INSTITUTE OF COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH

https://media.illinois.edu/node/58/history

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Director of Graduate Studies: James Hay
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(217) 333-1549
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Major: Communications and Media
Degrees Offered: Ph.D.

Medical Scholars Program: Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Communications and Media and Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) through the Medical Scholars Program (http://www.med.illinois.edu/msp)

Graduate Degree Programs

Please note: The ICR no longer has information regarding our programs of study available in hard copy format. All information can be found via http://www.media.illinois.edu/icr. On the graduate level, the Institute of Communications Research only offers a doctoral degree in Communications and Media.

The Institute’s faculty and graduate students are also active in the Department of Advertising (https://media.illinois.edu/degrees/advertising-bs-ms), the Department of Journalism (https://media.illinois.edu/degrees/journalism-bs-ms), the Department of Media & Cinema Studies (http://media.illinois.edu/macs) the Department of African American Studies (http://www.afro.illinois.edu), the Asian American Studies Program (http://www.aasp.illinois.edu), the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory (http://criticism.english.uiuc.edu), the Gender and Women’s Studies Program (http://www.gws.uiuc.edu), the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities (http://iprh.uiuc.edu), the Campus Informatics Initiative (http://www.cii.uiuc.edu/about.php?link=2), the Latino/a Studies Program (http://www.lss.uiuc.edu), and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (http://www.clacs.uiuc.edu).

The Institute cooperates with the University of Illinois’ College of Medicine in offering the combined M.D. and Ph.D. degrees. The Medical Scholars Program (http://www.med.illinois.edu/msp) is the largest and broadest program of its kind in the world, with more than 150 students enrolled in fifty graduate programs. Equipped with an excellent medical education and Ph.D. training, graduates of the Medical Scholars Program have the credentials to assume leadership roles in academic medicine, medical research, and health policy.

Admission

Any student with a bachelor’s or master’s degree and with a substantial background in the humanities, social sciences, or physical sciences is eligible to apply to the doctoral program. It is suggested but not required that students have or will have a master’s degree. All candidates for admission must submit an application for admission along with the application fee, official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate courses taken and grades earned, three letters of recommendation, and Graduate Record Examination scores.

Our application process is administered through the ApplyYourself (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply) system managed by the Graduate College at UIUC. Applicants should consult the instructions on the Grad College’s web page and the guidelines to applicants available on the ICR web page.

Applicants from non-English-speaking countries are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) before they come to the University. Depending on the results, they may be required to take further instruction in English after their arrival. Rules for “International Students & Applicants” can be found on the Graduate College website.

Students are normally admitted to start the program only during the fall term. Only under exceptional circumstances are they allowed to begin it in the spring or summer term. All material for fall admission should be submitted by a date designated each year on the ICR website.

Medical Scholars Program

Applications are not currently being accepted.

The Medical Scholars Program permits highly qualified students to integrate the study of medicine with study for a graduate degree in a second discipline, including Communications and Media. Students may apply to the Medical Scholars Program prior to beginning graduate school or while in the graduate program. Applicants to the Medical Scholars Program must meet the admissions standards for and be accepted into both the doctoral graduate program and the College of Medicine. Students in the dual degree program must meet the specific requirements for both the medical and graduate degrees. On average, students take eight years to complete both degrees. Further information on this program is available by contacting the Medical Scholars Program, 125 Medical Sciences Building, (217) 333-8146 or at www.med.illinois.edu/msp (http://www.med.illinois.edu/msp).

Faculty Research Interests

See ICR website: www.media.illinois.edu/faculty/icr.html (https://media.illinois.edu/degrees/institute-communications-research-phd/faculty)

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available in the form of assistantships, fellowships, and tuition and fee waivers. Students from populations underrepresented in communications research are eligible for certain University fellowships. Most Institute students receive financial support. The application for admission includes a section to be completed if you wish to be considered for financial aid. Insofar as possible, the Institute makes financial aid and admission decisions simultaneously.

See also UIUC Graduate College Financial Aid (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/funding-jobs) and Fellowship Office (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/fellowships).

Doctor of Philosophy in Communications and Media

Since its inception, the ICR’s doctoral program has encouraged interdisciplinary studies of communications and media. Students are encouraged to design and interdisciplinary course of study.
Coursework: ICR requires 64 credits of coursework, of which 16 may have been earned in previous graduate work. Students are responsible for designing their own programs of coursework, which are submitted for approval by the Institute’s Program Evaluation Committee.

Although students are given the broadest latitude in designing interdisciplinary programs, they must include courses that fill certain requirements.

Because students are admitted from diverse backgrounds, the Proseminar first introduces them to the history of communication research. The second semester revolves around the current debates in the field of communications research. While gaining an overview of the central issues and learning a common language, students in the Proseminar are also able to locate their own interests more precisely within the field of communications and media research in their historical and contemporary forms.

A number of currently available courses accomplish these goals. Specific examples are listed below, and the list is periodically updated to reflect developments in the field and available faculty resources. Though these courses are not formal requirements for obtaining the Ph.D., students are expected to include at least two of them in their proposed program of study for the Program Evaluation Committee. In preparing proposals, students should consult with their faculty advisors; they are welcome to seek additional help from other experienced faculty, including members of the Program Evaluation Committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 571</td>
<td>Proseminar I</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 572</td>
<td>Proseminar II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two research methods courses, 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 599</td>
<td>Thesis Research (min/max applied toward degree)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
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</tbody>
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Other Requirements

- Qualifying Exam Required: No
- Preliminary Exam Required: Yes
- Final Exam/Dissertation Defense Required: Yes
- Dissertation Deposit Required: Yes
- Minimum GPA: 3.0

Overview Courses

While flexibility is the hallmark of ICR’s program, students are strongly urged to take two or more overview courses that augment their area of specialization. Such courses, systematically extending proseminar material, give a broad overview of a significant body of scholarship in established areas of communications research, enable students to locate their own interests within the field as a whole, and provide solid preparation for courses that many students are likely to teach. Overview courses ensure breadth of knowledge within an interdisciplinary program such as the Institute’s, where students have great latitude in designing their programs and are encouraged to take courses outside the field of communications research.

A number of currently available courses accomplish these goals. Specific examples are listed below, and the list is periodically updated to reflect developments in the field and available faculty resources. Though these courses are not formal requirements for obtaining the Ph.D., students are expected to include at least two of them in their proposed program of study for the Program Evaluation Committee. In preparing proposals, students should consult with their faculty advisors; they are welcome to seek additional help from other experienced faculty, including members of the Program Evaluation Committee.

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 560</td>
<td>Feminist Media Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDIA 568</td>
<td>Political Economy of Comm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 570</td>
<td>Popular Culture</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 573</td>
<td>Freedom of Expression</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 575</td>
<td>Cultural Studies and Critical Interpretation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 577</td>
<td>Philosophy of Technology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 578</td>
<td>Communication Ethics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 580</td>
<td>Advanced Interpretive Methods</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDIA 590</td>
<td>Special Topics (Many courses listed as MDIA 590 also qualify as overview courses. Recent examples include International Communications, US Media History, and New Media Theory.)</td>
<td>2-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Methods

Students must complete at least 8 hours in research methods. In order to provide a competent background for constructively understanding the field’s wide-ranging literature, students are required to take one quantitative and one qualitative course.

In addition to methodology courses taught by the College of Media faculty, students are encouraged to consider relevant courses in quantitative or non-quantitative methods elsewhere on campus. Listings of such courses are available in the ICR office.

Preliminary Exams

Students, in consultation with their chosen advisors, select a committee of four faculty members for their preliminary exams. Upon completion of coursework, students undertake preparing written examinations. Upon completing written answers for each examiner, along with a dissertation proposal, students undergo a 2-hour oral examination. Upon passing the preliminary examination, students proceed with work on their dissertations.

Dissertation

Because the Doctor of Philosophy degree is primarily a research degree, candidates are required to demonstrate a capacity for independent research by producing an original dissertation on a topic within the general area of communications and media research.

Final Examination

After students distribute polished drafts of their dissertations, they take final oral examinations administered by their chosen committees. The student is required to support and interpret the dissertation to the committee’s satisfaction, as well as to show an adequate grasp of the selected area of concentration that it represents.

Joint M.B.A. Program

Students in this unit may choose to earn their major degree and simultaneously complete an M.B.A., with 12 fewer required hours than when pursuing both degrees independently. Students must be enrolled in the M.B.A. program for three terms and complete all the requirements.
of their primary degree. Interested students should see the joint program requirements (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/graduate-majors/bus-admin-mba/joint-mba) and contact the M.B.A. program and their major department office for more information.