

College of Arts and Sciences

Communication Studies

Overview

Employers today rate effective communication as the most preferred skill in their employees. Communication studies majors study how communication affects their relationships, groups workplaces and communities. They also develop the skills and abilities to craft messages for audiences and explore the consequences of those messages.

Professional options

Careers

Communication studies majors from K-State are prepared to excel in today's competitive market that values the abilities to adapt to changing environments, communicate with diverse stakeholders and make decisions based on sound information. Communication studies majors develop skills that help them succeed and exercise leadership in a range of professions, including business, sales, government, law, public relations, education and nonprofit management..

Employers

Our graduates have success finding employment opportunities in their specialized area, in part because these skills are in demand across many job sectors.

- Communication director, event planner, manager, account specialist or communications consultant at corporations and businesses.
- Professor, teacher, researcher, forensics coach or debate coach at educational institutions.
- Public engagement coordinator, campaign communication director or communication specialist in a government organization.
- Lawyer, jury consultant or paralegal
- Youth minister or pastor

Points of pride

The communication studies department at Kansas State University values community. Courses generally have fewer than 25 students, faculty advise you from your first day until you graduate, and there are multiple clubs and teams to join. Faculty work with you to develop a program of study tailored to your specific interests.

Job experience

Internships are great opportunities to enrich your academic experience and prepare you for your desired career. The communication studies internship program provides students with opportunities to gain work experience in a communication field while learning concepts and skills to enhance their professional development. Students earn three hours of academic credit by successfully completing the internship course and working in an organization for a minimum of 10 hours per week..

Academics

The communication studies major at K-State represents the humanities and social sciences. The program has two instructional goals: to improve a student's communication skills in developing messages that are clear, coherent and reasoned, and to develop a student's ability to analyze communication in different social, political and organizational settings..

Degree options

The communication studies major consists of 39 credit hours leading to a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science. A minor in communication studies consists of 18 hours that complement a major program of study in another department. Students who wish to pursue graduate studies are prepared to enter nationally competitive programs, including the master's degree in communication studies offered by K-State, as well as the doctoral program in leadership studies..

Communication studies majors specialize in one of four program tracks:

Organizational communication

In order for organizational members to function, they must be able to share ideas, solve problems and work together efficiently using communication skills. The courses at K-State develop and improve verbal and nonverbal communication skills while examining current research on communication processes in a variety of organizational contexts. This track is ideal for students who plan on entering the business sector in a variety of fields and for those who seek leadership positions at work or in their community.

Political communication

Politics and civic engagement depend on strategic use of language. Political leaders employ communication and rhetoric to mobilize publics, negotiate policy, affect public opinion, maintain relations with other nations and states and win votes. Courses in this track focus on the role of communication and rhetoric in the political processes of democracies and the ways public officials, candidates and citizens interact. This track is ideal for students who are interested in elective politics, political consulting, community organizing, policy analysis and research work for organizations.

Legal communication

Law is fundamentally a profession about research and communication. The practice of law demands the ability to clearly construct, present and critically analyze arguments. A communication studies degree is an effective foundation for a law career and is extremely useful for admission to law school. Courses focus on trial advocacy, argument construction, presentational skills and theories of legal communication. This track is ideal for students who are interested in the legal profession, including litigation, corporate law, family law or for those who want to work with attorneys and the courts.

Relational communication

Our lives are spent in relationships with others. This track focuses on current research and theories in interpersonal communication to explain behaviors and improve tangible communication skills. Courses increase understanding of verbal and nonverbal communication and responses, relational development, cultural similarities/differences, conflict, deception and group communication dynamics. Relational communication is ideal for students seeking careers involving interactions between organizational members, clients and customers.

Faculty

The communication studies faculty includes scholars trained at the best doctoral programs. The faculty has developed a strong reputation for its excellence in teaching research and engagement. Moreover, the faculty has extensive professional training in communication coaching, argument, public speaking, facilitation and message

framing. Faculty specialties include relational communication, conflict management, facilitation and group communications, technology, intercultural/international communication, organizational communication, environmental communication, and political communication.

Advising

Each student is advised by a faculty member from the start of the program until graduation. Advisers assist students in choosing classes, becoming acclimated to university life, seeking financial resources and career planning.

Activities

Clubs

Debate: Join a winning tradition. The K-State debate team has won three Cross Examination Debate Association national championships, had Top 10 sweepstakes finishes five of the last 10 years and has successful alumni in many fields of work. All students are welcome, regardless of experience. If interested, visit k-state.edu/debate.

Speech Unlimited: The K-State forensics team is one of the top programs in the nation. The team has more than 30 national champions in 11 different events and is consistently ranked in the Top 20 nationally. Just as importantly, it is open to any student regardless of major, experience or record. If you are willing to work hard and listen to an excellent coaching staff, you can travel, compete and do well. For scholarships and other information, visit k-state.edu/forensics.

Mock trial: Mock trial offers an opportunity for aspiring attorneys to form teams and try cases against universities from across the country. The group prepares students to think critically, communicate effectively and work as a team. Law schools hold mock trial participation in high regard. Participants may also receive academic credit (COMM 210) as the team is a subsidiary of the legal communication track in communication studies. To learn more, visit commstudies.k-state.edu/student_groups/mock_trial.

Lambda Pi Eta: Lambda Pi Eta is the official honor society of the National Communication Association. K-State's Upsilon Rho chapter was chartered in 2006 and remains an active, dynamic group representing the best of the best of communication studies majors. For applications and a list of requirements, visit commstudies.k-state.edu/student_groups/LPH.

Financial assistance

Each year, scholarships are granted to students who excel in the classroom and are dedicated to communication-oriented careers. The communication studies faculty choose scholarship winners from an application process during the spring semester.

Suggested course work

Communication studies required hours
(12 credit hours)

Hrs.	Course	
3	COMM 320	Theories of Human Communication
3	COMM 330	Rhetoric in Western Thought
3	Criticism of Public Discourse	
	or	
3	COMM 433	Communication Research Methods
3	COMM 550	Senior Colloquium
	or	
3	COMM 551	Senior Honors Thesis

Tracks

Twelve credit hours must be completed in one track. An asterisk denotes a required course in that track.

Legal communication (12 credit hours)

Hrs.	Course	
3	COMM 260	Introduction to Trial Advocacy
3	COMM 325	Argumentation and Debate
3	COMM 326	Small Group Discussion Methods
3	COMM 431	Criticism of Public Discourse
3	COMM 430	Freedom of Speech
3	COMM 460	Advanced Trial Advocacy
3*	COMM 475	Legal Communication
3	COMM 525	Argumentation Theory Credit
3	COMM 526	Persuasion

Organizational communication

(12 credit hours)

Hrs.	Course	
3	COMM 311	Business and Professional Speaking
3	COMM 326	Small Group Discussion Methods
3	COMM 328	Professional Interviewing
3*	COMM 425	Theories of Organizational Communication
3	COMM 440	Collaborative Communication and Event Planning
3	COMM 480	Intercultural Communication
3	COMM 535	Communication and Leadership

Political communication (12 credit hours)

Hrs.	Course	
3	COMM 321	Public Speaking II
3	COMM 325	Argumentation and Debate
3	COMM 432	The Rhetoric of the American Presidency
3	COMM 434	Rhetoric and Social Movements
3*	COMM 435	Political Communication
3	COMM 470	Rhetoric of Community Building
3	COMM 525	Argumentation Theory
3	COMM 526	Persuasion
3	COMM 545	Communication and Democracy

Relational communication (12 credit hours)

Hrs.	Course	
3	COMM 322	Interpersonal Communication
3	COMM 323	Nonverbal Communication
3	COMM 328	Professional Interview Credits
3	COMM 420	Gender Communication
3	COMM 480	Intercultural Communication
3	COMM 526	Persuasion
3	COMM 535	Communication and Leadership
3*	COMM 542	Relational Communication

Additional requirements include 15 credit hours of communication studies electives, three of which must be at the 500 level or higher, not including COMM 550 or 551.

For more information about communication studies, contact:

Department of Communication Studies
Kansas State University
234 Nichols Hall
702 Mid-Campus Drive South
Manhattan, KS 66506
785-532-6875
commstudies@k-state.edu
commstudies.k-state.edu

For more information about Kansas State University, contact:

Office of Admissions
Kansas State University
119 Anderson Hall
1919 Mid-Campus Drive North
Manhattan, KS 66506-0102
1-800-432-8270 (toll free) or
785-532-6250
k-state@k-state.edu
k-state.edu/admissions

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Post-Graduation Statistics
k-state.edu/postgrad-stats
ksdgreestats.org