

# School of Media & Communication

2020 - 2021

Graduate Student Handbook

For Students in the Doctor of Philosophy  
Program in Media & Communication

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### **Mission**

The mission of the School of Media and Communication (SMC) at Bowling Green State University is to promote and extend the study of communication processes ranging from interpersonal transactions, development and health communication, rhetoric, social movements, to mass-mediated communication, emerging media, cyber culture and computer-mediated communication. The School endeavors to create a premier learning community for master's and doctoral students by promoting graduate student participation in regional, national and international conferences, forums, and journals. The School maintains numerous partnerships to nurture collaborative teaching, innovative research, and significant public service. With a tradition of excellence in graduate study dating back to the 1950s, the faculty, staff, and students of the School of Media and Communication look forward to contributing to today's media and communication scholarship as well as its education and practice.

The graduate program of the School of Media and Communication (SMC) is known for its excellent placement records; its balance in teaching, research, and service; and the diversity of its student body. The key commitment of the SMC faculty is to motivate and educate students to be independent intellectual leaders and professionals.

Doctoral students can choose to pursue an area of emphasis during their time in the School of Media and Communication. The emphasis areas can be located within these three broad categories of communication scholarship:

#### **Critical Media Studies and Rhetoric**

This area of emphasis draws together several key and complementary dimensions of humanistic areas of inquiry, research methods, and theory. Among faculty expertise are Intercultural and International Communication, Rhetorical Theory and Criticism, Social Movements and Activism, Urban Geography, Media Ecology, Political Economy, and Rhetorics of Peace-Building. Work in these areas encompasses a wide variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, concerning issues of media/mediated communication in cultural, economic, political or social contexts, including strategic mediated communication for development, digital environments, social change and social justice. We adopt this approach to an integrated critical engagement

with social problems that include, but often extend beyond localities to international and global environments.

#### **Interpersonal Communication**

This area of emphasis examines interaction processes in a variety of social and personal relationships such as romantic relationships, family relationships and friendships in face-to-face and mediated settings. Research and coursework within the area focuses on relationship processes in contexts such as health, sexuality, identity negotiation, relationship maintenance, information management and technology. Varying theoretical (e.g., narrative, dialectical, social exchange, disclosure theories) and epistemological perspectives (post-positivist, social scientific, interpretivist, feminist, queer, critical) are explored.

#### **Media Audiences & Processes**

This area of emphasis relies on empirical observation to study audiences and the process of how media content and technology influence the public agenda and individuals' attitude, emotion, knowledge and interpretation of society. The research orientation utilizes quantitative methods (e.g., experiments, survey) and qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus group) to answer pertinent issues in media audiences and processes. These include Media Technology Adoption, Emotional and Cognitive Response to Advertising, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), Narrative Persuasion and Comprehension, Media Effects, Cultivation and Perceived Media Realism, Effects and Effectiveness of Advertising, Audience Research Methods, Media Industry Analysis, Social Network Analysis, Political Communication, Alternative Journalism, Activism, and Public Opinion. This emphasis includes both administrative applied research and theoretical research on these topics.

#### **Time to Complete Degree**

The doctoral program is normatively completed in three to four years. Full-time students complete their coursework in two calendar years, including two summer sessions. At the end of the second summer, students should complete their preliminary examination. During the third year, students should defend their dissertation proposal and begin work on their dissertation. Doctoral students must complete doctoral degree requirements in 8 years. After the passage of that time limit, courses taken before

8 years must be revalidated by the Graduate College.

### **Graduate Program Committee**

The Graduate Program Committee (GPC) is comprised of five individuals: The Graduate Coordinator, Assistant Graduate Coordinator, Basic Course Director, Strategic Communication Director, and one at-large Level 1 graduate faculty member. If there is any overlap between any of these roles (e.g., Assistant Graduate Coordinator is also the Basic Course Director), then there are two at large Level 1 graduate faculty members.

The GPC handles all policies for GA assistantships, exams, and other aspects of the PhD program. In addition, the GPC handles appeals of courses or exams/dissertations. For more information about appeals process, please see the Graduate Handbook.

### **Funding**

All regular assistantships are half-time appointments, which require students to work 20 hours a week. In most cases, graduate assistants teach or assist with teaching two courses. Students may not accept other offers of employment for the time they are contractually obliged to work as graduate assistants.

Continued funding is dependent on a student's satisfactory progress toward degree, and his/her fulfillment of contractual duties outlined in the assistantship responsibilities. Students who do not make satisfactory progress or who do not fulfill their duties may have their funding reduced or eliminated altogether.

While on assistantship, graduate assistants are contractually obligated to maintain full-time student status (8 credit hours or more) during each fall and spring semesters. Funding offers only cover the fall and spring semester of an academic year. In rare cases, summer funding opportunities may be available and usually awarded to advanced doctoral students with strong teaching and academic record.

Typically, funded students receive a scholarship in the form of tuition waiver (instructional fee) during the academic year. In addition, doctoral students will receive a scholarship in the form of summer semester tuition waiver during the first two years.

Funded students who are making satisfactory progress are eligible to apply for fourth year of funding. There is no guarantee that the School will be in a position to offer fourth year funding to any graduate student, and no graduate student is ever guaranteed fourth year funding even if

there is such funding available. To apply for fourth-year funding, students must submit the *Application for Doctoral Student Fourth-Year Funding* to the graduate secretary by March 1 of their third academic year of funding.

### **Course Load**

Most Media & Communication (MC) classes are three credit hours. Students who are currently working their way through coursework typically enroll in 9 hours (3 courses) in the fall and spring semesters and 6 credit hours (2 courses) in the summer session. Funded students who have completed their coursework must enroll in at least 4 credit hours.

**Once a graduate student begins work on a doctoral dissertation, s/he must be continuously enrolled in dissertation hours during fall and spring semesters until graduation.** Otherwise, the student will have to apply for readmission to the Graduate College and pay for the requisite credits then.

### **Transfer of Credits/Course Waiver**

Students are eligible to apply for up to 9 hours of transfer credit from another accredited master's program or from BGSU graduate-level classes completed as an Advanced Undergraduate or Non-Degree Graduate Student. Should a student receive a waiver for a particular course, s/he will need to complete an elective course to make up the overall credit hours required. Waivers must be requested in writing, which should be submitted with proper documentation of prior coursework to the Graduate Coordinator.

### **Graduate Orientation**

All incoming graduate students are required to participate in Graduate Orientation. This takes place one week before the fall semester starts. Returning students have participation obligations each year during orientation week within the school. All returning funded students should report by the beginning date of each year's contract.

### **Travel & Research Funding**

The School of Media and Communication has limited funds available to assist full-time graduate students with travel and research expenses. Students who have peer-reviewed papers may apply for funding to attend a conference. Travel expenses to present papers at conferences can be reimbursed up to \$200, but the amount is subject to change, depending

on the fund availability. No student is funded more than once in one fiscal year, from July 1 to June 30.

Students must apply for funding at least 14 days prior to conference attendance. Documentation in the form of email notification of acceptance or program copy should accompany the application; the conference program must list BGSU as the student's institution.

The Graduate Coordinator must sign the application form. Travel reimbursement also requires students to submit a request after their travel, as instructed on the travel fund application form. To qualify for travel reimbursement, a student must be 1) a full-time MC graduate student, and 2) taking coursework, or enrolled for four or more graduate credit hours, if completed coursework. In addition, doctoral students may be eligible for dissertation research funding support. When the funding is available, a call for applications will be announced.

### Style Guidelines

Scholarly style and convention should be followed in all written work in Media and Communication. The manual used should be appropriate to the subject matter. The latest editions of the *American Psychological Association's Publication Manual*, Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertation*, the *Modern Languages Association Handbook* and *The Chicago Manual of Style* are acceptable manuals. However, if an instructor requires a specific style guide, students should follow as required by the instructor.

### Forms

Many of the important forms necessary for the PhD program that are mentioned herein can be found through DocuSign, which is accessible through the Graduate College website (<http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/documents-and-forms.html>). Those necessary forms accessed through DocuSign include the following:

- Preliminary Examination Application/Report, Topic Approval Form, Dissertation Defense & Manuscript Form, ETD Submission/Approval Form, Application for Graduation.

In addition, there are School specific forms that PhD students will need. These can be accessed through the SMC website. These forms include:

- Change of Advisor Form, Fourth Year Funding Application Form.

DocuSign forms for the Graduate College should be completed 24 hours prior to meetings (e.g., Prelim defense, dissertation proposal defense). School forms should be submitted to the Graduate Secretary. Students must complete all forms before submitting them to faculty, advisors, and/or administrators for signatures. Students are strongly encouraged to keep a copy of completed and signed forms in their personal records.

### Degree Audit Proposal Report System (DARS)

While completing coursework, graduate students need to make appointments with their advisor to go over their DARS report. Students should do this each semester (fall and spring). During their discussion with their advisor, students should go over the courses that they have taken, and which degree requirements that they fulfill. They should also discuss the courses that they will take in order to complete other degree requirements.

### Academic Honesty Policy

The graduate program of the School of Media and Communication is committed to the University's standards on academic honesty as expressed in the University Charter and Student Code. This statement supplements those provisions. As these documents note, cheating and plagiarism are destructive to the central purpose of the University and never tolerated.

### Policy Definitions

As defined in the charter and code, violations of academic honesty include:

- **Plagiarism:** Representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.
- **Cheating:** Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise.
- **Fabrication:** Falsification or invention of any information or citation in any academic exercise.
- **Facilitating Academic Dishonesty:** Helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty.

### Policy Applications for Media and Communication Graduate Students

A. Students must always be very careful to acknowledge any kind of borrowing that is included in their work, not only in words but ideas. Acknowledgment of whatever is not one's own work is the proper and honest use of

sources. Ignorance of citation style is no excuse. Style manuals provide extensive information on appropriate forms of citation.

B. Unless explicitly permitted by the professor, students shall not submit any work that the student himself/herself prepared for any other purpose, including work prepared for other classes or for other degree programs.

C. Unless explicitly permitted by the professor, students must work independently on take-home examinations. Consultations with other students or other individuals over the content of take-home exams are forbidden. All information provided in response to take-home examination questions that are not the student's own work must be fully credited to its source.

D. The use of professional term paper services or research services is always forbidden.

E. Students are always responsible for the data collection and analysis in works that they represent as their own, unless the work in question is explicitly credited to the source.

F. Students should take great care to comply with professional standards in regard to submission of their work to professional conferences and journals.

### ***Enforcement & Penalties***

Faculty members will report every instance of academic dishonesty to the Graduate College and keep the Graduate Coordinator informed in the process. At BGSU, students who plagiarize are subject to penalties described in the student code, ranging from failure on an assignment to dismissal from the University.

### **Probation & Dismissal**

It is possible for a student to lose funding at the end of a semester and be placed on academic probation (without funding) for the subsequent semester. Graduate students are required to demonstrate "satisfactory progress toward the degree" in order to maintain a teaching, administrative, or research assistantship. Failure to make satisfactory progress normally results in academic probation and may lead to dismissal from the graduate program.

Satisfactory progress means that a graduate student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. This GPA requirement applies to all graduate students at BGSU, including those who are currently enrolled as non-degree seeking students. Unsatisfactory progress is also indicated by the accumulation of two or more C's, a D, or an F. Students who are placed on or continued on probation will be notified in writing by the Graduate College.

In general, students should not remain on probation for more than two semesters; if satisfactory progress seems unlikely after one or two semesters on probation, the student is likely to be dismissed from the program.

### **Consensual Amorous Relationships Policy**

On June 22, 2007, the Board of Trustees of BGSU approved the statement below to cover all university employees:

"The university takes seriously its duty to provide a place to study and work free of situations that may be construed as abuse of authority, an inappropriate conflict of interest, preferential treatment, or other unprofessional and unethical conduct. The policy below is established in order to avoid such instances.

1. Within the University community, supervisors and faculty are not to have supervisory, evaluative, instructional, coaching, advisory, or other relationships with students or employees with whom they have or have had a consensual amorous relationship.

2. If an amorous relationship exists or develops, the faculty or staff member of superior rank must disclose the relationship to his/her immediate supervisor in a timely manner. The supervisor will then take steps to make alternate arrangements affecting one or both parties, to effectively discontinue any supervisory, evaluative, instructional, coaching, advisory, or other formal connections between them. If possible, such arrangements should be made in ways that respect the interest of all involved and will not be prejudicial toward or against either party.

3. The decision of an immediate supervisor may be appealed by either or both parties to the next higher administrative level.

4. Disclosure is the responsibility of those who engage in, or are about to engage in, amorous relationships within the University community. Failure to abide by this policy may result in disciplinary actions taken against any negligent party. The range of disciplinary actions would depend upon the circumstances and culpability of those involved. Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, a verbal warning, a letter of warning, temporary reassignment, temporary suspension or other measures, as the case may warrant. The imposition of faculty sanctions beyond the written warning should abide by the policy on sanctions contained elsewhere in the Academic Charter. Disciplinary actions regarding administrative staff and classified staff are administered by the Office of the Executive Vice President; disciplinary

actions regarding faculty are administered by the Office of the VPAA/Provost.” [Source: *A Handbook of Commonly Shared Employment Policies for BGSU faculty, Administrative and Classified Staff 10/07*]

### **Incomplete Coursework**

The School of Media and Communication follows the policy of the Graduate College regarding incomplete coursework. The policy, applied to both degree and non-degree seeking students, is as follows:

An INC (incomplete) may be given only when a student fails to fulfill a specified requirement in a course. An incomplete may be given at the discretion of the instructor, only with the agreement of the student (exceptions may be considered on a case by case basis). The instructor should notify the student of the deadline and expectations for completion. An INC may be removed and a grade substituted if the student completes course requirements to the satisfaction of the instructor prior to the deadline established by the Graduate College (or prior to an earlier deadline established by the instructor). The Graduate College deadlines for removal of incomplete grades for the respective academic semesters are:

- (a) Fall semester: March first
- (b) Spring semester: August first
- (c) Summer semester: November first

For an extension of the deadline, the student must make a written request to the instructor. If the instructor agrees, the instructor must petition their academic dean or designate for such consideration in writing prior to the expiration of the deadline stated above. For courses taken for a letter grade, any mark of INC not removed by these deadlines will change to F. For courses taken S/U, any mark of INC not removed by these deadlines will change to U. A student cannot graduate with a grade of INC in a graduate level course. If a student receives an INC in their graduation semester, they will be removed from the graduation list. They will then need 3341-3-9 4 to apply for graduation in a future semester after the incomplete has been resolved.

### **Graduation**

Students must apply for graduation early in the semester they plan to graduate. Students file the form directly with the Graduate College. Students are eligible for graduation if they have fulfilled all their academic program requirements and met all the Graduate College deadlines and have applied for graduation.

## **Program of Study for the Doctor of Philosophy**

The doctoral degree in Media and Communication is designed to prepare students for a career in scholarship, research, and teaching at a college/university. Courses in the program provide doctoral students with a deeper understanding of theories related to media and communication. Ultimately, the coursework would, in part, help students to build an expertise and guide their research and teaching in their careers. In addition, courses in the program help to hone doctoral students' research skills and other skills necessary for rigorous scholarship.

In addition, doctoral students are required to write a dissertation that is based on theories and methods they learned through their coursework. The dissertation represents a concerted effort by the doctoral student to utilize theory and method to build on past literature in the fields of media and communication. The dissertation should become the foundation for the student's future research and career.

### **Degree Requirements**

The Ph.D. in Media and Communication requires a minimum of 64 hours of coursework beyond the master's degree. A master's degree is a prerequisite for admission. Students must take 48 hours of coursework, followed by 16 hours of dissertation work. All 48 hours of coursework must be from 6000 or 7000 level courses. Students should not take 5000 level courses. Students must complete the doctoral degree within eight years and maintain continuous enrollment until they graduate. A student in good standing must maintain a minimum of 3.0 cumulative GPA in all coursework, and have accumulated no more than two incomplete grades at one time.

The residency requirement for doctoral students is as follows: Students are required to be enrolled in a total of 15 hours over two consecutive semesters during their coursework. Doctoral students holding a graduate assistantship must be enrolled full-time in Fall and Spring semesters and be registered in non-audit graduate work. Graduate assistants are encouraged to register for 6 credit hours in graduate coursework during their first two summers.

### Required Courses (9 credit hours)

- MC 6000 Introduction to Media and Communication
- MC 6300 Social Scientific Research Methods, or equivalent methods class. The GPC determines equivalency.
- MC 6400: Humanistic Research Methods, or equivalent methods class. The GPC determines equivalency.

PhD students MAY NOT take the versions of these courses offered online or off campus. Those sections are reserved for strategic communication MA students only.

### Tool Courses (9 credit hours)

Students are required to take three of the following tools courses.

- MC 6010: Rhetorical Criticism
- MC 7010: Interpretive Research Methods
- MC 7300: Critical Media Analysis
- MC 7020: Descriptive & Inferential Statistics (or another comparable stats course offered through programs like Sociology or Psychology)
- MC 7760: Conceptualization & Measurement in Communication Research
- MC 7770: Advanced Social Science Methods

It is recommended that students, prior to enrolling, consult the instructor of the course in order to make sure that it meets the student's academic needs.

### Emphasis Courses (15 credit hours of MC courses)

Each doctoral student must complete at least four courses (plus on 3 credit hour independent study) that are designated as part of one of the three areas of emphasis within the School of Media & Communication. Emphasis courses constitute the core knowledge in media and communication scholarship students acquire during their doctoral study in the School. Ultimately, the emphasis provides students with the depth needed for a research degree. At this time, the following courses are designated within the following areas of emphasis:

- Critical Media Studies & Rhetoric:
  - MC 6570: Intercultural Communication
  - MC 7300: Critical Media Studies
  - MC 7630: Communication for Social Change

- Interpersonal Communication:
  - MC 6530: Interpersonal Communication
  - MC 7610: Seminar in Race & Communication
  - MC 7000: Relational Communication
  - MC 7530: Theory & Practice in Interpersonal Communication
- Media Audiences & Processes:
  - MC 6440: Persuasion
  - MC 7110: Mass Communication Theory
  - MC 7370: New Media Research
  - MC 7770: Topics in Advanced Social Scientific Research Analysis

Special topics courses are also offered for each of the areas, so that students may attain the full 12 credit hours. In addition, students may take an independent study that addresses concepts, theories, or issues related to their area of emphasis. The student's faculty advisor typically administers such an independent study.

### Elective Courses (15 credit hours)

Students need to take MC electives that will supplement their emphasis. The elective courses can count as a "minor" or secondary emphasis that will expand students' knowledge beyond their primary interest. In many cases, this could be a "minor" in one of the other areas of emphasis in the School of Media & Communication. Ultimately, the electives should provide students with breadth.

Alternatively, student may choose to pursue a cognate instead of MC elective courses. Students may take four classes outside of the School, five if they are enrolled in a certificate program. The cognate track will involve 12-15 hours in an academic area(s)/department(s) in BGSU outside the MC degree program. A doctoral student may select, with guidance from his/her advisor, an appropriate selection of courses from departments outside of the School of Media and Communication that will help constitute an external, related area of expertise.

### Online Courses

PhD students may only take online courses during the summer semesters, with permission from their advisor.

### Reading Hours/Independent Study

Doctoral students may enroll in a maximum of 6 credit hours of readings or independent study. Three of those hours could address their

emphasis, while the other three could be used to prepare for the preliminary examination. Students should reserve these credit hours for the summer semesters, as course offerings are sparse at those times.

### **Dissertation Research (16 credit hours)**

Students must enroll in MC 7990 Dissertation Hours while they work to complete their dissertation. Students enroll in dissertation hours as soon as they complete coursework, and remained enrolled in those hours through the preliminary examination and dissertation process. Students must complete at least 16 hours of dissertation credits. While a student may take additional hours of dissertation credits beyond the required 16, only 16 hours of MC7990 will count toward the doctoral degree.

### **Teaching Practicum (1 credit hour)**

Students with teaching assistantships must enroll in MC 6970 Teaching Practicum during their first semester of funding.

### **Colloquium**

The Colloquium is designed to create an active community for friendly scholarly discussion among graduate students and faculty. Typically, faculty, students, and/or guest speakers will present their research, which is then open to group discussion. Graduate students who regularly attend colloquium (three times in the fall, three times in the spring) can be eligible for travel funding.

### **Advising**

Members of the graduate faculty in SMC play three important roles necessary for students' advising and progression through the PhD program: temporary advisor, faculty advisor, and dissertation chair. A temporary advisor will be assigned to each incoming PhD student. The assignment of the advisor is based on the student's statement of purpose (from their application), and faculty comments made during the application review process. The temporary advisor will help the student integrate into the School, as well as an area of emphasis. The temporary advisor can also address questions that incoming students might have concerning their program of study and course work. Before completing the first year of coursework, students need to declare a faculty advisor and submit the *Change of Advisor* form to the Graduate Coordinator for approval. Faculty advisors must hold Level 1 graduate faculty status and be on the SMC faculty list.

Faculty advisors will aid the students in completing their program of study. Faculty advisors will prepare students for the preliminary examination, and help them to narrow down ideas about their eventual dissertation project. In addition, the faculty advisor should prepare the student for the job market and seeking employment after their program of study is complete. Faculty advisors can also serve as dissertation chairs. See dissertation committee on p. 11 for more information about that role. Before a student carries out any change of advisor, it is suggested that the student discuss the changes with both advisors involved before formally applying for the change. The form requires the signature of the Graduate Coordinator. If there is a change in faculty advisor anytime during the program, the student must make sure to file the *Change of Advisor* form and seek approval from the Graduate Coordinator. Unapproved advisor change will be deemed void.

### **Doctoral Presentation**

Doctoral students are strongly encouraged to make presentation(s) during their program of study. They may present their dissertation or other research at professional conferences. Examples are AEJMC, BEA, ICA and NCA. Students may also present their research at other forums. Consult with your advisor.

### **Internship**

Doctoral students may enroll in MC 7890 Internships (S/U, 1-4 hours) and may have the hours (up to six hours combining all non-dissertation reading hours) count toward the degree or required minimum hours. An internship requires professional supervision on the job and an evaluation from the director of the internship.

### **Preliminary Examination**

This examination is comprised of a written and an oral component. The written preliminary examination is a take-home exam intended to assess the student's ability to integrate knowledge following the completion of their coursework, and to assess their readiness to proceed on their dissertation. The preliminary examination is taken when students have successfully completed or near the end of their coursework. All MC core courses must be completed prior to taking this examination. The following categories must be addressed in the exam: 1) theory, 2) method, 3) primary area of interest, and 4) secondary area of

interest/cognate. Students may work with the preliminary exam committee to conduct an independent study at the end of coursework, which will allow them to prepare for the exam. The independent study will count toward their 48 hours of coursework.

### ***Preliminary Examination Committee***

The first step toward the preliminary exams is the formation of a Preliminary Examination Committee. The student, in consultation with his/her advisor, selects faculty members to serve on the committee and then meets with those faculty members to invite them to serve on the committee. The committee must have at least three members (including the chair) from the School of Media and Communication, in addition to a Graduate College Representative. The committee chair must have regular graduate faculty status. All other committee members should be regular or provisional graduate faculty. The Graduate College Representative will be assigned by the Graduate College. All members of the committee, including the student and the Graduate Coordinator, will receive written notification about the appointment of the Graduate College Representative. Students or their advisors may request, in writing, appointment of a particular Graduate College Representative as a committee member. This request should be attached to the *Preliminary Examination Application/Report form*. Students should note, however, that the desired appointees may not be granted. In general, the Graduate College Representative has two primary responsibilities: 1) to assure the University that all minimum standards of the Graduate College, both written and implied, have been met in all aspects of the preliminary examination process, and 2) to ensure that the student is treated fairly and equitably in all aspects of the examination. The Graduate College Representative must be a participant in all deliberations and actions.

### ***Committee Meetings and Application***

The committee members and the student will work together to develop a reading list. Students and committee members will play an important role in this learning process, which will be geared toward committee members' academic/research area as well as the student's research interest. Students must apply to the Graduate College for permission to take preliminary examinations during their final semester of coursework by filing the *Preliminary Examination Application/Report form*. The form

is available through DocuSign, on the Graduate College website. The application must be submitted through DocuSign with signatures of the committee members, advisor, and Graduate Coordinator. Students should also print out the form and submit it to the Graduate Secretary for internal records. After the form is submitted, the Graduate College arrange for the appointment of an outside faculty member to serve as the Graduate College Representative. Students must complete the preliminary exam process (exam, oral defense, rewrites) within a five-week time span, which begins from the moment that they receive their prelim questions. If students need additional time, the student and advisor must petition the Graduate Coordinator.

Students are highly recommended to complete their preliminary exam process by the first week of the fall or spring semesters. This will allow them to maximize their time. For instance, if a student completes their coursework in the summer, they should try to conduct the prelims late in the summer before the beginning of the fall semester. The oral defense should, at the latest, be conducted the first week of fall classes.

### ***Examination Procedure***

Upon the notification by the student, the Graduate Secretary or Graduate Coordinator will request questions from faculty at least three weeks prior to the start of exams. Students should check with the Graduate Secretary or Coordinator one week prior to the exams to ensure that all exam questions have arrived. Students are given a maximum of one week to complete the writing for this exam. Typically, the student receives his/her questions on a Monday morning around 8:00 AM. The students will return their responses to the Graduate Secretary by 5pm of the Monday of the following week; students who fail to complete the written exam fail the exam as a whole. The exam responses will, in turn, be distributed to all of the committee members by the Graduate Secretary. The faculty members will be given two weeks to read and respond to all of the student's answers and return those responses to the Graduate Secretary. At that point, the chair and the student may look at the committee members' written responses available on file in the Media and Communication office. The student may request a copy of each faculty member's cover response and any comments made directly on the exams.

A student is deemed to have failed a prelim question, if more than half of the graders assign

“fail” to the answer to a given question. Should a student fail one question, the student is allowed to proceed with the oral defense. If a student fails two questions: the student is required to rewrite the failed answers before proceeding with the oral defense. If a student fails three or four questions, the student automatically fails the entire prelim and is mandated to retake the prelim after minimum six months.

### **Oral Defense and Outcomes**

An oral defense of the preliminary examination is required. The student consults the prelim committee members to set the date of the oral defense after the deadline for the faculty response. At the oral defense, the committee may ask a student to rewrite all or parts of a question, depending on their answers during the defense. If a student fails the preliminary exam either at the written or oral stage, s/he may request permission from the Graduate Program Committee (after a lapse of six months) to take a second examination. The student and advisor should work with the committee to develop new questions and ensure that areas that led to the first failure have been addressed. Students will be dismissed from the doctoral program if they fail the second examination. Students who pass the preliminary examination will finalize their *Preliminary Examination Application/Report* through DocuSign. A student may begin working on their dissertation proposal after the successful completion of the doctoral preliminary examination.

## **Dissertation**

### **Dissertation Committee**

The Dissertation Committee should consist of the SMC faculty advisor, two SMC faculty members, and the Graduate College Representative (appointed by the Graduate College). The faculty advisor may also serve as the chair of the dissertation committee. The dissertation chair will aid the student in conceptualizing the dissertation project, and serve as the primary reader for the document. Students will turn in drafts to the dissertation chair, who will make comments and suggest revisions. As in the case of the faculty advisor, the chair of the committee must hold Level 1 graduate faculty status in the Graduate College. The other committee members must hold Level 2 or Level 1 graduate faculty status. A student may use the same committee as the preliminary exam committee to serve as his or her

dissertation committee. They may also build a new committee altogether.

### **Dissertation Topic Proposal**

The dissertation chair and student should work together to prepare the proposal. The proposal should contain the following:

- A statement of the problem
- The objectives of the study and justification of its selection
- Relationship of the topic to previous research in the field, including a review of the literature
- A description of the method and procedures for solving the problem
- Organization of the dissertation into chapters
- A timetable for the dissertation's completion

The proposal should be submitted to the members of the student's committee and then presented at a proposal defense. Signatures from committee members, the student, and the Graduate Coordinator must be secured on the *Dissertation Topic Approval form*. All research involving the use of human participants must have approval from the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB).

### **Doctoral Candidacy**

To be eligible for the status of doctoral candidate, students must have met the following requirements:

- GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Successful completion of written and oral preliminary exams
- Successful defense of the dissertation topic proposal
- HSRB approval documentation (if applicable)

The student should prepare the *Dissertation Topic Approval form* 24 hours before the dissertation topic proposal defense meeting. If the defense is successful, the committee members and the student will sign the form after the defense. The form is then forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator for signature. The Graduate College will send a letter to the student when the topic is approved, along with a confirmation that the student has been admitted to candidacy.

After the dissertation topic has been approved and submitted to the Graduate College, students may not change their dissertation advisor or committee members without the mutual consent of all parties.

**Dissertation Format**

The student should review the *Thesis and Dissertation Handbook*, which is available on the Graduate College Website ([http://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/graduate-college/doc/Thesis%20and%20Dissertation%20Handbook\\_07.01.14.pdf](http://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/graduate-college/doc/Thesis%20and%20Dissertation%20Handbook_07.01.14.pdf)). Students also must consult with their advisors to choose the appropriate style manual as a reference. Students may use the services of a copy editor at their own expense.

**Dissertation Defense**

A copy of the dissertation, prepared by the student, should be given to each committee member at least two weeks prior to the scheduled examination. At that time, the student should notify all members of his or her committee of the time and place of the defense as well. A room for the defense should be reserved with the Graduate Secretary. A dissertation defense is open to the public and the Graduate Secretary posts public notices in the building.

The final oral examination can be expected to cover the dissertation and directly related fields. The student may pass the defense with no more than one dissenting vote. If the committee reaches a decision of "Conditional Pass," the conditions must be met before the exam is recorded in the Graduate College as satisfactory. The dissertation is filed electronically with the Graduate College with all required forms to be submitted via the graduate secretary. See the graduate college website for submission information:

<http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/thesis-and-dissertations/submission-and-approval-of-your-manuscript.html>

## Important Dates & Deadlines

**August 1**

Spring semester incomplete grade due

**November 1**

Summer semester incomplete grade due

**Mid-February**

Awards application due

**March 1**

4<sup>th</sup> year funding application due

Dissertation research funding application due

Graduate assistantship & tuition scholarship application due

**March 1**

Fall semester incomplete grade due

**PhD Program Study Check Sheet**  
**Course Title**

<b>Taken</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC 6000: Introduction to Media & Communication	Core
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC 6300: Social Scientific Methods*	Core
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC 6400: Humanistic Methods*	Core
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	Tool Course _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	Tool Course _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	Tool Course _____ [9 hour min.]	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC Emphasis _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC Emphasis _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC Emphasis _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC Emphasis _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC Emphasis _____ [Emphasis: 15 hours]	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC Elective _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC Elective _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC Elective _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC Elective _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	3	MC Elective _____ [Electives: 15 hours]	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	16	MC 7990 Dissertation Hours	

\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL HOURS COMPLETED (64minimum)

\*Alternate methods courses can be taken, but they must be approved by the Graduate Program Committee.