

RHETORIC, MEDIA, AND PUBLICS

Degree Type: PhD

The Doctor of Philosophy in Rhetoric, Media, and Publics is replacing the PhD in Communication Studies (Rhetoric and Public Culture). Rhetoric, Media, and Publics is an interschool program between the School of Communication, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, and the Medill School of Journalism, Media & Integrated Marketing Communications. It is housed in the Department of Communication Studies and administrated through the School of Communication.

The PhD program in Rhetoric, Media, and Publics is grounded in the humanistic tradition of rhetoric and its focus on the study of politics, philosophy, and the arts. The new program asks the fundamental question of how people influence, reflect, and transform society through mediated practices. Students learn to analyze the production and circulation of meaning in a range of rhetorical and journalistic texts, practices, and institutions through varied modes of qualitative inquiry, and to engage audiences and communities directly in the production of knowledge. The stakes of this inquiry are profoundly social and political as well as formal and aesthetic. The program teaches students to approach public media as sites for political contestation, for the representation and interrogation of ethics and power, and for imagining personhood and collective life.

Please note the program is in a period of transition. The older Communication Studies: Rhetoric and Public Culture PhD program is being replaced by a new PhD program in Rhetoric, Media, and Publics. Though this new program has been approved by Northwestern, Northwestern is currently unable to issue F-1 or J-1 documents for the PhD in Rhetoric, Media, and Publics while the program undergoes review by the federal government. In this interim period, we ask students requiring immigration documents to study in the United States to apply to the current Communication Studies: Rhetoric and Public Culture PhD program, which is able to issue F-1 or J-1 documents. All students not needing an immigration document from Northwestern should complete the application for the Rhetoric, Media, and Publics PhD program. These two groups will be considered together to admit our new Fall 2023 cohort.

Additional resources:

- Department website (<https://phdcommunication.northwestern.edu/>)

Degrees Offered

- Rhetoric, Media, and Publics PhD (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/rhetoric-media-publics/rhetoric-media-publics-phd/>)

Learning objective(s)/Students should be able to...

- Contribute original research to the scholarly community.
- Develop skills and commitments necessary for effective classroom teaching.
- Present research for scholarly review.
- Perform academic service to support the program larger scholarly community.
- Develop scholarly and professional development plan.

Rhetoric, Media, and Publics Courses

COMM_ST 301-0 Current Issues in Privacy (1 Unit)

The texture of interactions affecting privacy: government and workplace monitoring and surveillance, invasion of privacy by social media, disclosure to unintended Internet audiences, database aggregation, privacy and the person.

COMM_ST 302-0 Law of the Creative Process (1 Unit)

Principles of copyright, contracts, and entertainment business practices from the perspective of the producer, artist, and creator.

COMM_ST 314-0 Rhetoric and Public Commemoration (1 Unit)

Public commemoration as a rhetorical phenomenon. Through discussion of scholarly literature and production of research papers, students investigate questions such as: How do societies remember the past? What do the strategies for remembering the past teach us about the present? How are 'collective memories' produced and challenged?

COMM_ST 315-0 Rhetoric of Social Movements (1 Unit)

Study of traditional theories of opposition derived from sociological and rhetorical analyses of mass movements. Examines new social movements such as advocacy groups related to abortion, animal rights, feminism, and other local and national issues.

COMM_ST 321-0 Media & Publics Across Cultures (1 Unit)

Relationship between culture and media in an increasingly globalized world, examined through analysis of ethnographic case studies and theoretical texts.

COMM_ST 323-0 New Media as Popular Culture (1 Unit)

How rituals, practices, and relationships enabled by new-media cultural forms shape and reconstitute everyday life. Emphasis on research implementing qualitative and interpretive methods.

COMM_ST 324-1 Rhetoric of U.S. Women's Rights, Colonial to 1920 (1 Unit)

Students in this course investigate the early U.S. women's rights movement through the analysis of primary texts and the examination of critical essays. Students should expect to gain a complex and nuanced perspective on the rhetorical history of public advocacy by U.S. women, and also to improve their skills in critical reading and analysis.

COMM_ST 324-2 Rhetoric of U.S. Women's Rights, 1920-Present (1 Unit)

Students in this course investigate the discourse of contemporary U.S. feminisms through the analysis of primary texts and the examination of critical essays. Students who complete the course successfully should expect to gain a complex and nuanced perspective on the rhetoric of U.S. feminisms and to improve their skills in critical reading and analysis.

COMM_ST 333-0 Girlhood in Public Culture (1 Unit)

Why girls have figured so centrally in 20th century popular culture; why the concept of girlhood itself has been so widely debated within public culture more generally; how girls themselves have responded to public representations of girlhood.

COMM_ST 334-0 Media and the Making of Social Class (1 Unit)

The nature of the relationship between the media, middlebrow culture, and the rise of the American middle class; the future of middlebrow culture in the wake of digital production, audience segmentation, and globalization.

COMM_ST 341-0 Communication and Aging (1 Unit)

Relationship between adult developmental processes and changes in communication behavior.

COMM_ST 344-0 Interpersonal Conflict (1 Unit)

In-depth analysis of theories and research examining conflict within relationships. Special emphasis on conflict within friendships, dating relationships, and family.

Prerequisite: COMM_ST 205-0.

COMM_ST 345-0 Family Communication (1 Unit)

An overview of the family as a communication system. Intergenerational interaction patterns, intimacy and conflict patterns, decision making, environmental and cultural factors, and enrichment efforts. A wide range of family types and research methods are considered.

Prerequisite: COMM_ST 241-0.

COMM_ST 351-0 Technology & Human Interaction (1 Unit)

Understanding human interactions that take place both with and through technology; design, creation, and evaluation of technologies to support such interactions.

COMM_ST 352-0 Social Network Analysis (1 Unit)

Use of social network analysis to understand the growing connectivity and complexity in the world around us on different scales, ranging from small groups to the web. How we create social, economic, and technological networks; how these networks enable and constrain our attitudes and behavior.

COMM_ST 355-0 Audience Analysis (1 Unit)

Methods used to analyze electronic media audiences; emphasis on quantitative research techniques.

Prerequisites: COMM_ST 201-0 (or equivalent); COMM_ST 270-0.

COMM_ST 363-0 Bargaining and Negotiation (1 Unit)

Communication in bargaining and negotiation in organizational settings. Cognitive and motivational theories emphasizing bargaining and negotiation strategies.

COMM_ST 364-0 Collective Decision Making & Communication in Organizations (1 Unit)

Research on how organizations make, communicate, and implement collective decisions. Assessing decision effectiveness, group decision making, leadership in organizations, and organizational design.

COMM_ST 365-0 Organizational Assessment (1 Unit)

Advanced concepts and techniques for defining and analyzing organizational problems. Preparation for recognizing and working with problems in business organizations.

COMM_ST 370-0 Ethnographies of Culture (1 Unit)

This course looks at ethnographies of artistic practice to better understand how culture is made, circulated, and received in social life.

COMM_ST 375-0 The Sociology of Online News (1 Unit)

Survey of sociological research on the production and consumption of online news.

COMM_ST 377-0 Development & Marketing Popular Culture (1 Unit)

The invention and packaging of popular culture products, including film, music, television, and celebrities.

Prerequisite: COMM_ST 275-0.

COMM_ST 378-0 Online Communities and Crowds (1 Unit)

Examination of the types of collaborations that occur in online communities and crowds. Emphasis on sociological, economic, and political analysis of how and why largescale online collaborations work.

COMM_ST 380-0 Political Communication (1 Unit)

Nature and functions of communication within established political institutions; decision making strategies, deliberative discourse, and electoral campaigns; field study of advocacy and interest groups.

Prerequisites: COMM_ST 220-0 and COMM_ST 205-0.

COMM_ST 386-0 Science, Technology, and Society (1 Unit)

Examination of developments in information and communication technology in the larger context of American science and technology since 1900.

Prerequisite: previous coursework on the historical or social dimensions of information and communication technology.

COMM_ST 388-0 Internet and Society (1 Unit)

The social, cultural, political, and economic implications of information technologies.

COMM_ST 389-0 Practicum in Communication Research (1 Unit)

Collaboration with a faculty member on design and execution of a communication research project. Students learn how to complete a research project and write a report.

COMM_ST 390-0 Children's Culture (1 Unit)

Examination of children's media from psychological, sociological, historical, and other perspectives. Discussion of the role of media in children's development.

COMM_ST 392-0 Global Culture, Commerce and Communication (1 Unit)

Examination of current topics and events to familiarize students with the cultural dimensions of globalization and the critical importance of culture and communication in understanding the globalized world.

COMM_ST 395-0 Topics in Communication Studies (1 Unit)

Reading, research, and discussion in areas of significance. Topics vary.

COMM_ST 401-2 Approaches to Theory Development in Communication Inquiry (1 Unit)

First Quarter: Constructing scientific theories of human communication. Rule-governed approaches to the explanation of social behavior and implications for research methodology. Theory-development activities. Second Quarter: Causal analysis and principles of research design in history and criticism; historical and critical evidence; relationships among science, history, and criticism.

COMM_ST 402-0 Modes of Cultural Analysis (1 Unit)

This class is designed to prepare students to engage in the cultural analysis of communicative forms, genres, and practices as situated in given contexts and historical moments. As such, it begins with the examination of some of the complex, even contradictory concepts of 'culture' that have been used to describe and analyze the constitution and consequences of communicative behavior. Drawing on political economy, critical cultural theory, and the literatures on identity, subjectivity, and community formation, this course introduces students to the challenges involved in connecting rhetoric and culture. Attention will be paid to British Cultural Studies, the Frankfurt School, and other significant discourses engaging with cultural theory.

COMM_ST 403-0 Intro to Methods of Mass Comm Research (1 Unit)

Introduction to the quantitative and qualitative research methods employed in the study of mass communication, including surveys, experiments, quantitative content analysis, and naturalistic methods.

COMM_ST 405-0 Seminar in Persuasion (1 Unit)

Current developments and issues in persuasion; study of a particular issue or development.

Prerequisites: COMM_ST 401-2.

COMM_ST 407-0 Techniques & Problems in Survey Research (1 Unit)

Measurement theory, major sources of error in self-report, and techniques employed in survey research to reduce measurement error. Measurement problems associated with different modes of data collection, such as face-to-face or telephone interviews and self-administered questionnaires.

COMM_ST 410-0 Rhetoric: History and Theory (1 Unit)

This course surveys key questions of rhetoric, highlighting the intertwining of theory and practice. It introduces major concepts from the western classical tradition and traces their evolution and devolution across time.

COMM_ST 412-0 Modern Rhetorical Theory (1 Unit)

Studies of important theoretical problems, claims, and arguments in the modern era.

COMM_ST 414-0 Classical Rhetoric and Its Afterlives (1 Unit)

Study of texts on rhetoric from Greek and Roman antiquity, with attention to subsequent histories, practices, and problems of appropriation.

COMM_ST 415-0 Seminar in Rhetorical Criticism (1 Unit)

Elements of critical theory, methods of rhetorical criticism, and analysis and preparation of examples of rhetorical criticism.

COMM_ST 416-0 Contemporary Rhetorical Analysis (1 Unit)

Investigating analytic approaches in contemporary rhetoric, this course explores the development of research questions, the definition of an archive, the assessment of evidence, and the generation of a scholarly essay.

COMM_ST 417-0 Rhetoric and Social Theory (1 Unit)

Major assumptions in European social theory and their implications for rhetorical theory and practice.

COMM_ST 418-0 Critical Media Practice (1 Unit)

Emphasizing critique, experimentation, and creativity, this course introduces students to modes of research beyond the written analytical essay in order to consider the ways media and form matter for scholarship within and beyond the academy.

COMM_ST 419-0 The Practice of Public Scholarship (1 Unit)

This course trains students in community-engaged scholarship that orients research toward various media forms and the public good.

COMM_ST 425-0 Seminar-Problems in Comm Studies (1 Unit)

Study of specific theoretical, methodological, or practical problems in communication.

COMM_ST 440-0 Seminar in Interpersonal Communication (1 Unit)

Topics related to communication in informal, unstructured settings. Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.

COMM_ST 450-0 Seminar in Small Group Processes (1 Unit)

Topics related to communication in small groups. Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.

COMM_ST 453-0 Visual Rhetoric (1 Unit)

Study of the use of visual images to shape public identity, thought, and action, with particular emphasis on the public art of photojournalism.

COMM_ST 454-0 Making and Unmaking of Audiences and Publics (1 Unit)

This course investigates concepts of audience, public, and social form across genres and performative practices.

COMM_ST 455-0 Current Issues in Audience Studies (1 Unit)

Focuses on current research and theory about media audiences. Special attention is paid to television audience behavior, theories of exposure, models of program choice, the use of audiences as commodities, and how audiences experience the media.

COMM_ST 465-0 The Research Literature of Organizational Communication (1 Unit)

Major viewpoints and theoretical contributions to the research literature on communication behavior in organizational, institutional, and social system contexts.

COMM_ST 471-0 Intellectual Foundations of Mass Communication Research (1 Unit)

COMM_ST 472-0 Contemporary Information Environment: Social, Political & Cultural Dimensions (1 Unit)

Conceptual tools for analysis of mediated discourse concerning news and public affairs. Seminar draws upon a variety of social, political and cultural perspectives.

COMM_ST 484-0 Mind and Society in the Information Age (1 Unit)

Examines the historical origins as well as the psychological, social, and cultural consequences of the technologies and industries that are powering the "information revolution."

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor required.

COMM_ST 485-0 Media Theory (1 Unit)

This course explores modern and contemporary theories of media and mediation.

COMM_ST 487-0 Legal and Political Dimensions of Telecommunications (1 Unit)

A study of legal and regulatory processes affecting mass media and common carrier (voice and data transmission) communications industries. Examines specific laws and regulations and the policy-making process.

COMM_ST 488-0 Topics in the History of Information and Communication Technology (1 Unit)

Examination of developments in information and communication technology in the larger context of American science and technology since 1900.

COMM_ST 489-0 History of Media Technologies (1 Unit)

Introducing the breadth of media technologies from ancient times to the present day, this course interrogates notions and experiences of media and technology in human culture.

COMM_ST 499-0 Independent Study (1-2 Units)

Permission of instructor and department required. May be repeated for credit.

COMM_ST 525-0 Seminar-Problems in Comm Studies (1 Unit)

Content varies. May be repeated for credit with change of topic.

COMM_ST 590-0 Research (1-3 Units)

Independent investigation of selected problems pertaining to thesis or dissertation. May be repeated for credit.