex communication situations. The program is intended to serve two groups of students: (a) those planning to pursue the PhD degree, either at CU-Boulder or at another institution; and (b) those interested in finding employment in other sectors (e.g., for-profit businesses, government, nonprofit organizations, and other types of community groups). Students wishing to continue in the department’s PhD program following completion of the MA degree must reapply at that time and be accepted into the program.
Administration of the MA program conforms to all CU-Boulder’s Graduate School rules regarding matters such as residency requirements, time for completion of degree, and maximum number of transfer credit hours. The MA program has two options for the completion of requirements: thesis or comprehensive examination.

In the first semester of the MA program, students should consult their temporary advisor (the Associate Chair/Director of Graduate Studies; DGS) about these two program options, appropriate coursework, and faculty members who might best serve as a permanent advisor and as committee members for the program options, with students subsequently meeting with those faculty members to discuss common interests. By the second semester (before the completion of 12 credit hours), students should select a permanent advisor and decide whether they will choose the thesis or comprehensive examination option.

In the beginning of their second year (assuming a course load of 9 hours per semester), students should submit to the DGS a completed MA Program of Study Form (which indicates all coursework to be completed; see pages 31–32). Students selecting the thesis option should hold a committee meeting early in that second year to approve the thesis proposal. Toward the end of their second year, a final committee meeting is held for students to orally defend the thesis or the comprehensive examination. Students must be registered on the CU-Boulder campus as regular degree-seeking students during the semester that the final comprehensive examination is passed.

For both the thesis option and the comprehensive examination option, coursework may include a maximum of 6 hours of independent study and/or internship combined. A maximum of 9 hours may be transferred from graduate work completed in/at other programs and/or institutions (including other University of Colorado campuses, such as CU Denver). A maximum of 9 credit hours of courses may be taken outside the department. Transfer and outside department courses combined may not exceed 12 credit hours. Courses in which a grade of C- or below is received are not counted toward the MA degree.

**MA Program Requirements: Thesis Option**

Students pursuing the MA thesis option are required to complete at least 33 graduate credit hours, including 27 credit hours of coursework (at the 5000 level or higher) and 6 thesis hours (including oral defense of the thesis; additional thesis hours cannot be taken). Course requirements include:

- Communication Research and Theory (COMM 6010)
- At least one methods course (COMM 6020 or 6030)
- At least two readings courses (COMM 5210, 5320, 5425, 5620, or 5720)
- Five additional graduate-level courses

Students choosing the thesis option should select a permanent graduate faculty advisor from the department (a person with a regular or tenured Graduate Faculty appointment) prior to completing 12 credits of coursework. In consultation with their advisor, students should select two additional committee members (who, most often, are from the department; at least one of those members must be from the department) and, by the beginning of the second year (assuming
a course load of 9 hours per semester), complete the MA Program of Study Form (see pages 31–32), and a written thesis proposal (with the thesis designed such that it can be completed during students’ final planned semester in residence). After the committee has read the thesis, a final oral defense is conducted in conformity with the Graduate School’s rules. Students must have an affirmative vote from the majority of committee members to pass the thesis. Students who fail the thesis defense may attempt it once more after a period of time that is determined by the committee. Students who fail the second defense are dismissed from the MA program. The final submitted thesis must comply with the Graduate School’s rules regarding the formatting of theses and dissertations.

**MA Program Requirements: Comprehensive Examination Option**

Students pursuing the coursework with comprehensive examination option are required to complete *at least 33 graduate credit hours* (at the 5000 level or higher), *a written comprehensive examination*, and an *oral defense of that written comprehensive examination*. Course requirements include:

- Communication Research and Theory (COMM 6010)
- At least one methods course (COMM 6020 or 6030)
- At least two readings courses (COMM 5210, 5320, 5425, 5620, or 5720)
- Seven additional graduate-level courses

MA students choosing the comprehensive examination option should select a permanent graduate faculty advisor from the department (a person with a regular or tenured Graduate Faculty appointment) prior to completing 12 credit hours. The DGS automatically serves as a committee member, and students, in consultation with their advisor, select a third committee member, who, most often, is from the department. By the beginning of the second year of graduate work (assuming a course load of 9 hours per semester), students should complete the MA Program of Study Form (see pages 31–32). The comprehensive examination includes three questions: (a) two standardized questions, created by the DGS, that are completed by all MA students taking the examination (at the same time) that semester about communication theory (90 minutes) and about research methods (90 minutes); and a question, created by students’ advisor, that is unique to students’ expertise area (2 hours). A 1-hour oral defense then must be held within 2 weeks of completing the written comprehensive examination.

Committees determine if and when students have passed the comprehensive examination. Should parts of the written comprehensive examination be judged as unsatisfactory (by more than one committee member), students may retake only those parts; if all parts of the examination are failed, all parts must be retaken. Students retaking the written comprehensive examination must repeat the oral defense. Prior to retaking the comprehensive examination, students may be required to complete additional coursework and/or research projects. Should the committee be reconstituted prior to the retaking of the written examination, new committee members determine (using majority rule) whether students must retake questions written by prior committee members that were passed successfully and/or whether any new questions need to be asked. Students can retake the written and/or oral comprehensive examination only once; students who fail either of them a second time (as judged by more than one committee
member) are dismissed from the MA program.

**MA Timetable/Checklist**

*Note:* The following list highlights activities and forms (in the approximate order to be completed) that students should attend to as they move through the MA program.

First and/or Second Semester (prior to completion of 12 credit hours)
- Select permanent advisor
- Decide on thesis or comprehensive examination option
- Select two members for the thesis committee or an additional member for the comprehensive examination committee (the DGS automatically serves)
- For thesis option, begin draft of thesis proposal

Third Semester (or as soon as possible after completing activities above)
- Submit MA Program of Study Form (see pages 31–32)
- For thesis option, complete thesis proposal and hold committee meeting to have it approved (typically, scheduled for 60 minutes)

Final Semester
- Complete Graduate School paperwork regarding composition of committee and intention to graduate
- Distribute thesis to committee members at least 2 weeks before scheduled oral defense
- Hold committee meeting to orally defend thesis or written comprehensive examination or (typically, scheduled for 60 minutes)
- Revise thesis as necessary and submit it to the Graduate School and to the Communication Department

Note: Committee meetings should be scheduled between the third to fourth weeks of the semester. Meetings should not be planned for the first 2 weeks of classes, the last week of classes, or during the final examination period.

**The Doctoral (PhD) Degree**

**General Information**

Students are admitted to the PhD program after having completed an MA degree. Depending on the extent of students’ prior academic work in communication, and their rate of progress, the degree can be achieved in 3 to 4 years.

All PhD applicants, with the exception of CU-Boulder MA students who are applying to the PhD program, must submit their materials online. CU-Boulder MA students should submit the following materials to the Graduate Program Assistant to the Associate Chair: (a) statement of purpose, (b) updated curriculum vitae, (c) funding form, and (d) a writing sample; they also need three letters of recommendation to be sent from letter writers to the Graduate Program Assistant to the Associate Chair.
According to Graduate School requirements, PhD students must enroll in residence (i.e., as a full-time student) for at least six semesters beyond the BA degree. Two semesters of residence credit may be allowed for an MA degree from another institution; however, at least four semesters of residence credit, two of which must be consecutive in one academic year, must be earned for work completed at CU-Boulder. One semester’s residency is earned by registering as a full-time student during the fall or spring semester, or during two summer sessions. Full-time PhD students must carry one of the following semester course loads: a minimum of 5 credit hours of graduate-level coursework before passing the comprehensive examination or a minimum of 5 dissertation hours after passing the comprehensive examination.

PhD students are expected to complete all degree requirements within 6 years from the semester in which they are admitted and begin coursework in the doctoral program. Students who fail to complete the degree in this 6-year period may be dismissed from their program with the concurrence of students’ advisor and associate chair of graduate studies (in consultation with the department chair). To continue, the student must file a petition for an extension of the time limit with the Dean of the Graduate School. Such petitions, which may be granted for up to 1 year, must be endorsed by the student’s major advisor, associate chair of graduate studies, and department chair.

**PhD Coursework Requirements**

A. Students’ individual coursework requirements must be specified in a *PhD Plan of Study document* (see guidelines on constructing that document, page 33) that is approved by students’ advisor and committee members (hereafter, committee); any changes to that PhD Plan of Study document must be formally approved by students’ advisor, committee members, and the DGS. A *minimum of 54 graduate credit hours of coursework* is required, plus *30 hours of dissertation credit*, for a *minimum total of 84 credit hours*. *At least 30 graduate credit hours of coursework must be communication courses*. Requirements for PhD courses include:

1. COMM 5210: Readings in Communication Theory

2. COMM 6010: Communication Research and Theory

3. Two of the following three research methods courses:
   
   A) COMM 5310: Rhetorical Criticism  
   B) COMM 6020: Quantitative Research Methods  
   C) COMM 6030: Qualitative Research Methods

4. Advanced expertise in a primary area of specialization. This requirement is satisfied by taking courses, seminars, and/or independent studies (including those outside the department) in the primary specialty that is declared in students’ approved PhD Plan of Study document.

5. Expertise in a secondary area of specialization: This requirement is satisfied by taking courses, seminars, and/or independent studies (including those outside the department) in
students’ approved PhD Plan of Study document.

6. Advanced expertise in a primary methodology that is appropriate to students’ primary area of specialization, such that they can conduct competent research that satisfies professional standards in that area. This requirement is satisfied by taking methodology courses in communication and/or cognate disciplines; methodological expertise also can be developed through independent studies and participation in research projects. The methodology may be primarily qualitative (e.g., discourse analysis, ethnography, and/or rhetorical criticism) or quantitative (e.g., experimental, survey, content analysis, and/or interaction analysis), or it may include a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. Although the PhD program requires that students choose two of the three methods courses (see point 3 above), those seeking to claim a scholarly identity as a social scientist (as opposed to a humanist) are strongly encouraged to take both the quantitative (COMM 6020) and qualitative (COMM 6030) research methods courses.

B. A maximum of 12 transfer credits from prior graduate coursework at another institution can be applied to the PhD program if those courses are included in students’ approved PhD Plan of Study document. Any graduate courses completed at CU-Boulder (including courses completed for the MA in communication) can be applied to the PhD program if they are included in students’ approved PhD Plan of Study document. When evaluating prior coursework for transfer and substitution credit, typically, committees consider the following criteria: recency (generally, coursework older than 5 years is not eligible), course content (substance and extent of duplication of courses offered at CU-Boulder), and quality of the institution and instructor (e.g., graduate faculty status). Depending on the focus and relevance of prior coursework to students’ primary or secondary areas of PhD specialization, committees may determine that the PhD Plan of Study document should include more than 54 hours of coursework.

C. A maximum of 9 independent study and/or internship credit hours combined can be counted toward the PhD degree; however, based on justification, committees may approve a maximum of 18 credit hours.

D. To achieve and remain in good academic standing, students must satisfy Graduate School residence requirements, make appropriate progress toward completing what is indicated on the PhD Plan of Study document, maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.00, and resolve any outstanding incompletes in a timely fashion. Courses in which a grade of C+ or lower is received are not counted towards the PhD degree. Funded students who are taking coursework full time must complete at least 18 credit hours of courses per year (typically, 9 hours per semester) to remain in good academic standing. No more than 15 credit hours of courses can be taken during any semester (with students financially responsible for 3 of those credit hours).

PhD Adviser and Committee Composition

A. All new PhD students are assigned by the DGS to a temporary advisor. Students should meet regularly with that temporary advisor during their first semester to discuss matters such as
selecting a permanent advisor, committee members, and courses for the next semester.

B. Students should select a permanent advisor from the department (a person with a regular or tenured Graduate Faculty appointment; coadvisors are permitted) on the basis of shared professional interests and compatibility, and, in consultation with the permanent advisor, construct a comprehensive examination committee early in their second semester in residence.

C. Students work with their advisor to create an identity statement and PhD Plan of Study document (see below), which is approved by their comprehensive examination committee, with a signed copy of that document (by the student, advisor, and DGS; see guidelines for constructing that document, page 33) submitted to the graduate program assistant.

D. PhD comprehensive examination committees contain a minimum of five members. Prior to and during the examination period, typically, the five members consist of four department graduate faculty (including the advisor), with an additional department graduate faculty member serving as a “reader” (who, typically, does not write questions but reads all answers). Students may include an “outside” member (someone from another CU-Boulder department or from a communication department or another department at another institution) as part of their examination committee (including serving as the reader). To successfully complete the comprehensive examination, students must receive affirmative votes from a majority of committee members. Following a successful oral defense, typically, the reader (if from the communication department) is replaced by a faculty member from another academic department (there must be at least one member from another academic department). At that point, the comprehensive examination committee is renamed as the “dissertation committee.”

E. Students’ advisor and comprehensive examination and/or dissertation committee composition may change over time (e.g., if students’ interests change).

Identity Statement and PhD Plan of Study Document

The Identity Statement is a short description (usually, 2–3 pages; see below) of students’ academic and professional background, and their goals for the PhD program and beyond. The PhD Plan of Study document (usually, 3–5 pages; see below and guidelines for constructing that form, page 33) shows how the PhD program is designed to achieve goals articulated in the Identity Statement, describing in detail areas to be pursued in the program, how all degree requirements will be satisfied, courses to be taken at CU-Boulder or transferred from an MA program, independent studies, internships, research projects, teaching experiences, and other relevant activities completed or planned.

The Identity Statement and PhD Plan of Study document are expected to evolve over the course of the PhD program. An initial version of the statement and plan of study is prepared for PhD students’ first committee meeting. Typically, the comprehensive examination committee is constructed and the identity statement and plan of study are approved in the second semester of the program. PhD students must have constructed their comprehensive examination committee and had their PhD Plan of Study approved prior to November 1 of the third semester of the program; failure to do so will result in students being dropped from all courses in which they
enrolled for the fourth semester of the program.

The initial version of the PhD Plan of Study, undoubtedly, will be tentative in some respects; for example, it may list alternative courses or types of courses to be taken, depending on known availability in future semesters. The committee approves the proposed PhD Plan of Study document (or any revised plan that results from that meeting) and a signed copy of that document (without the Identity Statement; see guidelines for constructing that form, page 33), signed by the student and by the advisor (with the date of the committee meeting at which the document was approved), and signed by the DGS is given to the graduate program assistant. Updated versions of the Identity Statement and the PhD Plan of Study document are prepared as needed, with major changes (e.g., a shift to a different specialization area) presented to the committee for approval, and the revised document signed (by the student, advisor, and the DGS) and submitted to the graduate program assistant. When the committee meets to plan the comprehensive examination, students’ Identity Statement and PhD Plan of Study document (updated to reflect courses and research projects actually completed, etc.) are the bases for designing and evaluating examination questions.

Students should address the following things in the order noted in their Identity Statement and PhD Plan of Study document:

A. Identity Statement: Academic and professional background, professional goals, academic and research interests, methodological expertise, and teaching philosophy

B. PhD Plan of Study Document (see guidelines for constructing the form, page 33)

1. Identification Information: Names of student, advisor, and committee members

2. Transfer Credits Requested (a maximum of 12 credit hours)

3. Coursework by Area (coursework must equal at least 54 credit hours, with at least 30 of those credit hours being communication courses):
   A) Broad-Based Communication Background (must include COMM 5210 and COMM 6010, or equivalents)
   B) Primary Area of Specialization
   C) Secondary Area of Specialization
   D) Methodological Expertise (Must include two of the following courses or their equivalent: COMM 5310, COMM 6020, and COMM 6030)

4. Coursework by Chronological Order

5. Teaching Experiences

6. Research Projects (at least two must be completed; see below)

7. Signatures and Dates: The PhD Plan of Study document is signed by the student and the advisor, using the date of the committee meeting at which that document was approved; it
then is signed and dated by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies.

Ordinarily, PhD students in their fifth semester of residence provide their committee with a portfolio consisting of an updated Identity Statement, updated PhD Plan of Study document, and two essays that have been presented (or accepted for presentation) at professional conferences or published (or in press) in scholarly outlets to meet the research expectations (explained below).

**Research Expectations**

A. PhD students are expected to be involved regularly in research projects (which often transcend, but also can be based on, coursework assignments), conducted independently or with faculty members and/or other graduate students. Students should take the initiative to bring about this involvement by meeting with faculty members to discuss common research interests.

B. Prior to taking the comprehensive examination, PhD students are expected to have completed *two research projects* of sufficient scholarly quality that they have been selected for conference presentation or publication. Those projects, ideally, are supervised by different faculty members.

**Admission to PhD Degree Candidacy:** To achieve the status of PhD candidate, students must:

A. Fulfill the PhD Plan of Study document
B. Receive final grades for all coursework, including incompletes
C. Demonstrate individual scholarly development, by meeting the research expectations
D. Demonstrate other appropriate professional competencies (e.g., teaching and training and development)
E. Successfully complete the PhD comprehensive examination

**PhD Comprehensive Examination**

A. The PhD comprehensive examination assesses students’ areas of scholarly expertise. Students usually take a reduced load of courses (3–6 credit hours) and sign up for 3–10 hours of dissertation credit the semester that they take the examination. Students are expected to complete the comprehensive examination *during* the semester for which they initially register for those dissertation credit hours. Students must be registered (pass–fail or for credit) on the CU-Boulder campus as regular degree-seeking students when they pass the comprehensive examination. Students must resolve any outstanding incompletes prior to taking the comprehensive examination.

B. Comprehensive Examination Procedure

1. Committee members, in consultation with the PhD student, design written examination questions, totaling 15–16 hours, to assess the student’s knowledge and competence. In the case of previous demonstrations of competence over and above the research expectations, such as numerous publications, the committee may decrease the examination to a minimum of 12 hours. Students may write their examination answers entirely in-house (using no
books or notes) or, with the committee’s approval, they may complete up to 50% of those answers at home (using books and notes). Take-home portions of the comprehensive examination must be completed within a 2-week period. The entire graduate faculty must approve exceptions to these rules.

2. Under normal circumstances, students taking the PhD comprehensive examination in-house are expected to compose their answers on a dedicated computer provided by the department that is formatted in a manner consistent with the department’s policy that graduate students not use outside material when writing in-house examination answers. Students should reserve, through the graduate program assistant, a laptop for the dates that they are scheduled to write; that reservation should be made as soon as the comprehensive examination writing dates have been established. In cases where students have documented need for special accommodation relevant to this policy, such as writing their examination answers by hand or using their laptop (e.g., a Mac), they must present their specific need in a timely fashion to their committee, which makes the final determination of whether and how that need will be accommodated.

3. The committee orally examines students within 2 weeks of completing the written PhD comprehensive examination. Students are permitted to have notes for the oral portion of the examination.

4. Committees determine if and when students have passed the comprehensive examination. Should parts of the written comprehensive examination be judged as unsatisfactory (by more than one committee member), students may retake only those parts; if all parts of the examination are failed, all parts must be retaken. Students retaking the written comprehensive examination must repeat the oral defense. Prior to retaking the comprehensive examination, students may be required to complete additional coursework and/or research projects. Should the committee be reconstituted prior to the retaking of the written examination, new committee members determine (using majority rule) whether students must retake questions written by prior committee members that were passed successfully and/or whether any new questions need to be asked. Students can retake the written and/or oral comprehensive examination only once; students who fail either of them a second time (as judged by more than one committee member) are dismissed from the PhD program.

**Registering for Dissertation Hours**

The Graduate School permits PhD students to begin registering for dissertation hours during the semester that they take the PhD comprehensive examination, but no more than 10 dissertation hours may be taken before completion of that examination. Students must continue to register for dissertation hours, taking no more than 10 hours per semester, for a total of 30 hours. A student who fails to register continuously (as a full-time student, meaning 5 dissertation hours in the fall and spring semesters of each year, unless the person is offsite, which then means 3 hours per semester) after passing the comprehensive examination must retake and pass the examination, to regain status as a student in good standing in the Graduate School. The department may require that the student validate coursework more than 5 years old. At its discretion, the department may
petition the Dean of the Graduate School for a time limit for completion of all degree requirements of up to 1 year after the retaking of the comprehensive examination. The department must petition to Dean of the Graduate School to waive the requirement to retake the comprehensive examination.

**PhD Students Taking Only Dissertation Hours**

PhD students who have completed the comprehensive examinations successfully and are taking only dissertation hours must complete each semester (before the semester’s drop/add deadline) with their advisor a contract that specifies what will be completed that semester with regard to the dissertation (see PhD Dissertation Hours Contract, page 34). That contact is signed by the student (advisee), advisor, and the DGS, and is submitted to the graduate program assistant. At the end of each semester, advisors evaluate advisees’ completion of the contract as being “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.” Two unsatisfactory evaluations (at any time during the program) result in an automatic formal review of students to decide their continuance in the graduate program.

**Dissertation**

A. Students first prepare and present a written proposal of their research project for approval by their dissertation committee, comprised of at least five persons, three of whom must be CU-Boulder communication graduate faculty, plus a fourth member from another academic discipline; the remaining member may be from the communication discipline or another discipline, and from CU-Boulder or elsewhere. Any committee member not from CU-Boulder must be approved to serve in that capacity (consult the graduate program assistant about the approval form that needs to be completed). Although the dissertation proposal varies based on the goals of the project and research methods employed, typically, the document ranges from 30 to 70 pages, and it includes an introduction to the topic and its significance; a review of literature; research problem(s), issue(s), or question(s) being addressed; methods of gathering and analyzing data, and sequence and content of chapters. Committees meet with students to review the proposal, provide advice, and approve the research project. The project should be designed realistically such that it can be completed after admission to candidacy and during students’ final planned year in residence. Some students, in consultation with their advisor and committee, may commence dissertation work (e.g., data collection) prior to that period.

B. PhD students are expected to make a presentation on their proposed dissertation project in a department research occasion or colloquium (see pages 27–28). Presentations are to be given as soon as possible following a successful proposal committee meeting.

C. The faculty does not encourage PhD students to leave the program “ABD” (“all-but-dissertation”).

D. After the dissertation has been read by committee members, an oral defense of it is conducted in conformity with the Graduate School’s rules (e.g., students must notify the Graduate School of their oral defense at least 2 weeks before their scheduled defense date and the defense must be scheduled no later than the posted deadline for the semester in which the degree is to be conferred).
E. More than one dissenting voice disqualifies students in the oral defense of the dissertation. Students who fail the defense may attempt it once more after a period of time that is determined by the committee. Students who fail the defense a second time are dismissed from the PhD program.

F. The final approved dissertation that is submitted must conform to the Graduate School’s formatting rules.

**PhD Timetable/Checklist**

Note: This list highlights activities and forms (in the approximate temporal order that they are completed) that students should attend to as they move through the PhD program.

**By End of First Year**
- Select a permanent advisor by the beginning of the second semester
- Select four other comprehensive examination committee members (for a total of five members, one of whom will serve as a reader)
- Write initial Identity Statement and PhD Plan of Study document and hold first committee meeting to approve that PhD Plan of Study (typically, scheduled for 30 minutes); turn in signed PhD Plan of Study document (with student, advisor, and DGS signatures) to the graduate program assistant (Note: At the latest, a student’s comprehensive examination committee must approve the PhD Plan of Study by November 1 of the third semester of the program; failure to do so will result in that student being dropped from all courses in which he or she enrolls for the fourth semester of the program)

**By End of Third Year**
- Complete coursework
- Complete and submit two research projects for acceptance as conference presentations or as publications
- Submit form to Graduate School for approval of 5-person PhD comprehensive examination committee (required at least 2 weeks before the second committee meeting)
- Hold second committee meeting to approve any revised Identity Statement and PhD Plan of Study document (and submit that document with appropriate signatures to the graduate program assistant), and to plan the PhD comprehensive examination (typically, scheduled for 30 minutes)*
- Take PhD comprehensive examination
- Hold PhD comprehensive examination oral defense (typically, scheduled for 2 hours)
- Committee members sign form stating that the PhD comprehensive examination was passed successfully (with copies filed and sent to Graduate School)

**By End of Fourth Year**
- Complete and circulate dissertation proposal to committee members
- Hold dissertation proposal committee meeting (typically, 60–90 minutes)
- Present dissertation prospectus at a department research occasion as soon as possible following committee approval
Final Semester before Graduation

- Send form to Graduate School listing dissertation committee composition and stating intention to graduate
- Distribute dissertation to committee members at least 2 weeks before scheduled oral defense
- Dissertation advisor announces place and time of dissertation oral defense
- Hold dissertation oral defense (typically, scheduled for 2 hours)
- If necessary, dissertation committee identifies desired revisions and process of submitting and approving revised dissertation; students submit revised dissertation to advisor and, if appropriate, committee members sign form stating that the dissertation has been completed successfully
- Submit dissertation to Graduate School and Communication Department

Note: PhD students who entered from CU-Boulder’s MA communication program, in general, should complete the checklist for the end of the third year and the end of the fourth year by the end of the second and third years, respectively. There is, however, some flexibility; students should talk with their advisor and with the DGS about the timetable.

Note: Committee meetings should be scheduled between the third to fourth weeks of the semester; meetings should not be planned for the first 2 weeks of classes, the last week of classes, or during the final examinations period.

General Information for Graduate Students

Graduate School Rules and Regulations

Students are responsible for knowing and following all rules and regulations established by the Graduate School. Students should check with the graduate program assistant periodically to ensure that they have obtained, completed, and submitted appropriate forms to the Graduate School.

New Graduate Students’ Responsibilities

New graduate students will be contacted by the graduate program assistant about completing necessary paperwork. New graduate students are responsible for three tasks before the fall semester in which they are admitted:

A. Have a CU-Boulder e-mail address by July 1.
B. Have a place to live and a rental agreement in place by the day before the first day that classes begin in August. This requirement is crucial to establishing Colorado residency and acquiring in-state tuition classification (see below).
C. Attend new graduate student orientation, which starts the second Monday of August.

Colorado Residency and In-State Tuition Classification

Funded graduate students (U.S. citizens or permanent residents) who are not residents of Colorado need to establish residency in Colorado upon arrival to qualify for in-state tuition.
Establishing residency includes obtaining a Colorado driver’s license, registering a motor vehicle, registering to vote, and paying Colorado state income tax (see specific instructions on the registrar’s website: http://registrar.colorado.edu/students/tuition_classification.html). Forms are available in the Department of Communication office or at the Registrar’s Office (Regent Hall).

It is very important to petition for in-state tuition classification and to adhere to the dates/deadlines indicated. For in-state tuition classification, if students are not Colorado residents and are qualified persons, they must petition for Colorado in-state tuition classification within one year to be eligible for in-state tuition for your second year of graduate study. Failure to establish residency will result in students having to pay out-of-state tuition and being ineligible to hold a monthly appointment at the university.

Funding

The department offers various forms of funding for graduate students, including Teaching Assistantships (TAs and GPTIs, who teach stand-alone courses), Research Assistantships, Summer Dissertation Fellowships and Summer Research Assistantships, Professional Travel Awards, and Summer Partial Tuition Fellowships. Each of these forms of funding are explained below.

A. Teaching Assistantships

1. Some graduate students are offered teaching assistantships (as TAs or as GPTIs). Generally, MA students receive 2 years of funding and PhD students receive 4 years (in both cases, continuous from the first semester enrolled), unless they enter the PhD program directly from CU-Boulder’s MA communication program, in which case the typical funding for the MA and PhD degrees combined is 5 years. Enrolled students who have not been funded may be appointed on a semester or yearly basis when funding is available.

2. TAs and GPTIs with half-time appointments are expected to devote, on average, approximately 20 hours per week to their teaching responsibilities. In addition to normal classroom responsibilities (e.g., preparing for classes, testing, and grading), they are expected to:
   A) Attend fall and spring graduate student orientations, and regularly scheduled teaching workshops
   B) Meet regularly with any course supervisor(s)
   C) Consult with the lead teaching assistant
   D) Hold regular/consistent office hours
   E) Arrange for evaluations of teaching performance (e.g., Faculty Course Questionnaires [FCQs] and classroom observations by course supervisor and by others)
   F) Comply with department and university policies about teaching and examination schedules
   G) Meet specific expectations for courses taught, as set by any course supervisor(s) and by good academic practice
3. Summer teaching often is available to graduate students, with assignments determined by the department chairperson, on the basis of seniority, need, and expertise. The summer pay schedule for GPTIs (the type of appointment) is: Term A: approximately 75% of total paycheck received on July 1, with remaining 25% received on July 31; Term B: approximately 75% of total paycheck received on July 31, with remaining 25% received on August 31.

4. TAs and GPTIs are evaluated on their teaching performance at the annual faculty review of graduate students. They also receive regular feedback from any course supervisors.

5. Lead Graduate Teacher Position: Each year, the department faculty appoints a graduate student to serve as the Lead Graduate Teacher (LGT), which is part of the Graduate Teacher Program (GTP; see http://www.colorado.edu/gtp). The GTP has two goals for graduate students who serve as LGTs: (a) to develop the leads themselves as future academic managers, leaders, teachers, and consultants; and (b) to assist departments with internal TA preparation to improve undergraduate education. Lead training focuses on academic management, leadership, college pedagogy, consultation, and teamwork. Requirements include: serving as a liaison between the GTP and the department, meeting with the lead coordinators, negotiating and writing a plan that is acceptable to the GTP and to the department, presenting on GTP opportunities that are available to graduate students and faculty, consulting with TAs during office hours and in videotaped consultations, developing and presenting at least one discipline-specific workshop, working on a cross-disciplinary team, and turning in a final report. LGTs also do a TA support activity of their choice within the department. LGTs must have excellent working relationships with the chairperson, DGS, and graduate program assistant; preference is given to those with an average score of 3.0 or better on the Faculty Course Questionnaire (FCQ) for courses previously taught, five to six semesters of teaching experience, and continued progress toward completion of the GTP certificate in teaching or professional development. LGTs receive a 6% Administrative Intern appointment, and they receive the Best Should Teach Silver Award at the Best Should Teach Lecture that is given in August. LGTs are nominated and voted on by department faculty. Interested students should consult with their advisor and with the DGS.

6. Overloads for Teaching Assistants: Graduate students who are on a 50% teaching assistantship, with permission from the DGS, may petition the Graduate School for an exception to the 50% rule. Teaching assistants are limited to 74% maximum appointment, which means that, with permission, they may work an additional 9 hours per week.

7. Extension of Teaching Assistantship Funding: Continuous TA funding is dependent on the availability of funds and on students remaining in good academic standing. Students who do not complete their degree program within the normal period of assistance may request extended TA funding, under the following conditions:

A) Students recognize that the department is under no obligation to provide extended TA funding, and that the risk of funding availability is borne by students
B) The decision to make extended TA funding available is based on:
1) Availability of funds
2) Undergraduate course demands
3) Demonstrated ability to teach needed courses
4) General quality of teaching, as assessed by FCQs and faculty evaluations
5) Assurance by students’ advisor that funding will assist, and not inhibit, students’
   program completion
6) Recommendation from students’ thesis/comprehensive examination or dissertation
   committee that they be funded

Faculty advisors make recommendations to the DGS for extended TA funding of graduate
students. If approved, the DGS presents that recommendation to the department chair, who
makes the final decision.

8. Cases that require exceptions to these guidelines may be brought to the faculty to decide.

B. Some graduate students (typically, PhD students) are offered research assistantships (RAs),
typically, across an academic year, that involve working for and with a faculty member on
that faculty member’s research. To the extent possible, RAs are matched with faculty
members who are engaged in research that connects to RAs’ desired expertise area. RAs give
students research-related experience that is part of their paid work and, thereby, helps them to
build a stronger profile that will enable them to do better on the job market.

C. Summer Dissertation Fellowships and Summer Research Assistantships

The department receives monies from the Graduate School and from gift accounts that make
possible the awarding of Summer Dissertation Fellowships and Research Assistantships
(RAs) for selected students. The DGS puts out a call for these awards early in the fall with a
due date in September, with students applying for the Summer Dissertation Fellowships and
faculty members applying for graduate students to serve as RAs for the following summer.
Students may apply for fellowships in more than one category, but cannot receive both awards.
The Graduate Program Committee reviews all applications received. Students receiving a
Summer Dissertation Fellowship or positions as RAs may not also teach in that summer. In
both case, the award amount is the equivalent of a summer teaching assignment salary, with
50% of the total paycheck received on July 1 and 50% received on July 31.

1. Summer Dissertation Fellowships: Awarded to students to provide time to work on their
dissertation. PhDs student may be awarded only one dissertation fellowship during their
program; typically, in the summer after completion of the PhD comprehensive
examination. Students submit to the DGS a 1–3-paragraph description of the proposed
dissertation work, along with a letter of support from their advisor.

2. Summer Research Assistantships: Awarded to support specific research projects under
faculty supervision. Faculty members submit to the DGS a 1–3-paragraph description of
the proposed research project and the name and reasons for the graduate student selected.
RAs work a total of 120 hours.
D. Professional Travel Awards

Professional travel awards are given to students traveling to present scholarship at professional conferences (in addition to any other university travel support). The DGS puts out a call for these awards early in the fall with a due date in September, with students applying for travel awards by indicating the professional presentation that has been accepted or that will be submitted. Students must apply at that time for any expected travel during that academic year; no funding is available for professional travel after that time. The typical range of awards is $100–400.

Once professional travel awards have been determined, students receiving such funds should check immediately with the graduate program assistant regarding necessary procedures for ensuring that those funds are used appropriately. Especially important:

1. Students need to use Christopherson Business Travel (CBT) to arrange for airfare. If airfare is not purchased through CBT, students must obtain an airfare quote for the exact dates of travel prior to any trip; they cannot request a quote after the fact.
2. A true receipt has a student’s name, last 4 digits of his or her credit card, the amount paid, an itemized list of what was purchased, and the name of the vendor.
3. The best items to use for reimbursement are airfare, hotel, conference registration, and per diem (amount allotted for food each day).

E. Summer Partial Tuition Fellowships

Summer partial tuition fellowships are awarded to graduate students taking Maymester or summer courses. The maximum award is $300.

Evaluation of Academic Progress

The department’s graduate faculty meets annually (typically, in January) to evaluate graduate students’ academic (e.g., coursework, research, and teaching) progress, and to make recommendations regarding retention and funding renewal. Prior to that annual meeting, students should meet with their temporary or permanent advisor, and they should complete the Graduate Student Annual Review Form (listing their research, teaching, and service activities and awards, see page 35) by January 1 and send it electronically to the graduate program assistant.

Following that graduate faculty meeting, advisors provide feedback to advisees about their progress toward completion of their respective degree, identifying specific areas where students’ performance is excellent, satisfactory, and/or in need of improvement. When appropriate, advisors and students should develop specific plans to address areas where improvement is needed. In periods between annual review sessions, faculty members may refer cases for consideration and action to the DGS or the Graduate Program Committee (chaired by the DGS).

To remain in good academic standing, graduate students must:
A. Satisfy Graduate School residence requirements and make appropriate progress toward completing what is outlined on their PhD Plan of Study document. Funded PhD students taking coursework must complete at least 18 credit hours of coursework per year; funded MA students taking coursework must completed at least 18 credit hours one year and 15 hours in the other year (which includes thesis hours).

B. Maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.00. Course grades of C- or lower are not counted toward the MA degree; course grades of C+ or below are not counted toward the PhD degree. Courses taken to fulfill MA or PhD requirements may not be taken pass–fail.

C. Resolve any incompletes in a timely fashion.

D. If funded as a teaching assistant (TA) or as a graduate part-time instructor (GPTI), maintain satisfactory teaching performance.

**Time-Out Policy**

Graduate students who need to temporarily leave the university may apply to the Graduate School’s Time-Out Program (TOP) for a period of up to 1 year. TOP allows students in good standing to not enroll in courses during that time period and to preserve their admission to the university and the department. TOP participation does not automatically extend graduate students’ time limit for funding and/or completion of the degree but it may be used as a justification in requests for extension of time limits. At the normal expiration of those periods, graduate students who have participated in TOP may petition for the reinstatement of funding and/or degree completion time that elapsed during their time-out. Graduate students, with the endorsement of their advisor, must submit this petition to the DGS. Approval of the petition is contingent on students’ academic progress, availability of vacant assistantship funds, undergraduate course demands, and students’ demonstrated teaching ability. After reviewing the petition, the DGS makes a recommendation to the department chair, who makes the final decision.

**Grievance Procedures**

The department seeks to create and maintain a professional climate that respects diversity and fosters excellence. Students who believe that a faculty or staff member has treated them unfairly or inappropriately may pursue the department’s grievance procedure. Grounds for this treatment include (a) violation of terms and conditions of an appointment by a supervising faculty member; (b) deviations from stated grading procedures (exclusive of individual grade challenges); and (c) individual students’ actions that violate department, college, and/or university policies (e.g., sexual harassment). The grievance policy, including the steps to follow in filing a grievance, are on the department’s website (http://comm.colorado.edu).

**Communication Graduate Student Association**

The Communication Graduate Student Association (CGSA) serves as an advocate for graduate students’ interests and seeks to foster a collegial and engaged academic community in CU-
Boulder’s Department of Communication. Since its inception in 2002, the CGSA has become the central representative body and has sought to promote the professional development and social well-being of the department’s graduate students. The CGSA serves as an important forum for developing personal and professional relationships with other graduate students; fostering a sense of community and support; representing voices of all graduate students in the department; supporting intellectual and pedagogical interests of graduate students through various programming; promoting diversity and engaging in service activities; communicating relevant information to the department’s graduate student body; and assisting with recruitment, orientation, and integration of incoming and current graduate students.

As an advocate, the CGSA represents interests, concerns, and experiences of the department’s graduate student community to the department and to the university. Two members (a PhD student and an MA student) are elected by communication graduate students as cochairs, who act as liaisons to the department chairperson, DGS, faculty, and staff on matters of practices and policies affecting the communication graduate student community, and, thereby, have a voice in shaping the future of the department. The CGSA has a voting representative to faculty meetings and selects representatives who hold voting positions on departmental committees, including the undergraduate program (one student), graduate program (one student), instructional fees advisory (one student), and hiring (one senior PhD student) committees. The CGSA also elects two graduate student representatives to the United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS). Several graduate students are elected as chairs of various CGSA committees. Graduate students who take on leadership positions within the CGSA gain valuable administrative experience.

In line with the organization’s purposes, the CGSA initiates a variety of programs and activities to buttress communication graduate students’ academic pursuits through community, mentorship, professional development, and outreach. The CGSA serves an important role by gathering graduate students for social events that are intended to develop personal and professional relationships with other graduate students, and to foster a sense of community and collegiality. The CGSA also provides opportunities for graduate students to pursue intellectual discussion together in less formal ways. Committed to professional development, the CGSA sponsors lecture and workshop series, as well as participates in service activities and promotes diversity in the community.

**Department Intellectual Opportunities**

The department promotes a vibrant intellectual climate for graduate students and faculty members by offering numerous opportunities to present and discuss scholarly (research and teaching) work. Those opportunities include colloquia, research occasions, and other gatherings.

A. Colloquia: The department holds colloquia several times a semester where presentations are given (often, by visitors from other universities). Colloquia offer graduate students opportunities to hear visible scholars whose work they are or will be reading, and to begin building relationships with scholars from other universities. Attendance at colloquia is expected of all department graduate students and faculty members.
B. Research Occasions: Approximately once a month, members of each area of the department (Discourse & Society, Organizational Communication, and Rhetoric) convene for an hour-long discussion of a scholarly project on which faculty members or graduate students currently are working. Presenters talk for 20 to 25 minutes, laying out their project and its basic arguments, followed by a group discussion. Research occasions offer area community members opportunities to come together to talk about ideas, try out arguments, and consider how to strengthen what they are doing. Those research occasions serve at least three interrelated purpose: (a) to provide a friendly site to engage regularly in serious intellectual conversation, (b) to deepen everyone’s knowledge about scholarship being conducted by others in an area of the department, and (c) to provide graduate students with a safe practice ground in which to hone skills of public discourse (e.g., questioning, responding, and arguing) that are key to academic life. PhD students are expected to attend research occasions; MA students are strongly encouraged to do so.

C. Other Gatherings: Other intellectual gatherings that involve subsets of students and faculty members meeting occur frequently. Those gatherings, announced via e-mail, include topic-specific reading groups and “data sessions” (that examine textual/video/audio materials).
COMM 5930: Internship Contract

Important Note: A maximum of 3 hours may be taken in the fall and spring semesters; up to 6 hours may be taken in the summer. A maximum of 6 hours for MA students and 9 hours for PhD students of internship and/or independent study combined is allowed toward coursework. Students are expected to devote at least 25 hours of effort for each credit hour assigned.

Student Name and Number: ____________________________________________________________

Faculty Sponsor: ____________________________________________________________________

Internship Sponsor and Site: __________________________________________________________

Semester and Year: _________________________________________________________________

Credit Hours: _______________________________________________________________________

Purpose of Internship and Relevance to Program of Study:

Student Activities for Internship:

Criteria for Determining Grade for Internship:

______________________________________________________________________________

Student’s Signature Date

______________________________________________________________________________

Faculty Sponsor’s Signature Date

______________________________________________________________________________

Internship Sponsor’s Signature Date

______________________________________________________________________________

Associate Chair of Graduate Study’s Signature Date

______________________________________________________________________________

Staff Member’s Signature (who registers student) Date
COMM 6840/8840: Independent Study Contract

Important Note: A maximum of 6 hours for MA students and 9 hours for PhD students of independent study is allowed toward the respective degree coursework. Students are expected to devote at least 25 hours of effort to this project for each credit hour assigned. If this project requires approval by the Human Subjects Committee, attach appropriate information and documentation.

Student Name and Number: _____________________________________________________

Faculty Sponsor: __________________________________________________________________

Semester and Year: ________________________________________________________________

Credit Hours: __________________________________________________________________

Purpose of Independent Study and Relevance to Program of Study:

Student Learning Activities and Criteria for Determining Grade for Independent Study:

______________________________________________________________________________

Student’s Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

Faculty Sponsor’s Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

Associate Chair of Graduate Study’s Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

Staff Member’s Signature (who registers student) __________________________ Date __________________________
MA Program of Study Form
(Must be Completed by Beginning of the Second Year)

Student Name: __________________________________________

Advisor Name: __________________________________________

MA Option (Specify): _____ Comprehensive Examination _____ Thesis

Two Additional Committee Members (Associate Chair of Graduate Studies automatically serves for comprehensive examination option):

__________________________________________________________________________

Requirements for All MA Students (indicate final grade or semester to be taken) Tally

__________________ COMM 6010: Communication Research & Theory (3 Hours) 3 Credits

Required Methods Course (One of the following; 3 Hours)

__________________ COMM 6020: Quantitative Research Methods

__________________ COMM 6030: Qualitative Research Methods 6 Credits

Readings Courses (Two of the following; 6 Hours)

__________________ COMM 5210: Readings in Communication Theory

__________________ COMM 5320: Readings in Rhetoric

__________________ COMM 5425: Readings in Discourse & Society

__________________ COMM 5620: Readings in Organizational Communication

__________________ COMM 5720: Readings in Communication & Technology 12 Credits

Additional Graduate Courses (identify course department, number, and title; if not 3 credit hours, specific number; must total to at least 21 credit hours, with, for thesis option, 6 hours being COMM 6950: Thesis Hours)

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

COMPLETE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS PAGE
The following rules apply to the credit hours of coursework completed:
1. A maximum of 6 credit hours of Independent Study (COMM 6940)
2. A maximum of 9 credit hours can be transferred from graduate work completed in/at other programs and/or institutions (including other CU campuses)
3. A maximum of 9 credit hours can be completed outside CU-Boulder’s Communication Department
4. A maximum of 12 credit hours of transfer and outside department courses combined

Signatures Approving Plan:

Student
Date

Advisor
Date

Associate Chair of Graduate Study
Date

Additional Notes:
PhD Plan of Study Document

The form must include the following information in the order noted:

A. Identification Information

1. Student’s Name

2. Advisor’s Name

3. Committee Members’ Names (indicate CU-Boulder department, if a member is not from the Communication Department, and indicate university, if not from CU-Boulder)

B. Transfer Credits Requested (a maximum of 12 credit hours): List each course, describe it (if possible, use the university’s catalog description), and explain why it is included in the PhD Plan of Study document; attach a copy of your transcript.

C. Coursework by Area: List all courses that are relevant to the four areas below (courses may be listed more than once), with any grades received (Note: Coursework must equal at least 54 credit hours, with at least 30 of those credit hours being communication courses):

1. Broad-Based Communication Background (must include COMM 6010: Communication Research and Theory, and COMM 5210: Readings in Communication Theory, or equivalents)

2. Primary Area of Specialization (construct a descriptive title for this specialization area)

3. Secondary Area of Specialization (construct a descriptive title for this specialization area)

4. Methodological Expertise (must include two of the following courses or their equivalent: COMM 5310: Contemporary Rhetorical Criticism, COMM 6020: Quantitative Research Methods, and COMM 6030 Qualitative Research Methods)

D. Coursework by Chronological Order: List all courses chronologically, by semester taken or anticipated, with any grades received

E. Teaching Experiences: Identify courses taught, semesters that they were taught, and their class structure (e.g., recitation or stand-alone)

F. Research Projects (at least two must be completed): Identify titles of essays, faculty supervisors, and conferences or journals to which they were (or will be) presented or published

G. Signatures and Dates: The PhD Plan of Study document is signed by the student and the advisor, using the date of the committee meeting at which the document was approved; the document then is signed and dated by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies.
PhD Dissertation Hours Contract

Important Note: This form must be completed every semester that PhD students take only dissertation hours. The form must be completed and filed with the graduate program assistant prior to the semester’s drop/add deadline.

Student Name: ________________________________________________________________

Student Number: ______________________________________________________________

Advisor Name: _________________________________________________________________

Semester and Year: _____________________________________________________________

Number of Dissertation Hours: _________________________________________________

Dissertation Work to be Completed that Semester:

______________________________________________________________________________

Student’s Signature ______________________ Date ________________________________

Advisor’s Signature ______________________ Date ________________________________

Associate Chair of Graduate Study’s Signature ______________________ Date __________

End of Semester Evaluation (Completed by Advisor): ___ Satisfactory  ___ Unsatisfactory

Advisor’s Comments if Unsatisfactory Evaluation:

______________________________________________________________________________

Advisor’s Signature ______________________
Graduate Student Annual Review Form

*Return this form electronically to Julie Blair by January 1*

Name:

Committee Chair/Advisor:

Committee Members:

**Status of Program** (e.g., completing coursework, completed comprehensive examinations, completed prospectus, completing thesis or dissertation):

Please describe as fully as possible your involvement in the following:

*Research* (e.g., publications and convention presentations)

*Teaching* (e.g., courses taught and FCQs)

*Service* (e.g., professional, university, college, and department)

*Awards/Recognition* for Research (e.g., top papers award), Teaching, or Service