

Welcome Letter from the Department Chair and the Director of Advising

Welcome to UMass and welcome to the Department of Communication! We are delighted to have you among our 1,100+ Communication majors, joining one of the most popular majors on campus. We hope you will agree as the years unfold that even with such large numbers, you will find a personalized and welcoming environment in Communication to support your experiences at UMass and beyond.

Home to a professional grade television studio and other media-making tools and facilities, we are a place where theory meets practice and where scholarship and creative expression are harnessed to bring to light and try to solve social issues, inequalities, and injustices. We are known far and wide for our commitment to **engaged research and teaching**, which means that we offer a number of civic engagement and service learning experiences associated with our classes, we produce knowledge not just for other academics but also for and in conversation with the wider world, and we are deeply committed to informed and active citizenship.

In your Communication coursework, you will have the opportunity to learn with faculty at the cutting edge of the discipline. Our faculty members are active researchers who author books, articles, and chapters on a number of vital topics pertaining to communication through face-to-face interaction and through various media technologies. They engage in **creative expression** in documentary and other digital media forms, writing for the screen as well as for other contexts, and through narrative performance. Our department features one of the largest groups of **award-winning teachers** on campus, with several Distinguished Teaching Award, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award, and other award recipients.

Our advising program is recognized for its excellence across the university, as well. The department's holistic approach to advising features **professional advisors** who will help you track your progress in planning for courses, meeting requirements, and engaging in professional development throughout your years at UMass. We also have exceptionally well trained **peer advisors** who can answer your questions about courses, internships, Study Abroad, Honors, residential life, and other topics from a perspective that only fellow students can provide.

In the major, you will begin with courses introducing you to a few of our main emphases: **Interpersonal Communication and Culture; Media and Popular Culture Studies; Media, Technology, and Society; Rhetoric and Performance Studies; and Film Studies**. From that foundation, you will advance to mid- and upper-level courses on a number of more specific topics within and across these areas. We offer a variety of classes that focus on communication skills, including public speaking, writing and screenwriting, research methods, leadership and service learning, and video production. Many of our students choose to pursue the interdepartmental **Film Studies Certificate** and others choose double majors or minors from around campus. If you are interested in working with youth and/or community organizations, check out the department's **Media Literacy Certificate**.

In keeping in touch with our former students through an annual **Alumni Career Night** and other interactions, we know that our graduates go on to a variety of exciting careers in television, radio, and film; public relations, promotions, and integrated marketing communications; health communication; business and sales; and in non-profit and arts organizations. The sky is the limit with the Communication major, with its attention to critical thinking, public speaking and effective communication, writing and creating, and collaborating in a context of increasing global diversity.

Again, welcome to the major, and we look forward to getting to know you!

[Erica Scharrer](#)

Professor

Communication Department Chair

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Senior Lecturer, Director of Undergraduate
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