

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the art of building community through created and shared symbol systems, from the embodied message to digital rhetoric. It is rooted in the creative work of God, establishing communion with his creatures.

The Communication Department equips graduates to build the church and benefit society worldwide by educating whole persons in the history, art, theory, and practice of competent, ethical communication. The Department enables students to understand historical and cultural effects of communication; engage in intentional processes of creating identities and messages; comprehend guiding theories, foundational research, and investigative methods; and demonstrate knowledge, skill and motivation for the ethical creation of messages.

Students focus their studies in one of four areas: Interpersonal Communication, Media Studies, Rhetoric and Culture, or Theater. The department also offers co-curricular activities in debate and theater, and a certificate in journalism. A Bachelor of Arts degree is offered in Communication.

Along with specific requirements for any major, all students in the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degree programs must meet all general education (<https://catalog.wheaton.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-information/academic-requirements-general-education/>) and graduation requirements (<https://catalog.wheaton.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-information/academic-requirements-general-education/#text>) under a single catalog.

NOTE: Communication majors and minors can also take COMM 201 to meet their oral communication competency requirement instead of COMM 101. *This requirement should be completed by the end of the sophomore year.*

The department offers an honors program for outstanding junior and senior majors desiring to carry out independent research. Details of the program are available from the department Chair and on our department website (<https://www.wheaton.edu/academics/programs/communication/>).

Faculty

Chair, Associate Professor Emily Langan

Professors Mark Lewis, Michael Stauffer

Associate Professors Kenneth Chase, Theon Hill, Read Schuchardt

Assistant Professors Danielle Corple, Andy Mangin, Rebecca Sietman

Visiting Assistant Professor Halie Wenhold

Programs

- Communication Major with an Interpersonal Communication Concentration (<https://catalog.wheaton.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/communication/communication-major-interpersonal-communication-concentration/>)
- Communication Major with a Media Studies Concentration (<https://catalog.wheaton.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/communication/communication-major-media-studies-concentration/>)
- Communication Major with a Rhetoric and Culture Concentration (<https://catalog.wheaton.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/communication/communication-major-rhetoric-culture-concentration/>)
- Communication Major with a Theater Concentration (<https://catalog.wheaton.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/communication/communication-major-theater-concentration/>)
- Communication Minor (<https://catalog.wheaton.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/communication/communication-minor/>)
- Theater Minor (<https://catalog.wheaton.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/communication/theater-minor/>)
- Journalism Certificate (<https://catalog.wheaton.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/communication/journalism-certificate/>)

Courses

Communication Courses

COMM 101. Public Speaking. (2 Credits)

A performance-based course to aid students in the invention, organization, delivery, and criticism of informative and persuasive speeches. This course does not meet major requirement. Gen Ed Oral Communication competency.

General Education: COMP

COMM 171. Introduction to Acting. (2 Credits)

An investigation of the fundamentals of acting technique through foundational exercise and scene work, including observation, physical awareness, stage discipline, and text analysis.

Tags: VPAT

COMM 172. Theater Practicum. (1 Credit)

Theater production practicum with emphasis on practical aspects of the production of live theater. Students will participate by being members of the production crew in one of several areas: Lights, Costumes, Set, Props or Stage Management.

COMM 201. Fundamentals of Oral Communication. (4 Credits)

A performance-based course involving the nature of communicative interactions, message construction and criticism, and ethical responsibilities involved in communicating. Required of majors and minors. Gen ed oral communication competency, for majors and minors only.

General Education: COMP

COMM 215. Journalism. (4 Credits)

An overview of basic writing skills utilized in mass media, with a practical emphasis on the gathering and writing of news and sports, and analysis of campus and metropolitan newspapers.

COMM 219. Journalism Co-Curricular. (0 Credits)

A periodic gathering of journalism students for the purpose of applying and broadening the academic discussion of journalism. Students are required to attend two approved events per semester for four semesters.

COMM 221. Interpersonal Communication. (4 Credits)

An examination of face-to-face interactions using cognitive learning, skills training, and experiential techniques to better understand and interact with others. Topics include verbal messages, nonverbal communication, listening, self-disclosure, conflict, gender roles, and intercultural communication.

COMM 223. Communication and Gender. (2 Credits)

An overview of how perceived gender difference shapes and influences our interaction with others. Discussion covers the impact of gender diversity on language, nonverbal communication, mediated messages, relationships, and conflict. Course is offered occasionally.

COMM 241. Media Studies. (4 Credits)

An introduction to the history of mass media, from speech to digital. This course includes a variety of approaches and critical practices used to examine and evaluate the media environment.

COMM 243. Digital Society. (4 Credits)

An examination of the new media environment and its influence on social spaces, cultural meanings, and human interactions.

COMM 246. Media Production. (4 Credits)

An overview of media production skills with an emphasis on recording, editing, and producing using new media technologies and distributing them in varying outlets. Students will be expected to create video blogs, podcasts, and other new media texts. Course is offered occasionally.

COMM 252. Argumentation and Debate. (4 Credits)

A performance-based course in which students learn argument design, including use of reason and evidence, and practice in competitive debate. Gen Ed Oral Communication competency.

General Education: COMP

COMM 253. Messages, Influence, and Culture. (4 Credits)

An introductory study of the relationship between rhetoric and social change, focusing on the rhetoric of oppressed groups in America. Topics include the rhetoric of social movements, poverty, race, gender, and power.

Tags: DUS

COMM 261. Strategic Communication. (4 Credits)

An overview of public communication with emphasis on how organizations and campaigns develop strategic goals, choose appropriate communication channels, target audiences, and assess outcomes.

COMM 271. Theater Survey. (4 Credits)

An exploration of the history of theater, the nature of theater as a communication art, and the roles of playwright, director, scenographer, actor and audience.

Tags: VPAT

COMM 272. Scenography. (4 Credits)

An exploration of scenographic theory and production practices necessary to move theater design from page to stage, including scene design, stage lighting and costuming. Prerequisite: COMM 271 or permission of instructor.

COMM 273. Acting I. (4 Credits)

An investigation of the fundamentals of acting technique through foundational exercise and scene work, including observation, physical awareness, stage discipline, and text analysis. Prerequisite: COMM 271.

COMM 275. Musical Theater London. (2 Credits)

Offered as part of the Arts in London program. Students will explore Musical Theater as a communication art form. Emphasis will be placed on understanding historical development, establishing criteria for evaluating live performance, and developing basic presentation skills. Cross-listed with MUCS 275. Alternate years; offered summer in even years. NOTE: This course does not fulfill the entire VPA theme and covers only the domain of VPAM.

Tags: VPAM

COMM 296. Journalism Practicum. (2 to 4 Credits)

A lower level experiential learning internship enabling students beginning their journalism program to gain hands-on experience under professional supervision. The Program Coordinator will supervise this course in conjunction with a site supervisor. Internship form required.

COMM 301. Communication Theory. (4 Credits)

An overview and integration of current approaches to understanding interpersonal, small group, organizational, mass, and intercultural communication. Prerequisite: COMM 201 and Junior standing or permission of instructor.

COMM 302. Rhetorical Theory. (4 Credits)

An historical and critical analysis of the modes of persuasion. The contributions of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine, as well as selected medieval, renaissance, modern, and postmodern theorists will be considered. Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of instructor.

COMM 311. Human Communication Research. (4 Credits)

An overview of methods and techniques for systematic observation of communication behavior. Students will learn to design, run, and analyze various qualitative and quantitative methods in areas of their communication interest. Prerequisites: COMM 201 and COMM 301, or permission of instructor.

Tags: SI

COMM 312. Communication Criticism. (4 Credits)

A study of communication performances using a variety of methods, with special attention to textual analysis. Texts selected will be taken from mass media, theater, and public speaking. Prerequisites: COMM 201, and COMM 301 or COMM 302, or permission of instructor.

COMM 324. Communication and Diversity. (4 Credits)

An overview of how perceived difference shapes and influences our interaction with others. Class discussion covers the impact of diversity on language, nonverbal communication, mediated messages, relationship, and conflict.

Tags: DUS

COMM 343. Screenwriting. (4 Credits)

An overview of the craft of writing and producing a feature narrative screenplay. Students will write their own scripts and learn the process of script breakdown, storyboarding, location hunting, and scheduling for media production.

COMM 344. Visual Symbolism: Icons, Brands, Logos. (4 Credits)

An overview of the creation, evolution, meaning and migration of visual symbols from the ancient religious world to the contemporary corporate world. Through experiments in design and interpretation, students will explore applications of visual symbols in branding, politics, advertising, and religion. Prerequisites: COMM 241, or COMM 253, or instructor permission.

COMM 345. Narrative Media. (4 Credits)

A skills-based course in non-linear editing, advanced techniques of media production, sound design, and directing. Students will make a narrative or documentary visual production, utilizing lighting, sound, and directing. Course is offered occasionally.

COMM 353. Advanced Persuasive Speaking. (4 Credits)

A skills-based class in which students become proficient in researching and delivering public speeches and oral performance within a variety of contexts. Prerequisite: COMM 101, COMM 201, COMM 252, or passed oral competency exam.

COMM 362. Group Dynamics. (2 Credits)

An experiential course which integrates theory and practice in small task groups. Topics include roles and leadership, discussion, decision making and problem-solving, social influence, conflict, power, and interaction in peer groups.

COMM 363. Persuasion. (4 Credits)

An examination of theories of attitude and behavior change, specific techniques of persuasion, and analysis of contemporary practitioners. Students will gain experience in attitude research and preparing a persuasive strategy.

Tags: SI

COMM 367. Reconciliation & Conflict Resolution. (2 Credits)

This course provides theoretical and practical resources for working through conflict in interpersonal, group, and international contexts. An emphasis will be placed on negotiation tactics and reconciliation processes. Course is offered occasionally.

COMM 373. Theater Workout. (0 or 1 Credits)

Prerequisite: Permission of instructor. One hour credit per year. Register for credit in Spring semester. Graded pass/fail

COMM 374. Directing. (4 Credits)

An investigation of the stage director's art and craft: play selection, casting, mounting the play, rhythm, characterization, and actor-director relationships. Prerequisites: COMM 271 and COMM 273. Fee for Chicago theater.

COMM 375. European Theater Studies. (2 Credits)

Students will study contemporary European theater in production. Selected playwrights, performance theory and styles will be studied in the class to be used as a basis for the evaluation of live performances in London, Paris, Berlin and Prague.

COMM 376. Church And Theater. (4 Credits)

An investigation of the theological and aesthetic relationships of the church to the dramatic arts. Lab experiences facilitate practical application of these discoveries.

COMM 393. Intercollegiate Debate (Practicum). (0 or 1 Credits)

Prerequisite: Permission of instructor. Two credits of COMM 393 meet the oral competency requirement at Wheaton. One hour credit per year (4 hours maximum; 2 hours maximum if combined with COMM 252). Register for credit in Spring semester. Graded pass/fail.

General Education: COMP

COMM 415. Special Topics in Journalism. (4 Credits)

An advanced study of such topics as interviewing, community journalism, ethics and the law, and investigative reporting. Guest instructors will be selected who have established professional success in journalism. Course may be repeated for separate topics. Prerequisite: COMM 215 or permission of instructor.

COMM 416. Special Topics in Journalism. (2 Credits)

An advanced study of such topics as interviewing, community journalism, ethics and the law, and investigative reporting. Guest instructors will be selected who have established professional success in journalism. Course may be repeated for separate topics. Prerequisite: COMM 215 or permission of instructor.

COMM 424. Special Topics in Interpersonal Communication. (2 or 4 Credits)

An advanced study of such topics as listening, nonverbal communication, friendship, family relationships, non-profit organizations, and sports communication. Prerequisite: COMM 221 or permission of instructor. Course may be repeated for separate topics.

COMM 441. Media, Religion, and Culture. (4 Credits)

An examination of the ways that media formations influence the practices of faith and theology within a given historical epoch. Prerequisite: COMM 241 or COMM 243, or permission of instructor.

COMM 444. Special Topics in Media and Culture. (2 to 4 Credits)

An advanced study of such topics as media effects, globalization, virtual identities, and media and politics. Course may be repeated for separate topics. Prerequisite: COMM 241 or COMM 253, or permission of instructor .

COMM 445. Media Constructions. (4 Credits)

An advanced study of professional-level video production, with structured teaching leading to high quality portfolio presentations in the media industry. Prerequisites: COMM 246 and COMM 345 or permission of instructor. Course is offered occasionally.

COMM 454. Special Topics in Rhetoric & Culture. (2 or 4 Credits)

An advanced study of such topics as Civic Discourse, Critical Approaches to Rhetoric and Culture, and Public Advocacy. Prerequisite: COMM 253 or permission of instructor. Course may be repeated for separate topics.

COMM 461. Organizational Communication. (4 Credits)

An application of communication theory and research in work contexts. Both corporations and non-profits will be examined through case studies, site visits, interviews, applied research, and team work projects.

COMM 473. Acting II. (4 Credits)

An application of developing acting skills to a series of exercises, monologues and scenes. Prerequisites: COMM 271, COMM 273, or permission of instructor. May be repeated as Acting II: Shakespeare.

COMM 474. Special Topics in Theater. (2 or 4 Credits)

An advanced study of such topics as Theories of Contemporary Theater, Advanced Production, and Theater and Culture. Prerequisite: COMM 271 or permission of instructor. Course may be repeated for separate topics.

COMM 476. Theater and Culture. (4 Credits)

The course will examine the role of the theater as a vehicle of social change throughout history and in contemporary culture. Through selected play readings and laboratory experiences, the student will be challenged to explore the responsibility of the Christian theater artist to his/her local and global community. Prerequisite: COMM 271 or permission of instructor.

Tags: DUS

COMM 494. Senior Seminar. (2 Credits)

An overview and integration of ethical perspectives as students consider the role of responsible communication in contemporary society. Development of the portfolio assessment is included. Prerequisite: COMM major with Senior standing.

General Education: SHAR

COMM 495. Independent Study. (1 to 4 Credits)

An investigation of current issues and developments in a specialized area of communication. Prerequisites: two appropriate Communication courses and permission of a professor.

COMM 496. Internship. (2 to 4 Credits)

An application of course work that engages the student in a responsible role as a worker in an organization or other practical experiences. Prerequisites: 16 hours in Communication; junior or senior standing with Communication major or minor. Graded pass/fail. (may be repeated for a maximum of eight credits, but only four hours count toward the major.)

COMM 498. Journalism internship. (2 or 4 Credits)

An application of course work that engages the student in a responsible role as a worker in the journalism profession. This experience will receive a letter grade based on a portfolio of work, journal entries, summative essay, and site supervisor evaluation.