

University of Iowa
Program Proposal
Name Change/PhD and MA Renaming

CLOSURE

Program College: Graduate College

Curricular College: CLAS

Academic Unit: School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Degree Objective (with and/or without thesis): Master of Arts (thesis and non-thesis)

Program: Journalism

Subprogram: N/A

Offers a Certificate Program: N/A

Distance Ed.: N/A

Available to: Degree-seeking students

Learning Center(s): N/A

Advisor: Kajsa Dalrymple

Effective Session: Spring 2022

Declarable in MyUI: No

CIP Code: 09.0401

CREATION

Program College: Graduate College

Curricular College: CLAS

Academic Unit: School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Degree Objective (with and/or without thesis): Master of Arts (with and without thesis)

Program: Mass Communication

Subprogram: N/A

Offers a Certificate Program: N/A

Distance Ed: N/A

Available to: Degree-seeking students

Learning Centers(s): N/A

Advisor: Kajsa Dalrymple

Effective Session: Spring 2022

Declarable in MyUI: No

CIP Code: 09.0401

CLOSURE

Program College: Graduate College

Curricular College: CLAS

Academic Unit: School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Degree Objective (with and/or without thesis): Doctor of Philosophy

Program: Mass Communications

Subprogram: N/A

Offers a Certificate Program: N/A

Distance Ed.: N/A

Available to: Degree-seeking students

Learning Center(s): N/A

Advisor: Kajsa Dalrymple

Effective Session: Spring 2022

Declarable in MyUI: No

CIP Code: 09.0401

CREATION

Program College: Graduate College

Curricular College: CLAS

Academic Unit: School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Degree Objective (with and/or without thesis): Doctor of Philosophy

Program: Mass Communication

Subprogram: N/A

Offers a Certificate Program: N/A

Distance Ed: N/A

Available to: Degree-seeking students

Learning Centers(s): N/A

Advisor: Kajsa Dalrymple

Effective Session: Spring 2022

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I. Executive Summary

The University of Iowa's School of Journalism and Mass Communication in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences currently offers an MA degree in "Journalism" and a PhD degree in "Mass Communications." We propose to create MA and PhD programs in "Mass Communication," which would rename the current degrees. The two programs are currently placing students in top academic and industry programs, but the program names are outdated and create confusion for prospective students and employers, as well as frustration for current students as they navigate the job market. In addition, the misalignment of the names of our degrees, our curriculum, and faculty areas of expertise have created serious issues for recruitment and retention in our programs. We expect that making these minor changes to our program names will significantly improve the match between student expectation and experience, as well as the caliber of student applying to our programs.

II. Purpose of the Programs

The mission of the Master of Arts (thesis and non-thesis) and PhD degrees in Mass Communication is to foster an environment in which students can prepare to make meaningful contributions to the field of communication by broadening their understanding and appreciation of the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the field. This mission is best achieved through a curriculum that is deeply rooted in the liberal arts. Such an education challenges students to think critically and creatively while developing analytical, rhetorical and research skills. Moreover, the program emphasizes and provides opportunities for student application of concepts and skills in research settings that enhance learning and development. The MA in Mass Communication provides students with a grounding to start a career in mass communication research or to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy in mass communication or a related field. The PhD in Mass Communication provides students with the research and teaching acumen to secure a position in the industry or at in an academic setting.

Professional productivity and scholarly activity inform the faculty's teaching. The faculty strive to serve students beyond the classroom as mentors and as links to the field of communication to help students navigate their professional futures and determine the role that communication processes play in their daily lives.

Through achievement of this mission, the programs will maintain their national recognition as a strong research and teaching program which places students in top industry and academic institutions such as, Apple, the Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research, University of California Berkeley, Virginia Tech University, Flagler College, Texas Tech University, the University of South Dakota, and other prestigious institutions.

The Mass Communication MA and PhD degrees support achievement of several University of Iowa and College Liberal Arts and Sciences strategic plan goals related to engagement and outreach, student success, and enriching graduate education, such as in the following ways that

the University of Iowa Strategic Planning Development Group specifically identified in the 2016-21 Strategic Plan:

- Create a more inclusive campus culture – The current MA and PhD programs as currently named are a leader in recruiting a diverse student population and will continue to be under the Mass Communication MA and PhD. The current MA and PhD student body includes about 75% underrepresented domestic minority and international students.
- Prepare students to be experts in their disciplines and leaders in their fields.
- Invest in graduate and professional student support – The School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) provides students with \$1,500 in yearly professional development funds that are available to support research and professionalization activities. In addition, SJMC just launched a summer RA program, which creates opportunities for students to gain research experience as an assistant to a faculty research project. The goal of this program is to increase opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience with faculty, and to fund students through the summer months.
- Enhance UI's statewide visibility and increase access to UI expertise.
- Recruit and retain faculty and staff who possess the broad diversity essential to our research mission – Changing the names of our programs will significantly improve students understanding of the goals of our programs, thereby positively impacting the caliber of students joining the department each year. This will subsequently improve our ability to recruit high caliber faculty to join our program.
- Become a Research I institution of choice for undergraduate students aspiring to pursue graduate or professional education – Changing the names of our program will not only improve brand awareness of our graduate programming, but will also improve student understanding of what they can achieve during their time in the SJMC. We expect that this will significantly improve the caliber of undergraduate students applying to our programs.

III. **Need for the Programs**

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication currently offers a Master of Arts degree in Journalism and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Mass Communications. The MA and PhD programs have a long history of producing successful leaders in the broader field of communication, with some representative examples outlined above in Section II. The new Mass Communication MA and PhD would replace the Journalism MA and Mass Communications PhD and is needed for several reasons summarized below:

- The name “Journalism” is no longer a representative title for what the MA program is preparing students for, and, in today's competitive marketplace, it disadvantages alumni in their job searches. Specifically, students associate the term “journalism” with a professionally focused program that will prepare them to gain applied skills to become better journalists, editors, and media producers. Although the program had previously offered courses in these areas, the make-up of the faculty no longer aligns with this identity and as a result the program has become more focused on media research training.

- Similarly, the PhD program name, “Mass Communications,” does not align with current curriculum or faculty areas of expertise. The term mass communications is a technical term that refers to the technology and systems used for sending and receiving messages, such as postal, telephone, radio, TV, and the Internet. “Mass communication,” on the other hand, refers to the systemic processes in which individuals interact with and through symbols, like text or images, to create and interpret messages. The current SJMC PhD curriculum has learning outcomes that are associated with the study of mass communication, *not* mass communications. Similarly, the graduate faculty and students are pursuing research in the area of mass communication, *not* training to become technical experts in practical media vocations. Considering this, changing the PhD program name to “Mass Communication” would not only improve student understanding of our program and its learning outcomes, but would also correct the misalignment between the current program name and the areas of interest of our students and faculty.
- These misalignments create serious issues for graduate recruitment and retention. Each year, a large amount of our graduate program applicant pool consists of students who are interested in vocational training programs that will prepare them to enter a newsroom or broadcast station. We expect that making these minor changes to our program names will significantly improve the match between student expectation and experience, as well as the caliber of student applying to our programs.

As the Journalism MA and Mass Communication PhD programs have evolved over the years, the research elements of the curriculum have increased in importance. More students each year are accepted into the program seeking hands-on, personalized mentorship that will prepare them for research-oriented jobs in the industry or tenure-track academic positions. New faculty hired into the program are primarily research focused, not practitioners. The program continues to serve the needs of students seeking careers in the field of journalism, but there is a growing need to emphasize the programs research focus. Moreover, rebranding these programs as Mass Communication offers an opportunity to clearly indicate to applicants what the programs offer in terms of learning outcomes and potential career avenues.

IV. **Description of the Program**

The Mass Communication MA is an academically-oriented degree that prepares students to be successful in a career of mass communication research or to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy in mass communication or a related field. Students will be involved in varied educational experiences to prepare them to be successful in the communication industry on completion of the program.

First, students are required to complete foundational coursework in social scientific and humanistic approaches to media communication. Second, students are required to complete coursework in methods and theory, as well as a number of concentration courses that apply to the specific area of media communication that they wish to research. Third, students will work with their faculty advisor to strategically select electives that are best suited to their individual interest areas. Fourth, students will complete at least three semester hours of

professionalization. This includes one semester hour of RHET:5100 Practicum: College Teaching and Professional Development for Teaching Assistants, as well as 1-2 additional courses that fit the individual student's interests and needs, including further training in areas such as teaching, grant writing, community engagement, and publishing. Additionally, students will be continuously enrolled in the MA/PhD Seminar throughout their entire graduate studies. In addition to fostering a sense of community amongst the program's instructors and students, the Seminar will provide a forum for the discussion of substantive theoretical and methodological problems and issues. It will also serve as a forum for formal presentation of PhD dissertation proposals, along with guest speakers from other departments, universities, and organizations.

Students who are enrolled in the MA Program without the intention of continuing on to the PhD Program are required to complete a scholarly thesis to fulfill MA degree requirements. The student is required to have a thesis adviser and a thesis committee composed of two additional graduate faculty members. One member of the committee may be from outside the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

The thesis proposal is prepared with the advice of the academic adviser, and then presented to the student's thesis committee. When the adviser determines that the proposal is complete, they will schedule a meeting with the committee to discuss and approve the proposal. Copies of the thesis proposal must be provided to the committee no less than two weeks prior to the proposal meeting. A form certifying this approval must be filed with the Graduate Program Coordinator as part of the student's permanent record. No more than 3 hours of credit for the thesis shall be counted toward the minimum degree requirements.

Students who are enrolled in the MA Program with the intention of continuing on to the PhD Program will complete the traditional master's curriculum with one additional course (rather than a thesis) to reach 34 hours. They will then pass a qualifying exam in their fourth semester. The qualifying exam will be a project that the student and their advisor agree upon with the approval of the Graduate Director, and can take the shape of whatever will best assist the student in the next step of their education or career. If the exam outcome is successful, the student will continue onto the PhD program. If not successful, the student is awarded a master's degree (non-thesis) and exits the program.

The program curriculum requires a minimum of 34 s.h. of graduate credit as summarized below:

Mass Communication MA required course work:

- Social Scientific Approaches to Media Communication – 3 hours
- Humanistic Approaches to Media Communication – 3 hours
- Professionalization – 3 hours
- Methods – 3 hours
- Theory – 3 hours
- Concentration – 6 hours
- Electives – 6 hours
- PhD Seminar—registered during entire program of study (Typically 4 hours)

- Thesis – 3+

The Mass Communication PhD The PhD program in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication provides training in research methods, communication theory and teaching skills. The School is the home of the first PhD program in the field of mass communication. Graduate courses are small and many students collaborate with faculty members in their research. Students in the PhD program prepare for careers as teachers and researchers.

The School has six areas of particular strength to support graduate student research in both traditional and digital media. Graduate students typically work in one of these areas:

- Critical and cultural studies
- Sports and media
- International and development studies
- Health and science communication
- Journalism studies
- History of media and media institutions

Students will be involved in varied educational experiences to prepare them to be successful in the communication industry on completion of the program.

First, students are required to complete foundational coursework in social scientific and humanistic approaches to media communication. Second, students are required to complete coursework in methods and theory, as well as a number of concentration courses that apply to the specific area of media communication that they wish to research. Third, students work with their faculty advisor to strategically select electives that are best suited to their individual interest areas. Fourth, students complete at least three semester hours of professionalization. This includes one semester hour of RHET:5100 Practicum: College Teaching and Professional Development for Teaching Assistants, as well as 1-2 additional courses that fit the individual student's interests and needs including further training in areas such as teaching, grant writing, community engagement, and publishing. Additionally, students are continuously enrolled in the MA/PhD Seminar throughout their entire graduate studies. In addition to fostering a sense of community amongst the program's instructors and students, the Seminar provides a forum for the discussion of substantive theoretical and methodological problems and issues, as well as a forum for formal presentation of PhD dissertation proposals, along with guest speakers from other departments, universities, and organizations.

Students in the PhD Program complete a qualifying exam at the end of the second semester. The qualifying exam directly assesses the understanding of content from the two approaches course, Social Scientific Approaches to Media Communication and Humanistic Approaches to Media Communication. If the student does not pass the qualifying exam they work with their advisor and the Graduate Director to explore an MA route. Once the student passes the qualifying exam they officially continue into the program.

By October 15 of the second year of study, the student must petition for candidacy. The

Graduate Committee must approve the petition in the same semester in which it was submitted. In many cases, the committee may ask for revisions before approval. A student should work with the advisor to revise and resubmit the petition.

If the student substantially changes their research interests after the petition has been approved, a new petition must be submitted and approved before the student can continue to progress in the program.

In the Spring of Year 2, the student enrolls in Guided Reading to prepare for the Comprehensive Examination, a 3-hour course in which the student works closely with their advisor and committee to build the proposal's literature review. At the start of the semester, the student works with their advisor to develop a plan for the semester. The plan should include, but is not limited to, a timeline of deadlines and expected outcomes, a schedule of when the student will meet and review work with each committee member, and a clear description of what the final product of the guided reading will look like (e.g., a full literature review, an annotated bibliography, etc.). Successful guided reading experiences will create a solid foundation for students to weave together theory, their primary and outside areas of interest, and methods/design in their dissertation proposal.

In the Fall of Year 3, the student completes and defend a dissertation proposal (i.e., the comprehensive exam). The dissertation proposal must indicate clearly the logical steps necessary for the completion of the project and suggest a plan of action. Once written, the student presents the dissertation proposal to the PhD Seminar. Following the PhD seminar presentation, an oral examination will be conducted by the student's committee, usually within two weeks of the completion of the written proposal.

Students are required to register for at least 1 s.h. of dissertation credit each fall and spring semester after satisfactorily completing the comprehensive examination until the degree is awarded. A minimum of 4 s.h. of dissertation credit must be included in the minimum 72 hour degree. If a student fails to register, the student may not be readmitted to candidacy until they have submitted an application that has been approved by the student's adviser, the departmental executive, and the Graduate College dean.

The completed dissertation is submitted to members of the dissertation committee after it has been approved by the chairperson. Copies of the dissertation must be available to committee members at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the final examination. The examination consists of an oral defense of the completed dissertation and is open to the public.

The student must successfully defend and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the Comprehensive Examination.

Upon successful defense and deposit of the dissertation, the student will be awarded the PhD degree and exit the program.

The program curriculum requires a minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate credit as summarized below:

Mass Communication PhD required course work:

- Humanistic Approaches to Media Communication – 3 hours
- Social Scientific Approaches to Media Communication – 3 hours
- Method – 3 hours
- Theory – 3 hours
- Electives – 6 hours
- Concentration – 6 hours
- College Teaching for TAs – 1 hour
- Other Professionalization – 2 hours
- Guided Reading for Comprehensive Exam – 3 hours
- PhD Seminar – registered during entire program of study (Typically 8+ hours)
- Dissertation – at least 4 hours
- Transfer credit from master's – 30 hours maximum (Students entering without a master's will need to take an additional 30 hours of coursework.)

Admissions: New students in the MA and the PhD in Mass Communication are admitted in the fall semester only. For consideration for fall admission, applications must be submitted by January 10.

Admissions Criteria will include:

- The academic record, for indicators of success in graduate study, and a minimum GPA of 3.0 (on a 4-point scale) in keeping with the requirements of The University of Iowa
- The statement of purpose, where we look for a clear focus, as well as a good fit to the program's strengths
- A sample of the applicant's academic writing
- Up-to-date CV or resume. Related work experience helps us assess an applicant's understanding of the field. It also helps us understand the skills and knowledge that an applicant could bring to an assistantship
- Three letters of reference, where we look for indicators of an applicant's professional and academic achievements and abilities.

For international non-native English speakers, we also look for indicators of an applicant's ability to work effectively in a verbally oriented graduate program. For this reason, we require one of three options

- a TOEFL iBT test score of at least 108,
- a IELTS test score of at least 7.5,
- Or, a DuoLingo English Test score of at least 105.

Student Advising:

The MA in Mass Communication In consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, first-year students should plan an initial program of study and determine who on the faculty can best

serve as permanent academic adviser. Students should select a permanent adviser by May 1 of their first year.

The PhD in Mass Communication Given the highly individualized nature of the PhD program, the advising function is critical. Each entering PhD student will be advised by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) until the student chooses a permanent academic adviser. In consultation with the DGS, the first-year student should plan the initial program of study and determine who on the faculty can best serve as permanent academic adviser.

Students should select a permanent adviser by May 1 of their first year. It is expected that the student will work closely with the permanent adviser in drawing up the plan of study required for the student's candidacy petition.

V. **Relationship to resources developed by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation**
Not applicable.

VI. **Program implications**
The Mass Communication MA and PhD programs will have no impact on undergraduate programs at the University of Iowa. The Mass Communication MA and PhD programs will be a natural objective for some alumni of the Journalism and Mass Communication BA program and can be expected to draw alumni from undergraduate programs in English, Marketing, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, and other College of Liberal Arts and Sciences programs.

VII. **Program Faculty**
The following faculty are available to serve the Mass Communication MA and PhD programs:

David Ryfe, DEO
Venise Berry
Kajsa Dalrymple
David Dowling
Frank Durham
Meenakshi (Gigi) Durham
Brian Ekdale
Kylah Hedding
Thomas Oates
Sujatha Sosale
Melissa Tully
Travis Vogan
Rachel Young

VIII. **Expected Enrollment**

The current Journalism MA and Mass Communications PhD programs enrolls approximately 3-5 students every Fall semester. The current student body consists of 1 Masters student and 11 Doctoral students (we had two PhD students matriculate in December 2020). Enrollment in the

new Mass Communication and PhD programs is expected to attract between 15-20 students but could grow when the name and mission become more aligned. 12 number of students applied for Fall 2021 enrollment to the Journalism MA program and 24 number of students applied for Fall 2021 enrollment to the Mass Communications PhD program. The name change alone will stimulate new interest in the program and make it easier to attract more competitive applicants whose interests are better aligned with the program mission and outcomes.

IX. Statement of additional needed budget support

There will be no need for additional budget support to start the program and operate it.

X. Assessment of future needs, commitments, and opportunities

These programs have sufficient staff and instructional capacity to serve current student needs, and likely will remain sufficient up to approximately 30 students. In the 2021-2022AY, the SJMC expects to hire a new tenure-track faculty member who add instructional capacity to the program. If and when these programs grow beyond 30 students, however, it may be necessary to add staff and instructional support.

XI. Letters of Support

See attached.



College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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April 8, 2021

John C. Keller
Associate Provost for Graduate Education
Dean of the Graduate College
Graduate College
201 Gilmore Hall
The University of Iowa

Dear Dean Keller:

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is very pleased to endorse the closure of the Master of Arts (thesis and non-thesis) in Journalism and the PhD in Mass Communications. The College also endorses the concurrent creation of the Master of Arts (thesis and non-thesis) in Mass Communication and the PhD in Mass Communication. The newly created degrees will be housed in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

These newly created degrees and the program learning objectives and outcomes associated with them not only reflect the present-day state of the field and the research interests of current faculty and students, but also more clearly communicate the School of Journalism and Mass Communication's graduate program identity to prospective students. As noted in the proposal, closure of the existing degrees and implementation of the new degrees is not expected to require additional faculty and staff resources.

Sincerely,

Sara Sanders, Ph.D, MSW
Dean and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
UI Alumni Association Dean's Chair
in the Liberal Arts and Sciences

C: Christine Getz, David Ryfe, Kajsa Dalrymple



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March 16, 2021

Dear Heidi Arbisi-Kelm:

I am writing as DEO in support of the School of Mass Communication and Journalism changing its degree names from "PhD in Mass Communications" to "PhD in Mass Communication," and the "MA in Journalism" becoming "MA in Mass Communication." I consulted with my Department Executive Committee and the faculty representatives did not have any concerns about these degree name changes.

Sincerely,

Kembrew McLeod
Professor and Chair