

## THE FIELD

Communication is at the center of social, cultural, and political life. As a communication major, you will develop analytical abilities that help you understand how communication works, whether in social media, a political speech, an argument between friends, a cross-cultural interaction, or a film or television program. Communication majors can study a wide array of topics, such as communication and cultural politics; film history and theory; technologies of communication and the nature of social institutions; media literacy; communication and social identities and relationships; mass media effects; and policies affecting communication technologies, systems, and institutions.

*There is no minor available in communication.*

## THE MAJOR

The communication major at UMass Amherst follows the liberal arts tradition, emphasizing the critical thinking, systematic analysis, and writing and speaking skills that make for engaged citizenship. We emphasize theory and methods of inquiry, as opposed to technical training. Our undergraduate courses are organized into five subject areas: interpersonal communication and culture; media and popular culture studies; media, technology, and society; rhetoric and performance studies; and film studies.

Communication is a popular major, so 100- and 200-level classes, which are aimed at first-year and sophomore students, are primarily large lecture classes. Our 300- and 400-level classes, which are usually restricted to juniors and seniors who have been formally admitted to the major, typically number from 25 to 45 students.

The major does not offer any industry-oriented, how-to classes in public relations, advertising, or broadcasting. It does, however, offer some great skill-building and applied courses, including public speaking, film and television production concepts, program process in television, and screenwriting. Students also gain applied training and skills through internships, service learning, and extracurricular campus experiences.

## ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Prospective first-year and transfer students may apply to the communication major when applying to UMass Amherst. If accepted, they are admitted directly into the major upon entering the university.

## MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Students admitted directly to the communication major must complete 45 credits in communication (including COMM 191: First Year Seminar, 1 credit); 37 credits must be in communication courses and nine credits are part of the International, Intercultural Education requirement, which may be fulfilled through any combination of study abroad, foreign language, or from a pre-approved list of regional studies courses. Required courses include an upper-level writing course (COMM 375: Writing as Communication); two additional courses at the 300-level or above; and two courses at the 400-level or above, which are restricted to 25 or fewer students.

## INTERNSHIPS

The Department of Communication strongly encourages its students to complete at least one internship during their undergraduate careers; 64 percent of recent graduates reported participating in an internship experience. Internships allow you to try out a new field, gain valuable skills, network with professionals in your field, and apply what you are learning in the classroom to real-life settings. Communication majors have interned in such diverse fields as media programming, public interest research, TV news, advertising, public relations, education, corporate management, sales, government, newspapers, magazines, nonprofits, and film production.

## **STUDY ABROAD**

The Department of Communication encourages students to study abroad or go on domestic exchange. Communication majors study all over the world and across the United States, bringing back new personal and academic insights and the broadened cultural awareness that comes from living in another place. Each year, approximately 60 communication students study abroad. In the last few years, students have studied in Australia, Germany, Israel, the Czech Republic, Japan, Peru, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Brazil, England, France, Italy, South Africa, and Ireland—and there are yet more options. Communication students also go on domestic exchange every year to schools in locations including California, Nebraska, and Nevada.

## **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES**

As a liberal arts degree, the bachelor of arts (BA) in communication prepares you for any career that calls for advanced literacy skills, analytical reasoning, and critical thinking. And, of course, the major prepares you for work as a communication specialist in industry; educational institutions; research organizations; political organizations; religious groups; and local, state, and federal government agencies. Here are some examples of what our graduates have gone on to do:

- Production, sales, or programming for print and digital media
- Media and communication advisors for a political campaign, intercultural organization, labor union, and government agency
- Communication consultants for personnel management, advertising, and sales organizations

Many of our graduates also pursue graduate degrees in fields such as education, human services, law, and business, in addition to communication-related fields, such as public relations and integrated marketing communications.

## **COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES**

The social and behavioral sciences focus on behavior and organization from cultural, social, and biological perspectives, examining people as both social and individual beings. Undergraduates in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences study culture, society, and individual and social interaction processes and learn methods by which knowledge in the social and behavioral sciences is created. Students are guided by the SBS Pathways approach, integrating their academic, experiential, and professional pathways. They anchor their knowledge in at least one discipline, but are encouraged to expand this knowledge through various broadening experiences inside and outside the classroom.

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