

COMMUNICATION ARTS, BA

The Communication Arts major offers a liberal arts approach to studying communication. The value of the liberal arts approach is that students not only learn specific skills, they also gain a deep understanding of communication theory, history, research, and criticism. Our students learn to apply communication principles in different contexts and with a variety of different media. As a result, the Communication Arts major prepares students for a wide range of jobs and careers, including those that don't exist yet.

Courses in Communication Arts (https://guide.wisc.edu/courses/com_arts/) deal with a diverse range of communication-related topics and approach them from a variety of theoretical, practical, and aesthetic perspectives. The curriculum is designed to foster an understanding of communication processes, improve communication and digital literacy skills, and develop the capacity for critical appraisal and reflection.

The Communication Arts major has two named options:

- Communication Science and Rhetorical Studies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/communication-arts/communication-arts-ba/communication-arts-communication-science-rhetorical-studies-ba/>): explore the social, psychological, and practical aspects of communication and human behavior with a focus on public, mass, online, organizational, group, and interpersonal communication.
- Radio–Television–Film (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/communication-arts/communication-arts-ba/communication-arts-radio-television-film-ba/>): explore the history, theory, criticism, cultural uses, and production practices of television, film, radio, and digital media.

HOW TO GET IN

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Requirements	Details
How to get in	No application required. All students who meet the requirements listed below are eligible to declare. For information on how to declare, visit Advising & Careers.
Courses required to get in	None
GPA requirements to get in	None
Credits required to get in	None
Other	None

Students may declare only one option in the major: Communication Science and Rhetorical Studies or Radio–Television–Film.

Non–Letters & Science students will need permission from their school or college to pursue an additional major in Communication Arts.

REQUIREMENTS

UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison are required to fulfill a minimum set of common university general education requirements to ensure that every graduate acquires the essential core of an undergraduate education. This core establishes a foundation for living a productive life, being a citizen of the world, appreciating aesthetic values, and engaging in lifelong learning in a continually changing world. Various schools and colleges will have requirements in addition to the requirements listed below. Consult your advisor for assistance, as needed. For additional information, see the university Undergraduate General Education Requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatetext>) section of the Guide.

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| General Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breadth–Humanities/Literature/Arts: 6 credits • Breadth–Natural Science: 4 to 6 credits, consisting of one 4- or 5-credit course with a laboratory component; or two courses providing a total of 6 credits • Breadth–Social Studies: 3 credits • Communication Part A & Part B * • Ethnic Studies * • Quantitative Reasoning Part A & Part B * |
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* The mortarboard symbol appears before the title of any course that fulfills one of the Communication Part A or Part B, Ethnic Studies, or Quantitative Reasoning Part A or Part B requirements.

COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)

Students pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in the College of Letters & Science must complete all of the requirements below. The College of Letters & Science allows this major to be paired with either a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science curriculum.

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

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| Mathematics | Complete the University General Education Requirements for Quantitative Reasoning A (QR-A) and Quantitative Reasoning B (QR-B) coursework. |
| Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the fourth unit of a language other than English; OR • Complete the third unit of a language and the second unit of an additional language other than English. |

- L&S Breadth
- 12 credits of Humanities, which must include 6 credits of literature; and
 - 12 credits of Social Science; and
 - 12 credits of Natural Science, which must include one 3+ credit Biological Science course and one 3+ credit Physical Science course.

Liberal Arts and Science Coursework	Complete at least 108 credits.
Depth of Intermediate/Advanced work	Complete at least 60 credits at the intermediate or advanced level.
Major	Declare and complete at least one major.
Total Credits	Complete at least 120 credits.
UW-Madison Experience	• 30 credits in residence, overall; and • 30 credits in residence after the 86th credit.
Quality of Work	• 2.000 in all coursework at UW-Madison • 2.000 in Intermediate/Advanced level coursework at UW-Madison

NON-L&S STUDENTS PURSUING AN L&S MAJOR

Non-L&S students who have permission from their school/college to pursue an additional major within L&S only need to fulfill the major requirements. They do not need to complete the L&S Degree Requirements above.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR

Communication Arts offers two options within the major:

- Communication Science and Rhetorical Studies
- Radio-Television-Film

Students declare one of the two options and complete a minimum of 10 courses and at least 30 credits in the major. Please note that COM ARTS courses numbered below 200 as well as COM ARTS 605, COM ARTS 614, and COM ARTS 615 do not count in the major.

STUDENTS MUST SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

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- **COMMUNICATION ARTS: COMMUNICATION SCIENCE AND RHETORICAL STUDIES** ([HTTPS://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/LETTERS-SCIENCE/COMMUNICATION-ARTS/COMMUNICATION-ARTS-BA/COMMUNICATION-ARTS-COMMUNICATION-SCIENCE-RHETORICAL-STUDIES-BA/](https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/communication-arts/communication-arts-ba/communication-arts-science-rhetorical-studies-ba/))
- **COMMUNICATION ARTS: RADIO-TELEVISION-FILM** ([HTTPS://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/LETTERS-SCIENCE/COMMUNICATION-ARTS/COMMUNICATION-ARTS-BA/COMMUNICATION-ARTS-RADIO-TELEVISION-FILM-BA/](https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/communication-arts/communication-arts-ba/communication-arts-radio-television-film-ba/))

RESIDENCE AND QUALITY OF WORK

- Minimum 2.000 GPA in all COM ARTS and major courses
- Minimum 2.000 GPA on at least 15 credits of upper-level work in the COM ARTS major, in residence. (Upper-level in the COM ARTS major includes courses at the Intermediate or Advanced level).
- 15 credits of COM ARTS major courses (200-699) taken on the UW-Madison campus.

HONORS IN THE MAJOR IN COMMUNICATION ARTS

Students may apply to pursue Honors in the Communication Arts major in consultation with a Communication Arts undergraduate advisor. To be accepted students must have:

- Completed the fundamentals course and the two core courses for their declared option and
- Earned a minimum 3.500 GPA in all COM ARTS courses

HONORS IN THE COMMUNICATION ARTS MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

To earn Honors in the Major in Communication Arts, students must satisfy both the requirements for the major (above) and the following additional requirements:

- Minimum 3.300 University GPA
- Minimum 3.500 GPA for all COM ARTS major courses
- Complete the requirements for the declared major option, to include:
 - All theory, history, criticism courses taken to meet the regular major requirements within the declared option must be numbered 400 or higher.
 - One additional theory, history, criticism course numbered 400 or higher.
 - Three theory, history and criticism courses must be completed on campus.
 - A two-semester senior honors thesis in COM ARTS 681 and COM ARTS 682, for a total of 6 credits.¹

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Submission and approval of a Senior Honors Thesis Proposal is required prior to the term in which students enroll for COM ARTS 681 Senior Honors Thesis. See the Communication Arts undergraduate advisor for current process. Approval of the completed thesis by the thesis advisor and a second Communication Arts faculty member is required.

UNIVERSITY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Total Degree	To receive a bachelor's degree from UW–Madison, students must earn a minimum of 120 degree credits. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 degree credits. Students should consult with their college or department advisor for information on specific credit requirements.
Residency	Degree candidates are required to earn a minimum of 30 credits in residence at UW–Madison. "In residence" means on the UW–Madison campus with an undergraduate degree classification. "In residence" credit also includes UW–Madison courses offered in distance or online formats and credits earned in UW–Madison Study Abroad/Study Away programs.
Quality of Work	Undergraduate students must maintain the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, or academic program to remain in good academic standing. Students whose academic performance drops below these minimum thresholds will be placed on academic probation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Explain core content in either of the two tracks: Communication Science and Rhetorical Studies or Radio-TV-Film.
2. Analyze communication from theoretical, historical, and critical perspectives.
3. Communicate effectively in writing, orally, or via the creation of media content.
4. Participate in communication practices that support diversity, equity, and inclusion for the historically marginalized.

FOUR-YEAR PLAN

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Please see any of the Named Options for a four-year plan.

ADVISING AND CAREERS

ADVISING AND CAREERS DECLARE OR CANCEL THIS MAJOR

Please follow the process described on the Communication Arts website (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/declaring/>).

Non-Letters & Science students will need permission from their school or college to pursue an additional major in Communication Arts.

COMMUNICATION ARTS ACADEMIC ADVISING

Communication Arts academic advisors (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/advising/>) assist students throughout their undergraduate studies.

COMMUNICATION ARTS COURSES

The Communication Arts Department offers a wide array of courses (https://guide.wisc.edu/courses/com_arts/). All the courses listed in the Guide are not offered each semester. Please see Course Search & Enroll (<https://public.enroll.wisc.edu>) for current course offerings.

CAREER EXPLORATION AND PREPARATION Gain Experience

The Department of Communication Arts encourages students to apply the knowledge and skills they attain through coursework to professional settings. Internships and part-time jobs at television networks, nonprofit organizations, talent agencies, magazines, radio stations, advertising agencies, production companies, government agencies, and other communication-related businesses help students gain work-related experience and explore career options.

Communication Arts offers a one-credit, online academic course to accompany a student's internship experience: COM ARTS 614 Field Experience in Communication and COM ARTS 615 Second Field Experience in Communication .

Attend Events

Throughout the academic year, students have the opportunity to participate in several communication-focused, career-related events.

Communication Arts Alumni Careers at a Glance

After completing a Letters & Science bachelor's degree with a Communication Arts major, alumni pursue a variety of careers. In a recent survey, Communication Arts alumni were asked to provide and categorize their occupation. The results are available on the Department of Communication Arts website:

- Communication Science & Rhetorical Studies Alumni Careers (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/careers/>)
- Radio–Television–Film Alumni Careers (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/careers/>)

SUCCESSWORKS

SuccessWorks (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/>) at the College of Letters & Science helps you turn the academic skills learned in your classes into a fulfilling life, guiding you every step of the way to securing jobs, internships, or admission to graduate school.

Through one-on-one career advising, events, and resources, you can explore career options, build valuable internship and research experience, and connect with supportive alumni and employers who open doors of opportunity.

- What you can do with your major (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/what-you-can-do-with-your-major/>) (Major Skills & Outcomes Sheets)
- Make a career advising appointment (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/make-an-appointment/>)

- Learn about internships and internship funding (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/finding-a-job-or-internship/>)
- Try “Jobs, Internships, & How to Get Them,” (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/canvas/>) an interactive guide in Canvas for enrolled UW–Madison students

WISCONSIN EXPERIENCE

WISCONSIN EXPERIENCE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

UW–Madison offers many opportunities to get involved. Communication Arts students join organizations across their areas of interest.

Department–Affiliated Organizations

- Communication Arts Student Association (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/casa/>) (CASA)
- Hollywood Badgers (<https://win.wisc.edu/organization/hollywoodbadgers/>)

STUDYING ABROAD

Communications Arts student are encouraged to look at study abroad programs (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/academics/major-advising-pages-maps/communication-arts/>) and opportunities across the globe. Our students have studied in cities such as London, Rome, Tel Aviv, Prague, Galway, Sydney, Madrid, Bologna, Cape Town, Paris, Copenhagen, and Buenos Aires. When planning for their semester abroad, students should think beyond courses required for their major. Students are encouraged to take courses from a variety of subjects to satisfy requirements and elective credits for their degree.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Communication science research team members gain hands-on research experience. Undergraduate research assistants may learn to code and enter data, interview participants, gather and prepare research materials, run experiments, and perform other activities required to complete a research study. Reading and writing assignments related to the research activities are assigned throughout the semester. Opportunities to participate in a research team vary from semester to semester.

RESOURCES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

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Students apply for scholarships online through Wisconsin Scholarship Hub (<https://wisc.academicworks.com/>). The Department of Communication Arts offers the following scholarships:

- Scott M. Broetzmann Scholarship in Communication Arts
- Christopher Neal Heinlein Memorial Scholarships
- S. Nelson and Carmella M. Nelson Scholarship
- Charline M. Wackman Awards for Summer Session
- Charline M. Wackman Awards (Fall Term)
- Keith Harris Wyche Memorial Scholarship

SUMMER INTERNSHIP FUND

The Communication Arts Department and Alumni Summer Internship Fund helps Communication Arts majors participate in internships with businesses or non-profit organizations.

See the scholarship (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/scholarships/>) and internship fund (<https://commarts.wisc.edu/undergraduate/internship-fund/>) sections of the department website for additional details and opportunities.