



M.A. in Media and Communication
Specialization in Strategic Communication and Social Media

2020-2021 Graduate Handbook

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StratComm [Program Web Page](#)

General Information

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About this Master of Arts program

The field of media and communication is constantly changing. Professionals who desire to continue or pursue a career in the field are expected to embrace change and apply current trends to advance in their current positions or explore new career opportunities, especially if they aspire to leadership roles.

StratComm Course work refreshes, solidifies, and upgrades the undergraduate knowledge base, allowing students to prepare for the challenges emerging in their professional careers. As a result, graduates of the program will be equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills in media and communication.

The specialization is designed for media and communication professionals working in corporations, agencies, not-for-profit organizations and elsewhere in marketing, corporate communication, public relations, social media, executive communication and other disciplines. Graduates of the Master of Arts in Media and Communication Strategic Communication Specialization will have a greater appreciation for the role that communication plays in organizational life, understand research-driven strategic planning and evaluation of communication programs and tactics, and understand different types of social media and their application alongside the full range of paid, owned, shared and earned media.

Students in StratComm should expect a dynamic educational experience that blends theory and practice, knowledge, and skills to result in a foundation for professional and personal growth. We present subject matter in wider context to fuse business and organizational strategy with communication strategy. We aspire to help students become highly effective business people with communication as their expertise..

About BGSU's School of Media and Communication

The School of Media and Communication brings together research, teaching, and service as a leader in developing the knowledge, skills, and values critical to civic and global engagement. We connect and enhance undergraduate and graduate educational experiences to prepare students for lifelong growth and leadership. We offer quality education – enriched by co-curricular opportunities and evolving communication technologies – that prepares students to achieve professional success, communicate effectively, contribute to their communities, and engage globally in relationships with individuals, governments, businesses, and not-for-profit and civic organizations.

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 at BGSU look forward to contributing to today's media and communication scholarship, education and practice. The graduate program is known for its excellent placement records, 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.

SMC has a long track record of successful graduate education, having produced communication managers at major corporations and faculty at colleges and universities throughout the region and beyond. The StratComm program also has a strong and growing network of alumni.

Time to Complete Degree

Candidates must complete a minimum of 27 hours of graduate credit, plus three (3) hours of comprehensive examination credit for a total of 30 hours. In the comprehensive examination for this master's degree, candidates are expected to demonstrate apt knowledge of the discipline of media and communication. The Specialization in Strategic Communication is a part-time program designed to be completed in less than two years; students can elect to complete the program full-time and must complete all their degree requirements within six (6) years. After the passage of that time limit, courses taken before the six-year mark must be revalidated by the Graduate College.

Course Load

All Media & Communication (MC) classes are three credit hours, offered in seven (7) week sessions in Spring and Fall and six (6) week sessions in Summer. Students typically enroll in one (1) class per session unless they choose to enroll in more. MC 6980 (readings for comprehensive exams) is also 3 credit hours and is offered in the second seven-week session in Spring and Fall. The exam is not available in Summer.

Coursework

Required Courses (3 credit hours each):

- MC 6001: Strategic Communication
- MC 6301: Quantitative Methods for Strategic Communication
- MC 6401: Qualitative Methods for Strategic Communication
- MC 6551: Public Relations Research & Practice
- MC 6553: Advertising Research & Practice
- MC 6550 Organizational Communication
- MC 6552 Social Media Seminar
- MC 6980 Comprehensive Exam

Electives:

- Six credit hours of electives must be completed. Three of those six hours must be MC courses; Three can be from any discipline, but must be eCampus or Distance Learning courses.
- Electives should be chosen in consultation with the program coordinator.

Transfer of Credits/Course Waiver

Students are eligible to apply for up to nine (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 (30). Waivers must be requested in writing, which should be submitted with proper documentation of prior coursework to the Program Coordinator.

Graduate Orientation

All incoming graduate students are encouraged to participate in BGSU's online orientation events, including MC 5000 Intro to Graduate Studies.

Forms

Most forms mentioned can be found on the [BGSU Graduate College Website](#). Others are available through the School office (SMC@bgsu.edu)

Degree Audit Proposal Report System (DARS)

Graduate students review their DARS report each semester. They should consult with the academic advisor of the program (Program Coordinator) requesting course registration. As a rule of thumb, students should take required courses at the time they are offered; electives can be taken at any time. Students are responsible for tracking their own progress.

MA Comprehensive Exam Instructions

The comprehensive exam will be given twice per year – the second weekend of the second session in Spring and the second weekend in the second session in Fall. In preparation for the comprehensive exam, students request enrollment in MC 6980 during the semester in which they wish to take the exam.

The MA comprehensive examination consists of four questions: One on MC 6001, one on a methods course (either MC 6301 or MC 6401), and two MC courses of your choosing. The exam will be graded by at least two different professors. To facilitate this process, students complete the following forms.

Comprehensive Examination Scheduling Form: The form identifies which courses the questions will cover, which faculty members taught the courses, and the semester the exam will be taken. The form should be submitted to the graduate secretary by email (SMC@bgsu.edu).

The deadline for receipt the form to the SMC Graduate Secretary (smc@bgsu.edu) is the third week in the first session for Fall and Spring semesters. Please note that if the form is received after these dates, you will not be permitted to participate in the exam until the next scheduled date.

The exam will be conducted on Canvas. You will have access to the test beginning at 12 noon ET on Friday, and must complete the exam no later than the following Monday by 11:59 a.m. Please note the deadline is one minute before 12 noon on that Monday.

Each of the four questions should be covered in 2,000-2,500 words, roughly 5-6 pages plus works cited, and in proper APA style.

During the semester you intend to graduate, your tasks:

- Decide which courses you wish to be tested upon
- Complete the Comprehensive Exam Scheduling Form 2020 as described above. Obtain the form from SMC@bgsu.edu and return it there after completion.
- Contact each professor and ask them to prepare a test question for you. Please be sure to indicate

the course number and semester you took that course.

- Complete the [application for graduation](#) in the Student Center in MyBGSU. [Note relevant deadlines here.](#)

In preparing for the exam, students should correspond with the faculty members writing questions to discuss the topic area and the faculty member's expectations. Faculty members writing questions submit their questions at least one week in advance to the Graduate Secretary. One week prior to the exam, the students should check with the Graduate Secretary to ensure that their exam questions are on file.

Consultation with another person in any manner, e.g. in person, phone, text, Twitter Facebook, etc., for help answering the questions is strictly prohibited. Students may not ask questions about the exam once the exam time begins.

How the exam works

Under the supervision of the Program Coordinator, the Graduate Secretary distributes copies of the student's exam answers to the faculty readers. Faculty readers are expected to return their responses within two weeks after receipt of the exam answer.

Once the faculty readers have turned in their report/evaluation to the Graduate Secretary. Students may request a copy of the faculty response cover sheet and to review their exams. The original exam, the faculty copies of the exam and the cover response sheet remain in the School of Media and Communication at all times.

The professor who wrote the question and at least one other faculty member selected by the Program Coordinator will read each question. For students to pass, both readers must recommend a passing score for every question. If the readers are split in their grade, a third reader is selected by the Coordinator. For the students to pass, a majority of the readers must vote to pass them on each of the four questions. Any student who does not pass one or more of the questions may, upon recommendation of the program's Graduate Coordinator and approval of the dean designate of the Graduate College, be granted permission to retake the examination of the course(s) he or she failed. Upon failing a second examination, the student is dropped from the program.

The retake examination committee will consist of the original faculty body who evaluated the student's first examination. Each committee member will evaluate the answer(s) independently and report pass or fail to the Graduate Coordinator who will compile all the results and then file them with the Graduate College.

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. [Review the complete policy.](#)

Policy Applications for Media and Communication Graduate Students

- SMC expects that all students will complete the examination on their own independently and individually.
- 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.
- 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.
- Unless explicitly permitted by the professor, students must work independently on examinations. Consultations with other students or other individuals over the content of exams are forbidden. All information provided in response to examination questions that are not the student's own work must be fully credited to its source.
- The use of professional term paper services or research services is always forbidden.
- 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.
- Students should take great care to comply with professional standards in regard to submission of their work to professional conferences and journals.

Probation & Dismissal

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.

Funding is not typically available for this program. However, if a student was awarded funding, 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.

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, for some justifiable reason, a student fails to take the final examination or to fulfill a specified requirement in a course.

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. The Graduate College deadlines for removal of incomplete grades for the respective academic semesters are:

- Fall semester: June 1
- Spring semester: September 1
- Summer semester: November 1. However, an individual instructor may come to an agreement with his or her student for an earlier deadline for removal of an incomplete grade.
- The graduate dean designee has the authority to extend the deadline for an incomplete. The student must petition the graduate dean designee for such consideration in writing and prior to the expiration of the deadline. The instructor's support is required for approval of the request.
- For courses taken S/U, any mark of INC not removed by these deadlines will change to
- For courses taken for a letter grade, any mark of INC not removed by these deadlines will change to F. A student cannot graduate with a grade of INC.

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. Find relevant deadlines and additional information [here](#).

Advising

The Program Coordinator for the strategic communication specialization is the Advisor for graduate students in the program.

Keys to Success

The common style in the School of Media and Communication is APA Style. Find more information at www.APAStyle.org.

The ability to review academic literature and evaluate it is critical to your success. The following book is very helpful.

Pyrczak, Fred & Tcherni-Buzzeo, Maria. (2018). Evaluating Research in Academic Journals: A Practical Guide to Realistic Evaluation. 10.4324/9781351260961.

The pace and cadence of graduate work is different and more demanding than in undergraduate study. Be prepared to set aside time to carefully read and view course content. Keep abreast of the work.