

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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Master of Arts in Communication Management

Degree and GPA Requirements

Bachelor's degree: All graduate applicants must hold an earned baccalaureate from a regionally accredited college or university or the recognized equivalent from an international institution.

University GPA requirement: The minimum grade point average for admission consideration for graduate study at the University of Denver must meet one of the following criteria:

- A cumulative 2.5 on a 4.0 scale for the baccalaureate degree.
- A cumulative 2.5 on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 semester credits or 90 quarter credits (approximately two years of work) for the baccalaureate degree.
- An earned master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution or the recognized equivalent from an international institution supersedes the minimum GPA requirement for the baccalaureate.
- A cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for all graduate coursework completed for applicants who have not earned a master's degree or higher.

English Language Proficiency Test Score Requirements

The minimum TOEFL/IELTS/C1 Advanced/Duolingo English Test score requirements for this degree program are:

- Minimum TOEFL Score (Internet-based test): 80 for exams taken prior to January 21, 2026; 4.0 for exams taken on or after January 21, 2026
- Minimum IELTS Score: 6.5
- Minimum C1 Advanced Score: 176
- Minimum Duolingo English Test Score: 115

Master's Degree Programs

Master of Arts in Communication Management with Concentration in Marketing Communication

Minimum number of credits required: 48

Code	Title	Credits
Core coursework requirements		
COMM 4045	Applied Critical Thinking in Communication	4
COMM 4146	Ethics in Organizational Communication	4
COMM 4324	Marketing Analytics	4
COMM 4900	Communication Inquiry, Analysis, and Trends	4
COMM 4905	Storytelling with Data	4
COMM 4920	Portfolio Capstone	4
Concentration requirements		
COMM 4140	Marketing Strategy and Process	4
COMM 4301	Brand Management Strategies	4
COMM 4321	Integrated Digital Marketing	4
COMM 4326	Digital Campaign Management	4
Elective requirements (Choose two courses)		8
Total Credits		48

Students will work with their academic advisor to determine the best set of courses to choose for their electives.

Master of Arts in Communication Management with Concentration in Public Relations

Minimum number of credits required: 48

Code	Title	Credits
Core coursework requirements		
COMM 4045	Applied Critical Thinking in Communication	4
COMM 4146	Ethics in Organizational Communication	4
COMM 4324	Marketing Analytics	4
COMM 4900	Communication Inquiry, Analysis, and Trends	4
COMM 4905	Storytelling with Data	4
COMM 4920	Portfolio Capstone	4
Concentration requirements		
COMM 4144	Strategic Public Relations	4
COMM 4145	Public Relations Writing and Content Creation	4
COMM 4150	Reputation Management & Crisis Communication	4
COMM 4154	Media Channels and Technology	4
Elective requirements (Choose two courses)		8
Total Credits		48

Students will work with their academic advisor to determine the best set of courses to choose for their electives.

COMM 4002 Dynamic Presentation and Training Methods (4 Credits)

The increasing presence of technology in the workplace has changed the way we present information and conduct trainings, both in person and virtually. In this course, students hone their presentation and training skills by assessing their audience, purpose, and desired learning outcomes. Students practice using appropriate and memorable visual aids in order to maximize the audience and/or participant engagement. Students employ communication strategies and training techniques to improve participants' receptivity and retention of information and ideas. Whether presenting or training in person or virtually, students will gain the skills and confidence needed for effective communication across varied delivery methods.

COMM 4006 Building High-Performing Teams (4 Credits)

High-performing teams are invaluable to every organization. Ensuring productive and satisfying group and team interactional outcomes in organizational, professional, and personal settings can be difficult. Students focus on theory, application, and the practice of working together to learn the fundamentals of building high-performing teams. Students learn about the development of group dynamics, assessment, and leadership while also gaining knowledge about their strengths and weaknesses in teams, developing new skills, and learning how to enhance productivity while reducing barriers to effective communication.

COMM 4010 Business Insights for Communicators (4 Credits)

Communications leaders must speak the language of business to effectively craft strategies, execute deliverables, and measure outcomes that create tangible value and advance their organizations' objectives. Whether in an industry, public sector, or non-profit role, these leaders gain an edge through supplementing strong technical literacy with the ability to assess operational priorities and execute deliverables accordingly. In this class, students will sharpen their understanding of balance sheets and budgets; demystify key aspects of Information Technology infrastructure (intranets, cloud and on-premises computing, databases, security, etc.); delve into various organizational and divisional/departmental models, functions, and political positions; address the benefits and challenges of globalization and cross-cultural communication; and touch on an assortment of other relevant topics, including managing upward and workflow prioritization. Along the way, students will hone their strategic planning competencies and perspectives by putting all elements learned in this course together. Materials and assessments are geared toward application in relevant contexts.

COMM 4016 Persuasion and Influence (4 Credits)

The Portfolio Capstone course provides students the opportunity to reflect upon the work they have done throughout their graduate studies at the University of Denver. Students in the seminar produce deliverables that include: (1) a thorough annotation of their portfolio, a process requiring critical and creative thinking about their educational experience, and (2) a pinnacle project that identifies, analyzes, and elaborates significant themes in their program experience, evaluates their accomplishments, connects their coursework to their professional goals, and assesses those goals in the context of their chosen field.

COMM 4030 Managing Learning in Organizations (4 Credits)

To support a culture of continuous improvement, Learning and Development (L & D) professionals must quickly and effectively train and develop employees, evaluate results, show a return on investment, and strategically develop new solutions to meet ever-changing business needs. This course prepares students to lead and manage L & D departments, teams, and processes by guiding them to think strategically, generate creative solutions that address root causes, build trusted partnerships, and manage knowledge assets.

COMM 4035 Cultural Intelligence through Communication (4 Credits)

There is a growing need to communicate effectively across cultural differences. Writer James Neuliep defines culture as an accumulated pattern of values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by an identifiable group of people with a common history and verbal and nonverbal code system. Culture pervades every aspect of the communicative process. This course uses a contextual approach to examine the ways culture, communication, context, and power intersect in intercultural communication interactions. Students will identify and analyze obstacles and barriers to effective intercultural communication. Finally, students will examine strategies and skills needed to become a competent and effective intercultural communicator.

COMM 4045 Applied Critical Thinking in Communication (4 Credits)

Effective communication depends on the ability to think clearly, evaluate evidence, and reason through complex situations. This course develops the critical thinking skills communication professionals need to analyze arguments, assess information quality, recognize bias and assumptions, and make sound judgments under uncertainty. Through case-based exercises and applied assignments, students practice applying critical thinking to communication challenges across organizational, professional, and public contexts. By the end of the course, students will be prepared to approach communication problems with rigor, craft evidence-based arguments, and support sound decision-making in their professional work.

COMM 4140 Marketing Strategy and Process (4 Credits)

Creating and sustaining competitive advantage is driven by strategies that integrate people, process, and systems. In this application-oriented course, students will examine the fundamentals of marketing, develop the insights and skills to formulate and implement sound marketing decisions, and apply ethical marketing strategies which contribute to the overall business (for-profit and non-for-profit) performance. Students will apply strategic concepts through discussion and teamwork. Throughout the quarter, students will examine how information and research is used to inform marketing management decisions to all level of the organization, including external stakeholders. Because marketing communication plays such a critical role in marketing success, integrating different types of communication channels will be an emphasis.

COMM 4144 Strategic Public Relations (4 Credits)

In a complex global environment, business, government, nonprofit, and other organizations require professional public relations practitioners who can effectively develop two-way relationships with constituents/audiences to enable strategic and effective communication processes. This course prepares students for this complex environment through the study and practice of essential components of public relations, which include the use of strategy, the value of relationship development, an overview of the range of PR tactics, the evolving role of digital communications and social media to PR, and the importance of ethics and transparency in PR practice.

COMM 4145 Public Relations Writing and Content Creation (4 Credits)

Effective and persuasive writing and creative content development are integral parts of today's public relations programs. This course deepens students' knowledge of the range of content available for public relations professionals to build relationships with media while ensuring they become effective, creative, clear, and concise architects and translators of the written word. In this course, students will develop a deep understanding of messaging for target audiences and the wide variety of concepts at their disposal to create effective communication programs. Students will leave the course with the ability to establish key messages using supporting evidence, craft content for target audiences, evaluate the impact of various media relations techniques as a way to achieve earned media coverage. Students will also develop a portfolio of well-written public relations collateral, including long- and short-form materials.

COMM 4146 Ethics in Organizational Communication (4 Credits)

This course explores the fundamental role of ethics in organizational communication across various contexts. Students will examine core ethical principles, transparency requirements, and decision-making frameworks essential for ethical communication practice. The course provides a comprehensive foundation in ethical theory while emphasizing practical application across corporate communication, marketing, public relations, internal communication, and digital media contexts. Students will develop critical thinking skills necessary for navigating complex ethical challenges in today's rapidly evolving communication landscape.

COMM 4150 Reputation Management & Crisis Communication (4 Credits)

Reputation management is the process of tracking, maintaining, and defending a consistent message and positive image across all media. It applies to corporations and individuals, to billion-dollar brands and grassroots causes. Today's reputation management integrates public relations, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and social media management. It requires constant monitoring and participation in the dialogues that comprise modern media as the traditional roles of sender and receiver merge and evolve. As digital presence has become the front lines of reputation management, systems use various predefined criteria for processing complex data to report behavior and activity surrounding a reputation, thereby automating the process of determining positive sentiment, influence, and trustworthiness. While reputation management is an ongoing proactive effort, PR professionals also need to be prepared to react in a crisis. Crisis communication planning and management strategies are an important subset of this field. Through the study of proactive and reactive programs, students will learn how to apply reputation and crisis management principles in times of quiet and chaos all while monitoring, positioning, and measuring a brand's presence online.

COMM 4154 Media Channels and Technology (4 Credits)

This course will focus on the increasing role technology and analytics play in the public relations profession. Data-driven decision-making is now essential to the development of public relations strategy and tactics. This course will expose students to engagement across media channels—including owned, shared, paid, and earned media—as well as techniques and strategies for the effective use of technology for tracking, planning, and engaging audiences. This course will position students to lead strategic, data-driven decision-making in the public relations field. The course will also provide students with the tools necessary to engage new media and technology effectively in public relations.

COMM 4200 Instructional Design (4 Credits)

This course explores the role of effective learning design in organizational success within the Learning and Development industry. It covers needs assessment, learner analysis, and the application of learning theories to create targeted instructional strategies. Students will develop skills in creating, implementing, and evaluating instructional design products that meet organizational needs and objectives across various professional settings. Emphasis is placed on hands-on projects and building the foundations of a professional portfolio. The course also addresses current trends, ethical considerations, and strategies for continuous professional growth in the rapidly evolving field of instructional design.

COMM 4206 Evaluating Learning and Development Effectiveness (4 Credits)

Assessment and evaluation allow learning and development professionals to determine whether learners have gained the intended knowledge, skills, and attitudes; to weigh the value of training benefits against costs; to assess how well training supports organizational goals; and to identify when additional training is needed. Through case studies, practice exercises, and the creation of an authentic assessment plan, students will learn to design, analyze, and apply a range of evaluation methods in their current or future professional settings, while critically addressing issues of bias and ensuring cultural responsiveness.

COMM 4235 Strategic Integration of L & D Technologies (4 Credits)

Learning and development (L&D) professionals must regularly assess current and emerging technological integrations and align data generated from these technologies with organizational goals. In this course, students will explore the connection between L&D technologies and organizational contexts, design training programs using common L&D technologies, and analyze the effectiveness of technology-integrated training. Recommended prerequisites: COMM 4030, IDT 4203, COMM 4200.

COMM 4301 Brand Management Strategies (4 Credits)

Organizations of all types – private, public, and nonprofit – increasingly recognize that a strong brand can ultimately become one of an organization's greatest assets. Executing on a strategy designed to build long-lasting brand recognition, resonance, and loyalty is a critical marketing responsibility. In today's dynamic business landscape, brand management requires complex decisions to create meaning and value for consumers. This course covers the essential components of branding with a focus on how to maintain consistent alignment between brand vision and marketing strategies. Students are strongly encouraged to take at least one other marketing concentration course prior to this course.

COMM 4306 UX Strategies and Methods (4 Credits)

This course will cover user experience strategies, tactics, and methodologies. Students will learn how to think about UX from a high level, set goals for a product or project, and turn the strategies into concrete steps. Students will learn how to employ research, design thinking, usability testing and analysis to enhance the user experience.

COMM 4307 Developing Content for User Experience (4 Credits)

This course will explore how strategically developed content is a cornerstone of the user experience. Students will learn the User Experience Design workflow and how to advocate, research and deliver content for digital experiences. The course will also cover how to measure the business impact of content strategy, as well as how to scale content strategy as a practice within organizations.

COMM 4308 UX Team Management (4 Credits)

Building and managing a dynamic UX team is a skillset that goes beyond typical design best practices and team management - the role of design leader today expects company leadership in innovation, creativity and culture. This course will provide the students with the knowledge needed to build, manage, and nurture highly dynamic, fast-paced cross functional teams while also providing experience in the transformational components of design leadership.

COMM 4309 Service Design (4 Credits)

Where UX design is specific to the digital experience, service design crosses over from the tangible to intangible experiences within both digital and analog channels. This course takes students through an in-depth exploration of research, mapping, blueprinting, and deep user flow analysis as it relates to interactions and experiences of all types. The impact behind processes for employees and customers across all sectors including public, private, and nonprofit will be covered.

COMM 4318 Mobile Marketing (4 Credits)

Mobile is global. We are living in an unprecedented time where people all around the world have access to mobile devices. These devices bring the world to the palm of our hands, and we can do almost anything with them. Often a user's first experience with a product or service will be on a mobile device rather than a desktop computer, so we must shift our mindset to a mobile-first mentality. The fast-paced, ever-changing field of mobile marketing has created exciting opportunities for brands to meet customers where they are and approach them with the right strategy. The focus of this course is to provide an expansive grasp of the tools and tactics used to develop and implement a multi-channel mobile marketing strategy. Through discussion, research, and practical experience, students will learn how to maximize mobile to have the greatest impact within their overall marketing plan.

COMM 4319 Compelling Content Creation (4 Credits)

In our digital world, communication is increasingly visual. This course will expose students to the art of turning facts into compelling, strategically-crafted visual narratives that engage an audience. From presentations to interoffice memos, press releases to video content, students will apply course concepts to develop critical business communication skills. The course will also explore on-screen video techniques to maximize impact in a business world that utilizes Zoom and other online tools.

COMM 4320 Social Media Strategy (4 Credits)

Social media is a critical communication channel that is constantly evolving. Learn to plan, manage, measure, and anticipate social media efforts that add value to your target audiences through organic and paid options. In this course, students will explore motivations that prompt audiences to engage, identify the tools and technology needed to execute social media campaigns or communication interventions, and devise effective strategy and tactics needed to cut through the noise. Create a stronger online presence, show personality, and build your brand by gaining skills needed to successfully communicate on behalf of any organization or individual using social media. Through online research, case studies, and practical exercises, students will gain first-hand knowledge of social media techniques and how to leverage social media as a communications tool.

COMM 4321 Integrated Digital Marketing (4 Credits)

At an ever-increasing rate, consumers use digital media to live, to work, and to play. Digital marketing leverages digital media and technologies allowing brands to promote their products and services to very targeted audiences at key online touchpoints in highly measurable ways. This course takes a deep dive into digital marketing strategies and provides an expansive grasp of digital marketing tactics. Students will analyze the digital marketplace and make strategic decisions about which tactics will have greatest impact, how to integrate them into the marketing mix, and ultimately how to use digital marketing to achieve overarching marketing goals. Recommended Prerequisite: COMM 4140 or working knowledge of traditional marketing is strongly encouraged prior to taking this course.

COMM 4324 Marketing Analytics (4 Credits)

Marketing analytics leverages business metrics to better understand marketing performance and return on investment (ROI). Through data analysis, attribution modeling, and reporting, marketers are able to measure and optimize their initiatives. This class focuses on developing a performance measurement system for marketing channels, incorporating measuring website traffic, conducting market research, estimating usage patterns, and interpreting website visitor behavior. Key performance indicators are tied to marketing goals and tactical campaigns. Students will conduct a review of online metrics, compare marketing analytics vendors, and develop ways to communicate performance.

COMM 4325 Search Marketing (4 Credits)

Search marketing is a communicator's medium and a vital part of any marketing mix. This type of digital marketing specifically focuses on increasing a website's visibility in the search engine results pages (SERPs) through organic Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and pay-per-click (PPC) while also drawing attention to quality website content or well-crafted paid ad messaging. This class will provide deep insight into the tools and tactics of search marketing. Students will learn what makes search marketing demanding and how to overcome the challenges presented by regular search engine algorithm updates, increasing mobile device usage, and the influence of social media. Two key techniques of SEM will be explored: search engine optimization (SEO) to improve results from the natural or organic listings, and paid search marketing, or pay-per-click (PPC), to deliver results from the sponsored listings within search engines. A variety of search practices, including mobile and local, will be explored.

COMM 4326 Digital Campaign Management (4 Credits)

A digital marketing campaign is a strategic and creative online effort to promote an organization's goal, reach their target audience in a variety of ways and drive them toward a desired action. Digital campaigns are often more complex and dynamic than traditional marketing methods, requiring constant analysis of data and evaluation of effectiveness. Students will experience this dynamism first hand through a course-long interactive campaign simulation during this course. Students will examine the process and stages engaged when creating a successful digital marketing campaign; investigate how marketing automation can streamline efforts and improve team efficiencies; and evaluate how tracking and measuring campaign data can facilitate optimization and scalability to boost ROI. Recommended Prerequisite: Students are strongly advised to take COMM 4321 prior to this course.

COMM 4510 Strategic Application of AI for Communication (4 Credits)

In this course students will analyze various AI tools and strategies, understanding how they can be applied to internal and external communication frameworks to achieve specific organizational goals. Building upon students' foundational knowledge of AI technologies and concepts, this course explores the strategies behind leveraging AI to drive communication innovation and optimize communication processes. This includes learning to assess the strategic potential of AI in different business contexts to drive competitive advantages for organizations. By the end of the course, students will be equipped with the skills to think critically about AI using the practical knowledge necessary to effectively integrate AI into an overarching communication strategy within an organization. #Prerequisite: ICT 4700.

COMM 4515 Building AI-Powered Communication Campaigns (4 Credits)

This course advances students' mastery of AI tools and strategies through end-to-end communication campaign development. Focusing on real-world applications, students learn to integrate AI across strategy, tactics, and analytics while developing critical evaluation skills. The curriculum emphasizes practical experience in leading AI communication initiatives across diverse organizational settings. Required Prerequisite: ICT 4700. Suggested prerequisites: Working knowledge of generative AI technologies AND/OR COMM 4510.

COMM 4701 Topics in Communication Management (4 Credits)

The content of this course varies each time it is offered. Topics may include time-sensitive issues in the field of communication, elective courses that are not scheduled regularly during the course of the year, or advanced inquiry into core-course subjects, such as ethics, human communication theory, or interpersonal communication. Each time the course is offered, the specific content is announced in the quarterly course schedule. Depending on the subject matter, students may be required to have completed prerequisite courses.

COMM 4900 Communication Inquiry, Analysis, and Trends (4 Credits)

In this course, students will actively immerse themselves in their chosen communication field, cultivating essential networking, writing, and analytical skills. Students will establish professional networks for mentorship, industry insight, and understanding field norms. They will enhance their business writing skills, ensuring clarity and authenticity in their communication. Students will explore current and future industry trends, strategizing for adaptation, relevance, and personal growth. Throughout the course, students will engage in reflective exercises, connecting course concepts to their learning and professional goals, fostering a deeper understanding of their communication practice.

COMM 4901 Capstone Project (4 Credits)

The Capstone Project provides students the opportunity to research a topic, problem, or issue within their field of study, and work individually with a Capstone advisor. Similar in weight to a thesis, but more flexible, this final project will synthesize and apply core concepts acquired from the program. The student will select an appropriate Capstone advisor who is knowledgeable in the field of study to work closely with and whom can guide the research project. Evaluation will be focused on the quality and professionalism of applied research and writing; critical and creative thinking; problem-solving skills; knowledge of research design, method, and implementation; and contribution to the field and topic of study. Please see the Capstone Guidelines for additional details. Prerequisites: A Capstone Proposal that has been approved by both the Capstone Advisor and the Academic Director, acceptance as a degree candidate, completion of at least 40 quarter-hours (including all core courses) with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better.

COMM 4902 Capstone Seminar (4 Credits)

The Capstone Seminar is a graduate seminar in which students utilize the knowledge and skills gained through the degree program to create a culminating work that critically addresses a problem in their degree field of study. The students produce a Capstone of 7000-8000 words that presents a position on a relevant problem, supports the position with professional and academic literature, analyzes and tests the proposed solution, and discusses the findings as related to the field of study. The seminar is dependent upon quality, collegial discussion, and feedback of students' research and work products, under the facilitation of a faculty member. The course structure guides the students through the process of independent, secondary research and writing of a Capstone. No primary research is allowed. Students generate the course content through ongoing discussion and peer feedback on the Capstone process and individual topic areas under investigation. Students professionally and academically communicate through written work and oral presentation. Students must have: Acceptance as a degree candidate, completion of at least 40 quarter-hours (including all core courses) with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better. Students must complete the Capstone Seminar in one quarter; no incomplete grades are assigned.

COMM 4905 Storytelling with Data (4 Credits)

Whether conducting a needs assessment, attempting to understand your audience, or developing a new product, communication professionals regularly harness the power of research, measurement, and storytelling. This course explores mixed-methods research design; data collection strategies; strategies for measuring the impact of communication challenges and interventions; and the fundamentals of telling data-driven stories that persuade stakeholders and demonstrate ROI. Together these tools enable confident problem solving, enhance organizational decision making, and influence stakeholder behavior. This course culminates in an individualized project that integrates research design, data collection, data analysis, and storytelling.

COMM 4920 Portfolio Capstone (4 Credits)

The Portfolio Capstone course provides students the opportunity to reflect upon the work they have done throughout their graduate studies at University College and synthesize their learning. Students in the seminar produce deliverables that include: (1) a thorough annotation of their portfolio, a process requiring critical and creative thinking about their educational experience, and (2) a pinnacle project that identifies, analyzes, and elaborates significant themes in their program experience, evaluates their accomplishments, connects their coursework to their professional goals, and assesses those goals in the context of their chosen field.

COMM 4980 Internship (0-4 Credits)

The Communication Management Internship is designed to offer students a purposeful experience in a practical, industry related setting. The internship is an individualized learning experience. A training plan is created for each student in conjunction with the internship site supervisor to provide experiences related to the skills and knowledge covered in the certificate and master's programs as well as professional goals. Students are responsible for finding their own internship site and proposing their internship ideas. The program will share internship opportunities with COMM students as they become available. Students may also work through the DU career center, to explore opportunities for internship experiences. To be eligible for an internship, completion of a minimum of 28 hours of graduate coursework in the field of specialty is required OR Academic Director approval for students with previous work experience in the field.

COMM 4985 Industry Innovation Project (1-4 Credits)

Students in this course will participate as a part of a team of cross-discipline students working on an innovation project that is scoped to meet the specific needs of its industry client. Students will have a choice between a variety of project types so that each student can select the industry and team role that best supports their specific area(s) of study. Teams will consist of 4-8 students pursuing a mix of technical, business, and liberal arts degrees. Every project will be led by an experienced industry advisor who will be responsible for managing the project workplan, client engagement, and end product quality. Students will gain direct industry experience in their area of study with an emphasis on innovative thinking, team collaboration, and independent project management skills. Prerequisite: Academic director and academic advisor approval is required. Selection criteria will include academic status and project availability.

COMM 4991 Independent Study (1-8 Credits)

This is an advanced course for students wishing to pursue an independent course of study. Before registering for the independent study, the student must be accepted in a degree program, have earned a grade point average of 3.0 or better, obtained the approval of the department director, and have completed the Independent Study form and filed the form with all appropriate offices. Independent Study is offered only on a for-credit basis.