

# Ph.D. Handbook

DOCTORATE IN COMMUNICATION  
2013-2014 ACADEMIC YEAR



**Moving Image Studies**



**Media and Society**



**Rhetoric and Politics**

## To Prospective Ph.D. Students

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

On behalf of my colleagues in the Georgia State University Department of Communication, I thank you for your interest in our doctoral program and encourage you to be in contact with our faculty. In the past decade we've made tremendous strides, and I hope you'll carefully consider what we have to offer. This handbook is not designed as a recruiting document, but I think you'll find it will help inform your choices since it includes detailed information about the policies governing doctoral activity.

Since we received University System of Georgia approval to offer the Communication doctorate more than a decade ago, our doctoral population has grown to roughly 50 full time students and we have graduated (and in every case, placed into academic employment) seven classes. The doctoral program's rhetoric and politics sequence was ranked in the *nation's top twenty*, and our overall program rated as a *top five* "up and coming" endeavor, both in the National Communication Association's 2004 ratings, which remain the most recent. GSU communication programs also fared well in the recently released National Research Council doctoral program assessments. The majority of our doctoral students receive full assistantship support (\$15,000 annual stipend, tuition waivers for all terms, discounted access to health insurance, and yearly professional development funds).



The program is track organized, each of which receive strong support (by number, faculty and students are roughly evenly connected with each). The *Moving Image Studies* track coordinates extensive faculty research relating to film, new media, television, and cultural studies, and also connects to faculty who work in the digital production and performance areas. The *Media & Society* track coordinates the extensive research activities of faculty at work on mass communication, audience research, and international communication. The *Rhetorical Studies* track coordinates scholarship on political discourse, public address, rhetorical theory, and social movement scholarship. All tracks connect to major departmental granting activity and research centers, and beyond the roughly forty graduate faculty currently on staff, we are continuing to implement a hiring plan that will add more in the coming years. The result is a program well organized to provide you with strong mentorship and support for your professional development.

At the heart of our work is a community of exceptionally talented faculty who often combine extensive professional experience with cutting edge academic research. In the year to come my colleagues have planned a rich range of intellectual activities that will, I think, helpfully supplement the intensive educational experiences you'll encounter in our seminars. In the first several weeks of the fall term alone, we will be hosting **Henry Jenkins**, the USC scholar who led the media studies field in conceptualizing digital convergence, and **Peter Forgacs**, the Budapest-based media maker and independent filmmaker (the Forgacs symposium will also include **Michael Renov** and **Bill Nichols**, both leading documentary studies scholars). In September we will also host a one-day symposium on the future of investigative journalism, a program enabled by a gift to the department made by the now-retired Cox Communications executive **Lee Armstrong** that will permit annual training in investigative journalism for our best honors students, and given to commemorate her father. In 2014 the Department of Communication will host three major conference events. In February, the *Georgia Communication Association* will hold its annual meeting in our facilities. Later that month, we will host an international cinema/media studies conference, called *Rendering (the) Visible*, which is a second iteration of the same event three years ago. And in October 2014, the department will coordinate and host the *Biennial Public Address Conference*, organized around the theme "Mapping Rhetorical Authority." I invite you to connect to these and other events and to join the conversations that they will prompt.

I hope you'll take some time to explore our website ([communication.gsu.edu](http://communication.gsu.edu)) and to arrange to meet with the graduate director supervising the program in which you have an interest (Dr. Natalie Tindall, [ntindall@gsu.edu](mailto:ntindall@gsu.edu), oversees the Media & Society and Rhetorical Studies tracks; Dr. Jennifer Barker, [jmbarker@gsu.edu](mailto:jmbarker@gsu.edu), oversees the Moving Image Studies track).

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David M. Cheshier". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr. David Cheshier  
Associate Professor / Chair  
Department of Communication



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## Introduction

The Graduate Program in Communication offers students a multi-disciplinary curriculum leading to the Ph.D. degree. The program is designed to prepare students for research and teaching in one of three primary areas of emphasis: *Media & Society*, *Moving Image Studies*, and *Rhetoric & Politics*. Required core courses are designed to provide students with in depth training in communication pedagogy and the professional expectations of the discipline, as well as mentored experiences in both teaching and research.

The *Moving Image Studies* emphasis draws theoretical perspectives from film, television, new media and performance studies. It prepares students to investigate how moving images are constructed, how they are perceived, and how they impact culture. Dr. Jennifer Barker is the area director for Moving Image Studies. Dr. Barker can be reached by phone at 404-413-5793, or by e-mail at [jmbarker@gsu.edu](mailto:jmbarker@gsu.edu).

The *Rhetorical Studies* emphasis draws theoretical perspectives from rhetorical and philosophical traditions to illuminate public discourse and persuasion. It prepares students to investigate rhetoric and public address with specific emphasis on how communities are constructed and maintained. Dr. Natalie Tindall is the area director for Rhetorical Studies. Dr. Tindall can be reached by phone at 404-413-5685, or by e-mail at [ntindall@gsu.edu](mailto:ntindall@gsu.edu).

The *Media & Society* emphasis draws theoretical perspectives from journalism and mass communication research. It prepares students to investigate the relationship between media and its audiences, with specific emphasis on international communication, media effects and stereotypes, and health communication. Dr. Natalie Tindall is the area director for Rhetorical Studies. Dr. Tindall can be reached by phone at 404-413-5685, or by e-mail at [ntindall@gsu.edu](mailto:ntindall@gsu.edu).

These programs of study each connect to other significant interdisciplinary initiatives, including faculty working groups on new and emerging media, transcultural conflict resolution, international communication, health communication, and media industries research.

Both prospective and newly admitted students are strongly encouraged to visit the Department of Communication website at [communication.gsu.edu](http://communication.gsu.edu). There, you can peruse extensive faculty biographies and learn more specific details about various aspects of our doctoral programs and their areas of emphasis. In addition, particular information about each track can be accessed through the main departmental website.

## Applying to the Program

In addition to the general admission requirements of the Georgia State University College of Arts & Sciences, the Department of Communication has the following requirements:

- ✓ *Completion of the communication doctoral program supplemental application form*, which is available online at the College of Arts and Sciences website whose address is listed below.
- ✓ *A statement of educational and career goals*. Faculty reviewers are interested to see the student connect his/her own interests with a broad area of communication scholarship, an indication that the student's needs are not simply pre-professional, and an articulated connection to the specific strengths of the GSU faculty and research facilities. Faculty reviewers presume that a person interested in graduate studies is passionate about the field, and so that point need not be extensively elaborated. The goals statement can also be used to draw reviewers' attention to areas of strength in the application that might otherwise be overlooked, or to explain apparent weaknesses that might impair the odds of acceptance.
- ✓ Three (3) *letters of recommendation* from individuals who can evaluate the applicant's potential to do doctoral work in Communication.
- ✓ A high standard of overall *undergraduate and masters level achievement*.
- ✓ A sufficiently high score on the verbal and analytical portions of the *Graduate Record Examination* and receipt of these scores by Georgia State University *prior* to consideration for acceptance into the graduate degree program. (A minimally qualified applicant typically will, on the old scale, have achieved at least a 500 on the Verbal portion of the Graduate Record Examination and at least combined score of 1000 on the Verbal and Mathematic Quantitative portions. On the new GRE scale, a typical minimum verbal score would be 153, and a quantitative score of at least 144.)
- ✓ A *writing sample* of scholarly research. The submitted sample may be a published article, an academic research paper presented at a conference, a paper written for a class, a significant excerpt from the M.A. thesis, or any other document which reflects the applicant's best work and research interests.

*Note:* The Department of Communication reviews application for fall semester admission only. Deadlines for application for admission may be found on the departmental website: [www.communication.gsu.edu](http://www.communication.gsu.edu). In order to be assured of consideration for assistantships, complete applications must be received by the department no later than December 1. Application materials may be obtained from <http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwgas>.

## Doctoral Program Flowchart

This flow chart suggests a recommended time sequence for doctoral students. Some of these sequenced events require official forms (see end of this handbook). We recommend that you record the date each form was submitted in the blocks to the left of each requirement.

<i>DATE</i>	<i>Requirements</i>
<input type="text"/>	Meet with Area Director each semester of the first year for advisement.
<input type="text"/>	Complete SARI Responsible Conduct of Research requirement (5 hour seminar and online test).
<input type="text"/>	Complete Communication Pedagogy in your first semester of study if on assistantship.
<input type="text"/>	Complete Doctoral Proseminar and Doctoral Writing Proseminar requirements (five total = 4 regular + 1 writing). Two proseminar presentations are required.
<input type="text"/>	Select and meet with Doctoral Advisory committee by end of first year. The committee chair submits a letter to the Administrative Specialist summarizing the meeting and the agreed-on plan of study.
<input type="text"/>	Complete methods requirements.
<input type="text"/>	Complete required courses for track.
<input type="text"/>	Meet with Doctoral Advisory committee annually to discuss your progress through the plan of study and to prepare bibliographies for Comprehensive exams. The committee chair submits a summary of the meetings to the Administrative Specialist.
<input type="text"/>	Pass doctoral Comprehensive Exams after completion of all coursework
<input type="text"/>	Select Dissertation Advisory Committee.
<input type="text"/>	Register for COMM 9999 each semester that the dissertator uses university resources.
<input type="text"/>	Successfully defend dissertation prospectus.
<input type="text"/>	Obtain copy of the Guide for Preparing Dissertations from the web at <a href="http://www.gsu.edu/ed-adm/PhD/dissertation/guide/">http://www.gsu.edu/ed-adm/PhD/dissertation/guide/</a>
<input type="text"/>	Submit Application for Graduation and graduation fee to Student Accounts, Room 101 Sparks Hall, two semesters before graduation (obtain from Graduation Office, Room 231 Sparks Hall).
<input type="text"/>	Prepare DISSERTATION after admission to doctoral candidacy.
<input type="text"/>	Successfully defend dissertation.
<input type="text"/>	Obtain signatures of Dissertation Advisory Committee and Department Chair on ACCEPTANCE PAGE of Dissertation. Submit to Office of Academic Assistance and Graduate Admissions (300 COE).
<input type="text"/>	Submit DISSERTATION as a PDF file to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Rev. 7/10

## Administrative Information

### Departmental Administration

The Department of Communication has two Area Directors. Angelo Restivo advises students in the Moving Image Studies track. Mary Stuckey advises students in the Rhetorical Studies and Media & Society tracks. Graduate students should work with the appropriate Area Director to facilitate administrative issues.

Tawanna Tookes is the full-time administrative support staff member for the graduate program. Her e-mail is [joutkt@langate.gsu.edu](mailto:joutkt@langate.gsu.edu). Her phone number is 404-413-5652.

### Registration

Newly admitted students who have not yet begun doctoral study need not register until the week of departmental orientations (i.e., the week immediately prior to start of classes), when the student will be advised by the graduate directors and area faculty. Spaces are reserved for incoming students in all doctoral seminars.

Students typically register via the Internet at the GSU website ([www.gsu.edu](http://www.gsu.edu)). Registration procedures are found at <http://www.gosolar.gsu.edu/webforstudent.htm>. The Registrar's Office will send each student a registration appointment card for Phase I registration by mail. Those students not registering during Phase I will be sent another appointment card for Phase II.

If a student's address is incorrectly listed with the Registrar, he/she will not receive an appointment card. (Students are encouraged to update their address with the Registrar on a semester basis.) Students who do not receive an appointment may contact the Appointments Section of the Registrar's Office at 404-413-3600 or go to the Appointments Section office in 253 Sparks Hall. Courses are listed in the Schedule of Classes, which is available online at the GSU website.

Registration appointments are assigned on a seniority basis for Phase I. The number of accumulated credit hours determines the student's seniority. Registration appointments are assigned randomly for Phase II. Students needing a particular course should register and pay for it during Phase I registration since it cannot be assumed that spaces will remain in the course through Phase II registration.

### Special Authorization

Some courses, designated by an asterisk (\*) in the *Schedule of Classes*, will require special authorization because there are specific prerequisites for the courses. Students are eligible to obtain authorization two-three (2-3) days before their registration appointment time. Special authorization requests for graduate Communication courses should be made to the instructor of the course in the Department of Communication, 8th floor, Twenty Five Park Place (404-413-5600).

### Time Limits

Students should be aware of and plan their course of study in accord with the time limitations on completion of various aspects of the program. While students may request an extension from the Graduate Petitions Committee of the College of Arts & Sciences, such extensions are *not* automatically granted. Students should therefore be mindful of their timely progress through the program. For consideration of an extension beyond the



published time limit for degree programs, students must petition through the Graduate Office, College of Arts and Sciences. Upon receipt of the petition, both the Area Directors and the Chair are asked to make recommendations for or against the proposed extensions. Factors considered in those recommendations include: successful defense of the dissertation proposal, demonstrated progress toward the completion of the dissertation, level of support from the student's committee advisor, relevance of courses taken beyond the term limit to the student's dissertation, and whether a previous extension has been granted. Students should provide a convincing argument that includes a discussion of these factors. The Area Directors and Chair may require a student to retake core classes (or classes that are particularly crucial to the student's dissertation) if the student took those classes more than 10 years before the semester of petition and/or if the content of those courses has changed significantly. Students should also be aware that the Graduate Council of the Arts and Sciences, the body who ultimately grants or denies petitions, only meets once each semester.

All requirements for the Ph.D. degree must be completed within ten (10) years of the student's first semester in the program.

## **Changing Programs**

Students are accepted for graduate study in the Department of Communication. Courses throughout the Department appropriate to their areas of emphasis (Rhetorical Studies, Media & Society, and Moving Image Studies) may be taken for credit with the approval of their advisory committee. Changing from the Ph.D. program in the Department of Communication to another program in another department or from another program to the Department of Communication requires application through the admissions process for the new program and adherence to published application deadlines.

## **Active/Inactive Status/Continuous Enrollment**

A student who has not registered for three (3) consecutive semesters is considered inactive and must apply for reentry through the Registrar's Reentry Office, located in 227 Sparks Hall. Students must take a minimum of six (6) hours credit in any given year, and not all credit hours can be taken in the summer semester.

Students seeking an Academic Program Leave for one to three semesters must formally apply through the Graduate Office. The ten (10) year deadline for completing all degree requirements will nevertheless remain the same.

Before reentry will be approved, the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts & Sciences will seek approval from their Area Director of Graduate Studies and the department chair.

## **GPA**

Students must earn a grade of "B" or above in all required coursework. Georgia State University uses a plus/minus grading system, and it is important to remember that for "B-or-better" courses a B- does not satisfy this requirement. No course in which a grade of C- or lower was earned will count toward a degree.

## **Yearly Evaluation Meetings**

All students meet with the relevant Area Director and the chair every spring. These meetings are brief and designed to provide students – and the department – with

ongoing feedback relating to progress in program and the pace of professional development.

At these meetings, students are required to provide updated copies of their C.V.s and to participate in a yearly survey of professional activity.

## **Scholastic Termination**

A student whose grade point average falls below the 3.0 required to receive a degree will have 18 semester hours in which to raise the GPA before being subject to termination from the graduate program. Students who twice fail the Ph.D. comprehensive examination will also be terminated from the graduate program.

## **Residency Requirements**

Four semesters of residence are required, two of which must be consecutive. During all four semesters the student must register for at least six hours of coursework. On the recommendation of the department and with the approval of the Area Director, up to one-half of the residence requirement may be waived on the basis of competence obtained through course-work completed elsewhere.

## **Application for Graduation**

Students must apply for graduation two (2) semesters in advance of their expected date of graduation. Applications are available in the Graduation Office (355 Sparks Hall), in the Registrar's Office (227 Sparks Hall), or in the Office of Graduate Studies for the College of Arts & Sciences (800 Haas-Howell Building). If a student is unable to finish by the semester originally specified, it is the student's responsibility to change the date by contacting the Graduation Office. Once a student has applied to graduate, an audit of the student's records will be completed by the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts & Sciences. It is the student's responsibility to discuss any discrepancies with their Area Director of Graduate Studies.

## **Additional Resources**

Several additional resources are available to help students navigate their doctoral education. Students should be in frequent contact with members of their advisory committees about conference attendance and presentation, publication, and so on. In addition, several of the major professional associations have made available mentorship resources that our faculty recommend and which you might look at. These include a volume available for sale at the National Communication Association website ([www.ncastore.com/Monographs.html](http://www.ncastore.com/Monographs.html)), authored by Arenson and Morreale, *Getting the Most from Your Graduate Education: A Student's Handbook*. In addition, a website organized by Dr. Jonathan Sterne, chair of the department of art history and communication at McGill University (<http://sternetworks.org/Academe/>) also makes available a number of quality resources that assist students as they orient their professional lives in the allied fields of communication.

## Departmental Information

### Important Phone Numbers

Dr. David Cheshier (Chair) 404-413-5649

Dr. Natalie Tindall (Area Director: Rhetorical Studies, Media & Society) 404-413-5685

Dr. Jennifer Barker (Area Director: Moving Images Studies) 404-413-5793

Ms. Tawanna Tookes, Administrative Specialist, 404-413-5652

Office of Graduate Studies, College of Arts & Sciences, 404-413-5040

### Important Dates

*Graduate advisory committee:* must be constituted and must meet to determine a plan of study by the end of the student's first year.

*SARI Responsible Conduct of Research:* must be completed within the first year in program.

*Completion of Doctoral Proseminar/Doctoral Writing Seminar:* During students' first six semesters, they should register for four classes of *Doctoral Proseminar* (COMM 8111) and one *Doctoral Writing Seminar* (COMM 8112).

*Completion of Communication Pedagogy Requirement:* Concurrent with or before a GTA assignment or a GLA assignment. Students without such an assignment should take *Communication Pedagogy* before completing their second year.

*Completion of comprehensive examination:* after the last semester of the student's coursework, excluding dissertation research (generally sometime during in the student's 3rd year).

*Research presentations in the doctoral proseminar:* Students are required to make one major research presentation in the proseminar prior to taking comprehensive examinations (often connected to a conference paper) and one after (which we expect would connect to the unfolding dissertation project).

*Registration for COMM 9999:* after the last semester of the student's coursework.

*Filing for Graduation:* two (2) semesters before the student plans to graduate.

### Internet Resources

Several Georgia State University web sites will likely prove helpful to students in, and applicants to, the Ph.D. program in Communication Studies. The Department of Communication web site is at <http://communication.gsu.edu>. The College of Arts & Sciences Office of Graduate Studies web site is at <http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwgas>.

Students are assigned a Georgia State email address automatically, and they must check that email account regularly for important information. Students on assistantship are also issued a departmental address (e.g. [abc@langate.gsu.edu](mailto:abc@langate.gsu.edu)). If you have another primary email account you may forward your GSU email to that account. Details about accessing GSU email and forwarding it are available at <http://www.student.gsu.edu>.

It is vitally important that students have a way to check their email on their GSU student account, because this is how the department and university communicate with students, and important information will be missed if the account isn't regularly checked.

## **COMM-GRADS Listserv**

Comm-grads is an Internet mailing list for news and announcements regarding graduate study in the Department of Communication. Comm-grads is the primary way that the Area Directors and the Chair communicate policy to Communication graduate students, and so all graduate students must subscribe. To subscribe to comm-grads, go to <http://mailbox.gsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/comm-grads>. If you find you need assistance in subscribing to this listserv, Gary Fessenden can assist you (gfessenden@gsu.edu).

## **Graduate Assistantships**

The Department of Communication offers Ph.D. students graduate assistantships that offer teaching and research responsibilities. Graduate assistants are expected to teach or be assigned as an assistant to the equivalent of three 3-hour undergraduate courses per year and assist an appointed faculty member in his or her research endeavors. Assistantships are renewable annually for a four year period, with an optional fifth year at the department's discretion. Students on assistantship receive a full tuition waiver, a stipend (currently \$15,000), and 10% discount at the university bookstore. Graduate teaching assistants also receive access to subsidized health insurance.

Renewal of assistantship depends on a successful annual performance review. A student may lose funding if, after a poor performance review and a period of time on probation, performance fails to meet expectations, and/or if the student is not satisfactorily progressing to degree completion. Years in which funding has been denied because of the outcome of a probation situation count against one's years of total eligibility. That is, students are eligible for funding for four years contingent upon performance; students who lose funding because of performance may or may not receive a total of four years of support.

Departmental doctoral students may also compete for university-granted **Second Century Initiative Fellowships**, which connect to interdisciplinary faculty research clusters, free fellowship awardees from teaching duties, and provide higher annual stipends (currently funded at \$22,000), in addition to waiving tuition. The Department of Communication is closely connected with two 2CI research clusters, one on *New and Emerging Media*, the other on *Transcultural Conflict Resolution*. Students interested in competing for these fellowships can do so by meeting the normal departmental application deadline; additional specific information about application requirements is available on the department's graduate programs webpage.

**Students on doctoral assistantship may not be employed in any capacity with other University System of Georgia schools or with the State of Georgia.**

All graduate assistants who hold a full tuition waiver must be enrolled in mandatory health insurance (see [www.pearceandpearce.com/PearceSite/Schools/GA/gsu](http://www.pearceandpearce.com/PearceSite/Schools/GA/gsu) to sign up prior to the first day of classes in the first year of your assistantship) or have taken the necessary steps to demonstrate that they have other health insurance coverage.

Graduate students may apply for an assistantship by filling out an application available from the Administrative Specialist or online at the department website (communication.gsu.edu).

*Assistantship Eligibility:* To be eligible to receive a graduate assistantship, students must be enrolled for a total of eighteen (18) hours each semester (fall, spring, and summer). As part of those eighteen hours, students must register for at least three courses in both fall and spring that have announced days and times in the course schedule. Students generally register for their remaining hours by signing up for the variable credit Directed Research course under the name of the research professor to whom they have been assigned (COMM 8780). Students receive a pass/fail grade in Directed Research based on their performance as assistants. These hours of Directed Research (COMM 8780) do not count toward the requirements for the doctoral degree. For example, in the fall or spring a typical full-time Ph.D. student with an assistantship would take 3 classes at 3 hours each, one hour of Doctoral Proseminar (COMM 8111), plus 8 hours of COMM 8780. Graduate students on assistantships must receive permission from their Area Director to take fewer than three courses that have announced days and times in the course schedule in their fall and spring semesters.

Assistantships are normally awarded in the late spring, and the assistantship term is annual (i.e., running from July 1 – June 30) after the first year (first year student assistantships do not begin until the start of the first fall semester in which a student has enrolled). Students receiving support are required to enroll in 18 credit hours of COMM 8780 in the summer sessions connecting their years of funding, although these hours do not require a student to be in local residence.

*Assistantship Evaluation and Probation:* At the end of the academic year, each graduate assistant participates in an individual evaluation with the chair and the appropriate area graduate director. In this evaluation students receive feedback on their work as a teaching and research assistant, as well as on their progress within the Ph.D. academic track. The student, chair, and area graduate director discuss ways of improving performance in the future.

At any time, a student's assistantship may be placed on probation or be terminated altogether based on a failure to perform assigned duties. Generally, a graduate assistant should strive to: 1) consistently achieve a student response score of 4.0-5.0 on question 17 of their teaching evaluations if they have assigned teaching duties; 2) consistently receive a grade of satisfactory for their performance in Directed Research if they are assigned research duties; and 3) maintain a grade point average in graduate coursework that falls between 3.5 and 4.0. Students are also expected to show progress in professional development each year (at a *minimum*, submitting papers to conferences in year two, presenting conference papers in year three, and publishing at least one article by year four). Students will be notified at the year-end evaluation if their assistantship is put on probation or terminated, and the chair and graduate director will advise the student how to remedy problems when they lead to probation.

## **Fellowships**

In addition to the University-awarded 2CI Fellowships described above, the department makes available other research-designated scholarships:

The *James W. Woodruff, Jr., Graduate Fellowship in Media Innovation and Responsibility* is awarded annually to a graduate student in Communication who intends to pursue research or creative projects related to media ethics or technology. Selection of the recipient will be made by the Department's Graduate Committee and the Department's Chair. Interested students should contact the Graduate Program's Administrative Specialist for further information.



The *George Greiff Scholarship* is awarded annually to a journalism graduate or undergraduate student in honor of George Greiff, a former journalism professor at GSU.

## **Transfer Credit**

According to college regulations, a Ph.D. student's master's degree is transferred to the Ph.D. program. In addition, a maximum of six (6) hours of graduate credit in an area related to the student's program of study earned beyond the master's degree at another accredited institution may be applied toward the Ph.D. degree (in unique circumstances a student may request additional transfer credit hours with permission of the area graduate director). To do so, the student should submit a request in writing to the Area Director, listing the student's date of admission into the Ph.D. program, the specific courses he/she wishes to count toward the Ph.D. program with copies of appropriate syllabi and/or catalog copy, and a short justification as to why the request should be approved. The Graduate Program's Administrative Specialist will notify the student when a decision has been reached. Application for transfer credit must be made during the student's first two (2) semesters at Georgia State University. Transfer credit is subject to evaluation and approval by the Department's Graduate Committee and the Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences.

## **Support for Academic Presentations**

The Department of Communication encourages Ph.D. students to present at conferences and to publish their research. Faculty and students regularly present their research in the doctoral Proseminar. Students who present a paper at regional/national/international conference are eligible for monetary support (up to an annual limit) for their travel. For travel reimbursement, contact the department's chair for initial approval; once that approval has been received, a student will work with the department's business manager, Juana Leary, at 404-413-5662. University employees seeking to travel on official business are required to submit a "Permission to Travel" form (available in the main office) at least two weeks in advance of departure.

## Degree Requirements

For students enrolled in the Media & Society track:

1. At least 47 hours of graduate coursework in communication and allied fields:
  - A) Required core coursework:  
*Media, Individuals and Society*  
*Communication in a Global Context*
  - B) 5 hours of Doctoral Proseminar, four of which result from enrollment in COMM 8111 and one from enrollment in the Doctoral Writing Proseminar (COMM 8112); a student must make two proseminar research presentations (one pre- and one post-comprehensive examinations).
  - B) 3 hours of Communication Pedagogy (COMM 8035).
  - C) SARI Responsible Conduct of Research requirement, which includes ethics training during orientation and passage of the online CITI ethics test. Documentation must be submitted before one may enroll in dissertation hours.
  - D) 21 additional hours in communication courses in an area of emphasis (Media & Society courses; or courses in allied disciplines as approved by the student's advisory committee and consistent with departmental policy).
  - E) At least 12 additional hours in research tools courses, as recommended and approved by the student's advisory committee, and which must include *Qualitative Methods* and *Quantitative Methods* (both are offered at doctoral level in the department).
2. At least 21 hours of Dissertation Research (COMM 9999). The typical full-time student can complete these hours in two to three semesters.
3. Written comprehensive examination with successful oral defense.
4. A successful prospectus defense.
5. A dissertation with successful oral defense.

For students enrolled in the Moving Image Studies track:

1. At least 47 hours of graduate coursework in communication and allied fields:
  - A) 5 hours of Doctoral Proseminar, four of which result from enrollment in COMM 8111 and one from enrollment in the Doctoral Writing Proseminar (COMM 8112); a student must make two proseminar research presentations (one pre- and one post-comprehensive examinations).
  - B) 3 hours of Communication Pedagogy (COMM 8035).
  - C) SARI Responsible Conduct of Research requirement, which includes ethics training during orientation and passage of the online CITI ethics test. Documentation must be submitted before one may enroll in dissertation hours.
  - D) 30 additional hours in communication courses in an area of emphasis (Moving Image Studies courses; or courses in allied disciplines as approved by the student's advisory committee and consistent with departmental policy).
  - E) At least 9 additional hours in research tools courses, as recommended and approved by the student's advisory committee, but selected from the following:

*Style & Narrative Analysis* (may be taken twice if instructors vary)  
*Media Historiography*  
*Reception Studies*  
*Media Industries*  
*Critical Visual Cultural Studies*

Note that students often take more than nine hours of methods instruction, and additional methods course hours may credit as electives.

2. At least 21 hours of Dissertation Research (COMM 9999). The typical full-time student can complete these hours in two to three semesters.
3. Written comprehensive examination with successful oral defense.
4. A successful prospectus defense.
5. A dissertation with successful oral defense.

For students enrolled in the *Rhetoric & Politics* track:

1. At least 47 hours of graduate coursework in communication and allied fields:
  - A) Required core coursework:
    - Rhetorical Theory 1*
    - Rhetorical Theory 2*
    - One of: *Critical Theory*, *Discourse Analysis*, or *Publics and Politics*
  - B) 5 hours of Doctoral Proseminar, four of which result from enrollment in COMM 8111 and one from enrollment in the Doctoral Writing Proseminar (COMM 8112); a student must make two proseminar research presentations (one pre- and one post-comprehensive examinations).
  - B) 3 hours of Communication Pedagogy (COMM 8035).
  - C) SARI Responsible Conduct of Research requirement, which includes ethics training during orientation and passage of the online CITI ethics test. Documentation must be submitted before one may enroll in dissertation hours.
  - D) 21 additional hours in communication courses in an area of emphasis (Rhetoric & Politics courses; or courses in allied disciplines as approved by the student's advisory committee and consistent with departmental policy).
  - E) At least 9 additional hours in research tools courses, as recommended and approved by the student's advisory committee, and which must include *Rhetorical Criticism 1* and *Rhetorical Criticism 2* (both are offered at doctoral level in the department).
2. At least 21 hours of Dissertation Research (COMM 9999). The typical full-time student can complete these hours in two to three semesters.
3. Written comprehensive examination with successful oral defense.
4. A successful prospectus defense.
5. A dissertation with successful oral defense.

### **Other Important Coursework Requirements**

No more than 16 hours of course work outside the Department of Communication may be counted toward fulfilling a student's minimum course work requirements without approval from the Area Graduate Director, but students are encouraged to take more than the minimum number of courses.

No more than six credits (two courses maximum) of independent study may be counted toward fulfilling a student's coursework requirements.

Only courses numbered 6000 and above may be counted toward fulfilling a student's coursework requirements. Ph.D. students are expected to take almost all of their courses at the 8000-level.

Some students may be required by the department to complete preparatory courses (which may include courses numbered below 6000) as a condition of admittance into the Ph.D. program. These courses cannot be counted toward fulfilling a student's 68-hour coursework requirement.

A student must earn a grade of "B" or better in all required coursework. In the Georgia State University plus-minus grading system, a grade of "B-" does not satisfy this requirement.

## Description of Program

### SARI Responsible Conduct of Research Requirement

All undergraduates, graduate students, and post-doctoral appointees involved in empirical research (a designation which applies to all communication graduate students) at Georgia State University are required to undertake Responsible Conduct of Research education and training as part of their requirements for graduation or employment. As part of this educational requirement, web-based training through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) is available for students. Before you log onto the CITI training program, please read carefully the "GSU Instructions for RCR Learners," linked at <http://ursa.research.gsu.edu/ursa/responsible-conduct-in-research>. To log onto the modules provided by CITI, go to <http://www.citiprogram.org/>

In addition to this training, the department of communication provides an annual in-person training session that all students must complete within their first year in program. This training is typically connected with start-of-year orientation events.

### Doctoral Professional Seminar/Doctoral Writing Seminar

Doctoral students must complete four semesters of the *Doctoral Professional Seminar* (COMM 8111) and one semester of the *Doctoral Writing Seminar* (COMM 8112), a total of five proseminar seminars. The Doctoral Professional Seminar is one-credit-hour course that meets Tuesdays from 3:35 – 4:25, and is designed to acquaint the student with expectations of the doctoral program and of the communication discipline as a whole. It serves two basic purposes. First, the Proseminar is intended to provide a regular opportunity for the full doctoral community to convene so important news and community-building can occur. Second, and most importantly, the Proseminar is intended to provide a venue for the presentation of the highest level scholarship spanning the range of communication-related fields – both by providing an audience for student presentations and to facilitate interaction with visiting and departmental scholars. The Proseminar should serve as a model for academic and intellectual engagement and should expose participants (faculty and students) to the best work being done in the discipline.

Students are thus required to take five total semesters of Proseminar, where four of these are fulfilled by enrolling in the regular (COMM 8111) Proseminar and where the fifth is fulfilled by enrollment in a writing (COMM 8112) Proseminar (also a one-credit-hour class, where students workshop publications projects or dissertation chapters in process). Students are required to present their own research in the COMM 8111 Proseminar on at least two occasions. These presentations should be derived from planned conference papers, job talks, and/or material from the dissertation. The instructor of record for the Proseminar certifies research presentations (the student should take responsibility for assuring that the form at the end of this handbook is submitted to Ms. Tawanna Tookes each time a presentation is made so they will be sure to credit when final degree requirement checks are done at end of program).

Students may enroll in one additional writing proseminar, but that extra proseminar will not credit toward the required proseminar hours. Presentations in the writing proseminar, when they occur, do not count toward the "two presentations" requirement.

Students are strongly encouraged to take the Doctoral Writing Seminar as a way to satisfy one hour of this five hour requirement. The Doctoral Writing Seminar gives the student an opportunity to polish an already existing paper for submission for



publication, under the guidance of a member of the doctoral faculty. Preference for the Doctoral Writing Seminar is given to students in their third year of coursework who have not taken the course before. The student may repeat the Doctoral Writing Seminar, but only one hour of this course will count toward the five hour requirement.

## **Communication Pedagogy**

Once during the doctoral program, students should also enroll in *Communication Pedagogy* (COMM 8035). This course introduces the student to the teaching expectations of the academy, familiarizes the student with the legal and ethical requirements of teaching, and begins a teaching portfolio for each student.

All students who wish to hold Graduate Teaching Assistantships **must** complete the *Communication Pedagogy* course before they begin their teaching assignments or in the same semester in which they begin their teaching assignments. In other words, this course is a pre- or co-requisite for students who will serve as instructors of record in courses in the Department of Communication.

## **Area of Emphasis**

Each doctoral student will build an area of emphasis in moving image studies, rhetoric and politics, or media and society. Working closely with their doctoral advisory committee, students will choose courses from the Department of Communication or allied disciplines, and will plan a program of conference attendance and presentations as well as independent reading, etc., to build a coherent program of study. Generally, students working in the public communication track will draw coursework from mass communication and human communication to understand how mediated public discourse functions within various cultural settings. Generally, students working in the moving image track will draw coursework from film, television, performance, and new media studies to understand how moving images circulate and produce meanings in our increasingly image-oriented environment.

Students in the all sequences must complete core courses specific to those sequences.

Moving Image Studies students are required to take at least three 8000-level Moving Image Studies courses. The two MIS courses COMM 8160 (Style & Narrative Analysis) and COMM 8420 (Media Historiography) constitute the core of the MIS program and are required of all MIS doctoral students. The third methods course can be selected from COMM 8160 (repeated as content varies), COMM 8680 (Media Reception), COMM 8980 (Media Industries), and COMM 8980 (when designated as Critical Visual Cultural Studies).

Doctoral students are also eligible to enroll in internships for up to three (3) hours of course credit. An internship provides students with both observational and hands-on learning experiences that enhance their academic preparation and increase their ability to perform on a professional level after graduation. Students must have completed 12 hours of coursework in the department, have at least a 3.0 GPA, and have a full-time faculty member from their area of concentration sponsor them. Students should apply for an internship one (1) semester prior to the semester of actual enrollment. Applications are located in the Department of Communication, 6th floor, One Park Place South.

## **Research Tools (a minimum of 9-12 hours)**

Students will complete a minimum of nine to twelve approved credit hours of courses that build their research skills. Courses both inside and outside the department may count toward the research requirement (although students should remember that they can apply a total of no more than 16 credits completed outside the department toward their 68-hour coursework requirements). Classes chosen to fulfill this requirement must be approved by the student's advisory committee and the Area Director.

Students in the Rhetorical Studies track must complete a required course sequence that includes seminars in rhetorical theory and a set of menu options that include classes in discourse analysis, critical theory, or criticism.

Students in the Media & Society track must complete a two course sequence that includes a seminar in *Qualitative Research Methods* and *Quantitative Research Methods*.

Students in the Moving Image Studies track must take at least three Moving Image Studies research methods courses. The MIS research courses are: COMM 8160, *Style and Narrative Analysis* (which may be repeated if content varies), COMM 8420, *Media Historiography*, COMM 8680, *Media Reception Research and Methods*, COMM 8980, *Media Industries*, and COMM 8980, *Critical Visual Cultural Studies*.

In addition to the required research methods courses listed above, students are usually required to take additional methods courses necessary for their research. Students should work closely with their doctoral advisory committee to develop a plan for completing research courses that provide the skills and expertise necessary to conduct advanced research in communication studies. This plan should be submitted to the Area Director, who will review and approve the planned menu of courses designed to satisfy this coursework requirement.

Again, additional methods courses must be agreed to by the advisor. Courses may be selected from across the university. Courses will typically cover research methods per se. Courses in computer programming, foreign languages, and other areas relevant to the student's program of study may also be appropriate. Appropriate courses will vary from student to student, since appropriate programs of study may vary from student to student. Only courses deemed capable of building research competencies directly relevant to the students' program of study will be approved by the advisory committee.

## **Dissertation Research (21 hours)**

Each student will complete a minimum of 21 hours of dissertation research (COMM 9999). Under the direction of the dissertation advisor and the dissertation committee, students will complete the exit project for the program. Students must register for at least one (1) credit hour of dissertation research each semester the student requires access to university facilities, equipment, resources, or faculty. Students on assistantship usually sign up for nine (9) hours of dissertation credit per semester.

## Advising

All graduate students in the Department of Communication should seek advisement in their first semester of attendance at Georgia State University from their Area Director. Area Directors in the Department have scheduled office hours each semester. In order to obtain these hours, the student should contact their Area Director (see page 8).

### Ph.D. Advisory Committees

In consultation with the appropriate Area Director, and with the consent of all faculty concerned, all Ph.D. students will choose a three-member advisory committee no later than the end of their first year, or after they have taken 18 hours, whichever comes first. Committee members must be doctoral faculty, at least two of which must come from the Department of Communication (see list at the end of this document).

Students should be aware, when considering committee composition and likely timetables for their program, that faculty are not obligated to be available and may not be available during sabbaticals, certain leaves, or summers in which they receive no support from the department. If a student wishes or needs to schedule a defense or other critical meeting at a time when one or more committee members is unavailable, regular committee members can often be replaced on an *ad hoc* basis in consultation with the committee chair. Committee chairs are difficult if not impossible to replace as they provide continuity for the student's plan of study or dissertation project, ensuring both that the student conforms to the committee's expectations set in plan-of-study meetings, the prospectus defense, and any other meetings the committee may have had with the student and that the student is not held to account to standards and expectations introduced at the last minute. Recognizing the limits of long-range planning and the likelihood that unexpected exigencies will arise, students should, as they create their committees, discuss possible timelines and contingencies with prospective committee members in order to have a basic idea of what kinds of flexibility might be available for each prospective member.

The student will choose the chair of the committee in consultation with the faculty concerned and the Area Director where appropriate. The chair of the committee must be from the Department of Communication.

After the comprehensive examination has been successfully completed, the advisory committee dissolves. The student then, in consultation with the adviser, appoints a five-member dissertation committee, which may or may not include all the members of the original advisory committee.

The composition of the committee can be changed with the agreement of the adviser.

No later than the end of the first year, the student will arrange for a meeting of the committee. In that meeting, the committee gives feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the student's performance in the program. The student (in consultation with the committee) will decide upon three areas of research/ teaching concentration and a plan designed to achieve expertise in each area. This plan may include a combination of course work, conference activity, independent reading, and so on. The committee may require additional courses beyond the minimum requirements to prepare the student for their research. The committee chair drafts a letter detailing what occurred in the meeting and what plan of study was agreed upon, and this letter remains in the student's file with the Administrative Specialist. This letter serves as the basis for an evaluation meeting with the Chair.

Any changes in the plan must be approved by the chair of the committee.

Thereafter, the committee should meet with the student at least once a year to assess the student's course work and progress in the program.

Toward the end of the student's coursework, the committee makes certain that the student has taken the appropriate courses to satisfy requirements and to prepare her or him for the comprehensive exams. The committee also works with the student on bibliographies for comprehensive exam questions.

## Comprehensive Examination

Each student must pass a departmentally administered comprehensive examination which tests the student's knowledge of theory and research. The examination includes two parts: a written examination which involves two full days of writing, and an oral examination which should occur between two and three weeks following completion of the written exam and will typically involve approximately two hours of questioning. Both parts must be passed by the student, and a failing performance on one part of the examination cannot be redeemed with a strong performance on the other.

The comprehensive examination process serves many important purposes, including the following: (a) It provides the student an opportunity to demonstrate her or his general competence in one or more allied communication disciplines or areas of specialization; (b) It affords the graduate faculty an opportunity to certify a student's written and oral advocacy skills in communicating complex ideas and literatures; (c) It provides the student an opportunity to integrate his or her educational experiences in the doctoral program, and offers evidence that s/he is able to evaluate and communicate research in a way that does justice to the larger traditions of the chosen field; and (d) It assures that a student is prepared to undertake the major research demanded by the dissertation requirement.

In the semester in which a student takes the comprehensive exam, she or he will usually be permitted to enroll in a combination of dissertation and directed research hours (so that assistantship registration requirements can be met), even though such hours may be undertaken prior to actual work on the dissertation. Permission to do this should be obtained from the adviser and graduate director overseeing the relevant degree track.

Students are only eligible to take the comprehensive examination after completing all required coursework, with the exception of the dissertation research hours. The comprehensive examination will typically be passed at least one academic year prior to the conferral of the doctoral degree. *A student will only be provided two opportunities to pass the written examination, and two other opportunities to pass the oral examination.*

### Composition of the Examining Committee

The committee shall be nominated by the student and consist of three doctoral faculty members (see list at the end of this handbook), at least two of whom must come from the Department of Communication. The student will nominate one member of the committee to serve as chair of the examination committee. Student nominations must be approved by the Chair of the Department of Communication. The committee chair must be a doctoral faculty member in the Department of Communication, and must be a faculty member in the student's chosen track (Public Communication or Moving Image Studies).

### Nature of the Examination

The comprehensive examination is one examination in two parts sub-divided by content areas and is evaluated accordingly. The written portion of the comprehensive examination always precedes the oral exam, and a student is only permitted to proceed to the oral examination upon the examining committee's assessment that the written portion of the exam is defensible. In other words, a student may have, in some cases, provided controversial or relatively weak answers to some questions, but overall, the committee's judgment is that the written answers could be defended in oral argument. In order to proceed to the oral exam, all four content areas must be judged to be defensible.



Comprehensive examinations (both written and oral) will be scheduled only during specific periods during the fall and spring semesters. The graduate directors will announce the testing periods for a given year, which usually are in early September, late October-early November, and early April. The student is responsible for scheduling his/her examination, working with the administrative specialist and advisory committee.

Each student will answer questions in four examination areas. One area must deal with the foundations for the student's track (for Rhetoric & Politics these foundations are the required theory seminars; for Media & Society the content covered in *Media, Individuals & Society* and *Communication in a Global Context*; for Moving Image Studies, these foundations are standard bibliographies prepared by the track faculty in Film, Television, or New Media). One area must concern the student's research approach/method. One area must concern a subject of specialization that is strongly relevant to the student's intended dissertation topic. One subject must deal with another subject of specialization as presumably emerging from some or all of the student's other elective coursework.

Students must submit to the examination committee suggested areas for questions in each of the four examination areas, along with a bibliography for each area. Students must submit to their committee suggested areas for questions and relevant bibliographies so as to provide significant lead time both for exam preparation and study (areas and bibliographies are often organized with the examination committee months before the exam, but must be finalized no later than thirty [30] days before the comprehensive examination is to begin). Examination areas and bibliographies must thus be specifically approved by the examination committee, who will create the questions to be asked. In some cases the committee may provide the student with a departmentally standardized bibliography for an area (for instance, when an area tests a student over a particular research methodology or an area foundation), and examining committees regularly use their discretion to add reading material to an area bibliography even if such material was not part of completed prior coursework.

Each student will have 16 hours over a two-day period (eight hours per day) to complete the written portion of the comprehensive examination. Students will be allotted four hours to answer each of their four examination areas. The examination will be administered in the department; the department will provide a private office and computer so that the written examination may be completed uninterrupted. Students must schedule their examination in consultation with their committee chair and the departmental Administrative Specialist. In the oral examination, the student will be questioned area-by-area by the entire committee. Because questions will often connect to the written examination, the student will be provided with a hard copy of their written answers in advance of the oral examination. Questions will also range more widely than the written responses, and students will be expected to articulate responses showing a detailed understanding of their designated areas of expertise.

## **Evaluation of the Written Examination**

Often, every committee member will grade each part of the exam, but if a committee wishes, it may assign primary responsibility for evaluating written responses to specific committee members or allow a level of deference to the committee member who wrote a particular question.

The committee will read and grade the examination before the oral examination is held. For each question a committee member evaluates, the faculty member decides whether or not the answer is defensible, that is, if there is a strong likelihood that the student, in oral argument, could elaborate, amend, and make a persuasive case for the answer. If

two of the three evaluating faculty judge an area response as defensible, that content area is considered ready for oral examination.

*If the student's examining committee judges the written portion "defensible" in all four content areas, she or he proceeds to schedule an oral examination. An oral examination cannot occur unless all four parts of the written examination have been evaluated as "defensible." The oral examination must be scheduled in consultation with the committee chair and the departmental Administrative Specialist; it should typically occur between two and three weeks after completion of the written examination.*

*If the student's examining committee judges the written portion "defensible" in three areas of the written examination, but not in the fourth, the committee may offer the student an opportunity to improve the one failing area response, so that the entire examination may be judged defensible. When a single part of the written examination has been failed, the committee may require a student to either (a) submit other specified written work that certifies intellectual competence in the area, or (b) retest on that one area, or (c) take additional coursework to bring the student up to a level of demonstrable competency. For all these options, the specification of a completion timetable rests with the faculty committee, although new work should typically occur within six months of the written examination. If the student fails to complete the newly assigned work competently in the specified timeframe, the overall examination will be considered failed.*

*If the student's examining committee fails to find the written portion of the examination "defensible" in two or more areas, the entire written examination is failed, and must be retaken in its entirety after a minimum interval of six months has passed. If a student is judged to have failed a written examination, she or he will be provided only one additional opportunity to raise his or her performance on the written portion of the examination. If the student fails a second time, he or she will be dismissed from the program. When a committee judges a written examination as failing, a meeting with the student will occur where feedback can be provided.*

The committee chair collects evaluations of the committee members, collates them and communicates the results to both the student and the committee members before the oral examination.

## **Evaluation of the Oral Examination**

In the meeting for the oral portion of the examination, when the questioning process is completed to the satisfaction of all committee members, the student will be asked to leave the room while the committee privately consults. The committee will decide if the student's combined performance on the written and oral portions of the exam constitute a *high pass*, a *pass*, or a *failure*. At this point, the student is not evaluated on an area-by-area basis; rather, the committee will make an overall assessment of the student's demonstrated competence in the oral defense (including emendation) of his/her written arguments. To pass the examination, the student must receive a two-thirds vote of the examination committee (where at least two faculty members vote *pass* or better). After the committee has deliberated and reached its conclusion, the student will be called back into the examination room and immediately notified of their examination results.

In cases where the written exam was judged to be weak but the student was permitted to advance to the oral examination, and where the oral defense was deemed insufficient, the committee may require the student to retake the entire examination (both written and oral).

*If a student is judged to have passed the examination (having received a grade of at least 'pass')*

*from a majority of committee members), the comprehensive examination has concluded successfully, and the candidate proceeds directly to doctoral candidacy and begins the work of forming a dissertation committee. The chair of the examining committee should notify the area graduate director and the department's Administrative Specialist of the examination's outcome.*

*If a student is judged to have **failed the examination**, he or she will be provided one more opportunity for oral examination. The second oral examination will normally occur within six months of the first, at the discretion of the examination committee. A committee may require a student to participate in specified activities likely to improve the student's grasp of the subject matter and/ or oral advocacy skills in the interim. These might include the assignment of extra course work or other forms of study, public presentation opportunities (such as presentation at academic conferences or departmental seminars), making available mock examination opportunities, or a requirement that a student receive some training to better handle communication apprehension. If the student fails the examination twice, she or he will be dismissed from the program; if the student passes the second examination, he or she has passed the overall comprehensive examination and proceeds to doctoral candidacy. The chair of the examining committee should then notify the area graduate director and Administrative Specialist of the examination's outcome.*

## Dissertation

Dissertations must be the product of the graduate student to whom the degree is awarded. Approval by the student's committee of his/her dissertation is not only an approval of the manuscript and of the research described in it but also a certification that the student is qualified to conduct research on his/her own. Basic to that certification is the knowledge that the student is primarily responsible for designing the project or study, synthesizing the material examined, analyzing the data, and discussing the results, with guidance from his/her advisor, committee members, and others, and through the process, is able to conduct publishable research projects independently.

Georgia State University requires that each student assume full responsibility for the correctness in content and form of the dissertation. Explicit guidelines for the dissertation ("Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines") are available from the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences; these guidelines specify standards with respect to composition, format, and certain policies and requirements. After successfully defending the dissertation, the student must submit the correctly formatted dissertation as a PDF file to the Office of Graduate Studies.

### Guidelines for Dissertation Research

Enrolling in *Dissertation Research* (COMM 9999) hours is an important exit requirement for students seeking the Ph.D. in Communication. Students must register for a minimum of twenty (21) credit hours of thesis research and will continue to receive a grade of "IP" (in progress) in COMM 9999 until the dissertation is completed.

Students must register for at least one (1) credit hour of dissertation research in each semester in which the student requires access to university facilities, equipment, resources, or faculty.

### Prior to Enrollment in COMM 9999

The student must identify a faculty member who is willing and able to serve as the dissertation advisor. The advisor must be a member of the department doctoral faculty (see list of doctoral faculty at the end of this document). The advisor must also be knowledgeable about the student's area of research. The student will nominate an advisor, who must be appointed by the Chair of the Department of Communication by use of the form at the back of this handbook. Once the student's nomination has been approved, the approval form will be provided to the Administrative Specialist, who will authorize the student's enrollment in COMM 9999. The student must then enroll in COMM 9999.

### Selecting a Dissertation Committee

After selection of the committee chair, the student should nominate three other faculty members to serve on the dissertation committee (more are allowable but not recommended). Thus, the typical dissertation committee is comprised of four faculty: the chair, two other Department of Communication doctoral faculty, and one outside member. In total, three of the four committee members must be appointed to the Department of Communication's doctoral faculty, and one of the four members must be a doctoral faculty from an allied department. In the event that more than four (total) faculty are on the committee, the additional member(s) may hold the rank of graduate and/or doctoral faculty in the Department of Communication. All dissertation committee

members must possess special expertise in the area of the student's proposed dissertation topic or research method.

## Developing the Prospectus

The first step of dissertation research is to develop a complete prospectus that the student will orally defend before his/her dissertation committee. The prospectus is developed in consultation with the dissertation advisor and committee members.

For students doing *quantitative* research for their dissertation, the prospectus should include the following:

1. *Abstract.* A brief summary (usually limited to half a page) of the significance of the project, its research question/hypotheses, and the method planned to conduct the research.
2. *Significance of the Project.* Justification of why the project will extend the current body of knowledge in an important way.
3. *Literature and Resource Review.* A summary of the findings of relevant research in the proposed area of study.
4. *Research Question/Hypotheses.* The general or specific questions that will be answered by the research project.
5. *Method.* The specific procedures planned for conducting the research. Any use of students or others as research subjects must be described in detail and must be accompanied by advance permissions from the GSU Research Office.

For students doing *qualitative* research for their dissertation, the prospectus should include the following:

1. *Research Question/Hypotheses.* The general or specific questions that will be answered by the research project.
2. *Argument.* An outline of the proposed answer(s) for the research question(s).
3. *Object of Study.* A clear delineation of which primary text(s) will be examined in the research and (where appropriate) a discussion of the method for obtaining and analyzing the text(s), including a justification of why these text(s) have been chosen. Any use of students or others as research subjects must be described in detail and must be accompanied by advance permissions from the GSU Research Office.
4. *Theoretical/Research Context.* A discussion of previous relevant literature, situating the proposed dissertation within a current academic debate and/or detailing an absence in the literature. The prospectus must clearly articulate the theoretical framework and assumptions for the proposed research.
5. *Significance of the Project.* Justification of why the project will extend the current body of knowledge in an important way.
6. *Chapter Outline.* A brief summary of the activities/arguments for each proposed chapter (one or two paragraphs per chapter).

## **Defending the Prospectus**

At least two (2) weeks after the student presents the committee with the prospectus acceptable to the dissertation advisor, he/she must set up an oral defense meeting time that is agreeable to all parties involved. At this meeting, the student will answer questions from the faculty about the prospectus and receive recommendations for any revisions required by committee members. Possible outcomes for the prospectus defense include: passing the prospectus; passing the prospectus with specified conditions; not passing. If the prospectus does not pass the defense, the student must rewrite and re-define the prospectus. The faculty advisement committee is to convey the outcome of the prospectus defense to Ms. Tawanna Tookes, including information about required revisions or added work.

## **Admission to Candidacy**

In order for a student to be admitted to candidacy, the student must have passed the comprehensive examination, and must have successfully defended a dissertation prospectus.

## **Format for Dissertation**

Dissertations must conform to a standard bibliographic format, such as Chicago, MLA, APA, and so forth. The student's committee must approve the specific style manual as appropriate for the project. Deviations from this requirement must be approved in writing by the Area Director. The dissertation must conform to the format guidelines for dissertations available through the graduate office.

## **Defending the Dissertation**

A student **must** provide his/her dissertation committee members with the completed dissertation at least two (2) weeks before the oral presentation and defense date. The presentation must be at a mutually agreeable time and should be scheduled no later than the midterm point of the semester the student expects to graduate. The date, time, and location should be publicized and the meeting should be open to other interested students, faculty, and staff. At the meeting, the student will present and defend the research project. At the conclusion of the defense, the committee will deliberate in closed session. If more than one member of the committee does not recommend that the dissertation be accepted, then the dissertation will not be accepted as a fulfillment of the degree requirements.

A student who fails a dissertation defense will be allowed to attempt a second dissertation defense, with a significantly revised dissertation. The student who has failed an initial dissertation defense will be provided with detailed comments for revision by the committee chair, as gathered from the members of the dissertation committee. The student may, if the chair is amenable, decide also to confer directly with members of the committee for specific comments and feedback on the shortcomings of the work presented. When the committee chair believes the dissertation revision is sufficient to warrant a second defense, such a defense will be scheduled according to the protocols above. If more than one committee member judges the dissertation as failing in the second defense, then the student cannot continue and will be terminated from the program.

When the signed copy of the student's dissertation title page is presented to the Department's Chair and a correctly formatted final copy of the approved dissertation is

submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies as a PDF file, the department chair will submit a Change of Grade form, which will allow the student to graduate. Explicit guidelines for the dissertation (“Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines”) are available from the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Final Research Dissertation Document form (toward the end of this handbook), once signed by the committee, **must** go to Tawanna Tookes.

### **Filing for Graduation**

Two (2) semesters before a student plans to have successfully completed the dissertation, he/she should file for graduation with the Graduation Office; 404-413-5040. See Administrative Information: Application for Graduation (p.4).

## Performance Expectations

### Grades and Grade Point Average

In general, the College of Arts & Sciences and the Department of Communication expect students to maintain superior performance in coursework. The College requires that a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale be maintained and stipulates that a graduate student is subject to scholastic termination for failure to achieve a 3.0 cumulative grade point average by the end of the next eighteen (18) semester hours of enrollment in letter-graded courses after the student's GPA has fallen below a 3.0. No course in which a C- or below was earned will count toward the degree.

These are minimum expectations, however, and the faculty expect doctoral students to exceed this minimum.

### Policy on Academic Honesty

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The University assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for practices that are fair require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable conduct in the course of their academic work.

The examples and definitions below are intended to clarify the standards by which honesty and academically dishonest conduct are judged. The list is merely illustrative of the kinds of infractions that may occur, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, the definitions suggest conditions under which unacceptable behavior of the indicated types normally occurs; however, there may be unusual cases that fall outside these conditions that will also be judged unacceptable by the academic community. If a student has any doubts about what constitutes proper ethical conduct, he or she should err on the side of caution, citing original sources even in apparently ambiguous situations, and seeking clarification from the course instructor. These standards govern all work submitted in the course of degree program work; for instance, students should avoid plagiarizing material even when they are using it for ungraded classroom presentations or handouts.

### Definitions and Examples

*Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Furthermore, plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects prepared by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the instructor. It is, for instance, plagiarism when an *article abstract* is copied without attribution into an annotated bibliography, or when *images* are copied into presentations without providing appropriate credit. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. The use of text copied from the World Wide Web, without specific attribution, is unethical and constitutes plagiarism. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or



course. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly, or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

*Cheating on Examinations:* Cheating on exams involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, texts, or “crib sheets” during an examination (unless specifically approved by the instructor). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one’s own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the instructor.

*Unauthorized Collaboration:* Submission for academic credit of any work product, or part thereof, represented as being one’s own effort, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with or without assistance from another person or source is a violation of academic honesty. Collaborative work specifically authorized by an instructor is allowed.

*Falsification:* It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise or assignment (for example, false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of the results of experiment or of computer data).

*Multiple Submissions:* It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the instructor(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however, the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

## **Obligation to Report Suspected Violations**

Members of the academic community - students, faculty, and staff - are expected to report violations of these standards of academic conduct to the appropriate authorities. The procedures for such reporting are on file in the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts Sciences and in the Office of the Dean of Students.

## Doctoral Faculty

**Arsenault, Amelia** (Ph.D., University of Southern California, 2009). *Assistant Professor*. Areas of research include media globalization, international communication, communication networks. (Media & Society)

**Atkinson, Jaye L.** (Ph.D., University of Kansas, 1996). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include interpersonal communication, patronizing speech, aging stereotypes and communication, and sport communication. (Media & Society)

**Atkinson, Nathan** (Ph.D., Carnegie Mellon University, 2009). *Assistant Professor*. Areas of research include rhetorical theory and criticism, rhetoric and visual culture. (Rhetoric & Politics)

**Barker, Jennifer** (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 2004). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include cinema studies, film and philosophy (e.g. spectatorship and phenomenology), feminist media studies, cinema history, and international film. (MIS)

**Boozer, Jack S., Jr.** (Ph.D., Emory University, 1972). *Professor*. Areas of research include film criticism and history, film and literature, and screenwriting. (MIS)

**Bruner, Michael Lane** (Ph.D., University of Washington, 1997). *Professor*. Areas of research include rhetorical and critical theory, memory and identity studies, nationalism, globalization, and statecraft. (Rhetoric & Politics)

**Cheshier, David M.** (Ph.D., University of Iowa, 1996). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include rhetorical theory and criticism, argumentation and public deliberation, contemporary social theory, and American public address. (Rhetoric & Politics)

**Darsey, James** (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, 1985). *Professor*. Areas of research include rhetorical theory and criticism, social movements, American public address. (Rhetoric & Politics)

**Davis, Patricia** (Ph.D., University of California – San Diego, 2009). *Assistant Professor*. Areas of research include cultural studies, mass communication, memory and heritage studies, critical gender studies. (Rhetoric & Politics)

**Freeman, Carrie** (Ph.D., Oregon, 2008). *Assistant Professor*. Areas of research include mass communication studies, media ethics, journalism studies, and media coverage of social movements. (Media & Society)

**Friedman, Ted** (Ph.D., Duke University, 1999). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include cultural studies, new media, and the politics of contemporary film. (MIS)

**Fujioka, Yuki** (Ph.D., Washington State University, 2000). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include social psychological processes involved in message effects, media use and ethnic stereotypes, and health information campaigns. (Media & Society)

**Hoffner, Cynthia** (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, 1988). *Professor*. Areas of research include media effects, television and children, emotional responses to media. (Media & Society)

**Holmes, Shirlene** (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University, 1991). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include playwriting, African–American studies, acting, storytelling. (MIS)

**Lemieux, Anthony** (Ph.D. University of Connecticut, 2006). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include the social psychology of extremism, research methods, and health communication. (Media & Society)

**Li, Hongmei** (Ph.D. University of Southern California, 2006). *Assistant Professor*. Areas of research include international communication, globalization, media studies, and advertising. (Media & Society)

**Lisby, Gregory C.** (Ph.D., University of Tennessee, 1988). *Professor*. Areas of research include communication law, legal history, censorship, ethics, and communication technologies. (Media & Society)

**Meyers, Marian J.** (Ph.D., University of Iowa, 1989). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include women and media, social production of news, media criticism, and cultural studies. (Media & Society)

**Powers, Shawn** (Ph.D., University of Southern California, 2009). *Assistant Professor*. Areas of research include international communication, public diplomacy, Middle Eastern media, social media. (Media & Society)

**Raengo, Alessandra** (Ph.D., New York University, 2006). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include cinema studies, visual culture, critical theory, and cultural studies. (MIS)

**Restivo, Angelo** (Ph.D., University of Southern California, 1997). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include international film and media, critical theory, and global art cinema. (MIS)

**Romski, Mary Ann** (Ph.D., University of Kansas, 1981). *Regents Professor*. Areas of research include child language and communication impairments, augmentative communication, mental retardation, and child language acquisition. (Media & Society)

**Shahaf, Sharon** (Ph.D., University of Texas, 2008). *Assistant Professor*. Areas of research include television studies, global media, cultural studies, Israeli media, and media history. (MIS)

**Smith, Greg** (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, 1998). *Professor*. Areas of research include style and narrative, media and emotion, and new media theory. (MIS)

**Stuckey, Mary** (Ph.D., University of Notre Dame, 1987). *Professor*. Areas of research include political communication, presidential rhetoric, American public address. (Rhetoric & Politics)

**Tabako, Tomasz** (Ph.D., Northwestern University, 2004). *Assistant Professor*. Areas of research include rhetorical studies, social movement theory, and philosophy of communication. (Rhetoric & Politics)

**Teel, Leonard R.** (Ph.D., Georgia State University, 1984). *Professor*. Areas of research include the history of American journalism, international communication, and the African–American press. (Media & Society)

**Tindall, Natalie** (Ph.D., University of Maryland, 2006). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include public relations, mass communication, and gender and racial difference as inflected in the media industries. (Media & Society)

**Tussey, Ethan** (Ph.D., University of California – Santa Barbara). *Assistant Professor*. Areas of research include media industries, media ethnography, television studies, new media. (MIS)

**Wilkin, Holley** (Ph.D., University of Southern California, 2005). *Associate Professor*. Areas of research include health communication, communication research methods, communication campaigns, and media effects. (Public)

**Williams, Ann** (Ph.D., University of Michigan, 2008). *Assistant Professor*. Areas of research include political communication, public opinion and electoral behavior, media institutions and effects, and mass communication research methods. (Media & Society)

**Winkler, Carol K.** (Ph.D., University of Maryland, 1987). *Professor*. Areas of research include presidential rhetoric, political debates, terrorism rhetoric, and visual communication. (Rhetoric & Politics)

## Sample Prospectus Title Page

### Persistence of Vision: The Censorship of Motion Pictures in Georgia

Sara Anne Mendelsohn

A Dissertation Prospectus  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment for the  
Degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in Communication  
Georgia State University

#### Committee

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Chair

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Member

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Member

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Member

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Member

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Date

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Chair, Department of Communication

## Dissertation Adviser Agreement Form

I agree to serve as dissertation adviser for:

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*Student's Name | Students Social Security Number*

My signature below authorizes the Administrative Specialist to approve the above named student to enroll in COMM 9999 and to begin work on his/her dissertation research. I have certified that the above named student has completed the SARI (Responsible Conduct of Research) requirement and documentation for the (a) 5-hour seminar, and (b) completion of the online course are on file with Tawanna Tookes.

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*Faculty Member Name*

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*Faculty Member Signature*

**Approved:**

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*Area Director, GSU Department of Communication*

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*Chair, GSU Department of Communication*

## Proseminar Presentation Completion Form

This certifies that the student satisfactorily completed a presentation in the doctoral proseminar.

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*Student's Name*

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*Degree Track*

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*TITLE OF PRESENTATION*

---

*Date*

**Approved:**

---

*Adviser, Proseminar Instructor of Record, or Area Director  
GSU Department of Communication*

WHEN COMPLETED TURN THIS FORM IN TO MS. TAWANNA TOOKES,  
MAIN DEPARTMENTAL OFFICE, 8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR 25PP

**Certification of the Outcome of the Written Portion of the Comprehensive Examination**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*has taken the written portion of the comprehensive exam and it has been deemed defensible by the committee.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Chair Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Member Signature

**If the project is not defensible, please note additional requirements for student to complete to remedy failure as set forth by committee and as outlined in the Ph.D. handbook:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Student has successfully met the additional requirements as set forth by the committee:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR OF THE COMPS COMMITTEE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE



## Certification of the Outcome of the Oral Defense of the Comprehensive Examination

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*has taken the oral portion of the comprehensive exam.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Chair Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Member Signature

**Please note additional requirements for student to complete to remedy failure as set forth by committee and as outlined in the Ph.D. handbook:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Area Graduate Director** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

### Evaluation of the Complete Exam

(Written and Oral portions combined)

**High Pass** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pass** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample Title Page**  
For Final Research Dissertation Document  
(to be submitted to Tawanna Tookes)

**Persistence of Vision:  
The Censorship of Motion Pictures in Georgia**

Sara Anne Mendelsohn

A Research Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Communication  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Georgia State University

**Committee**

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Chair

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Member

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Member

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Member

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Member

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Date

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Chair, Department of Communication

## Request for Graduate Foreign Language Reading Examination

**TO:** Chair, Department of Modern and Classical Languages

**FROM:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Area Director, Department of Communication*

**STUDENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize the above named student to sit for the foreign language examination in fulfillment of a foreign language requirement for the **COMMUNICATION Ph.D.** degree program.

**EXAMINER'S RECOMMENDATION:** [  ] Pass [  ] Fail

**EXAMINER'S SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Departmental Recommendation

Upon examination of the candidate, the Department of Modern and Classical Languages

[  ] recommends [  ] does not recommend

that the above named student be considered to have fulfilled the foreign language requirement for the graduate degree sought.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Chair, Department of Modern and Classical Languages* **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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*Note:* The examination is typically given on the Wednesday of the eighth week of fall and spring semesters, and on the fourth Wednesday of the summer semester.

In case of failure to satisfy the requirement, students may request an appointment to discuss their translations by contacting the coordinator of the examination.