COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA, PHD

for the Doctor of Philosophy in Communications & Media

Since its inception, the Institute of Communications Research's (ICR) doctoral program has encouraged interdisciplinary studies of communication and media. ICR faculty represent the three academic departments within the College of Media: Advertising (https://media.illinois.edu/advertising/), Journalism (https://media.illinois.edu/journalism/), Media & Cinema Studies (https://media.illinois.edu/media-cinema-studies/). ICR faculty are also active in a wide array of interdisciplinary campus initiatives which include but are not limited to: Illinois Informatics Institute, Beckman Institute, National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory, Center for Advanced Study (CAS), Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities (IPRH), and the Departments of Gender and Women's Studies, Latina/Latino Studies, Communication, Psychology and Business Administration. These affiliate networks allow ICR students to develop and pursue unique programs of research that extend the boundaries of current scholarship.

The ICR requires 64 credits of coursework and dissertation research for students entering with a Master's degree. 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. Specifically, all new students will take a two course Proseminar sequence during their first year. Because students are admitted from diverse backgrounds, these courses introduce them to the history of and current trends in the field of media and communication research. This sequence also helps new students begin to locate their own research interests more precisely within the broad landscape of contemporary media and communication research.

### Programs in the Institute of Communications Research

**Graduate Programs:**

- Communications and Media, PhD (p. 1)

### 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 before starting the program. 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 the University of Illinois. Applicants should consult the instructions on the Graduate College's website 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.

New students will begin the program during the fall term. All material for fall admission should be submitted by a date designated each year on the ICR website.

### Financial Aid

Financial aid is available in the form of assistantships and fellowships. Students from populations underrepresented in communications research are eligible for certain University fellowships. Currently, all admitted ICR students receive financial support, including a tuition waiver and stipend. Insofar as possible, the Institute makes financial aid and admission decisions simultaneously.

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

### Entering with a Bachelors Degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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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>Two research methods courses, 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDIA 599</td>
<td>Thesis Research (min/max applied toward degree)</td>
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**Total Hours:** 96

### Entering with an approved Masters Degree

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<td>MDIA 571</td>
<td>Proseminar I</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDIA 572</td>
<td>Proseminar II</td>
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<td>Two research methods courses, 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective Hours</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDIA 599</td>
<td>Thesis Research (min/max applied toward degree)</td>
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**Total Hours:** 64

### Other Requirements

<table>
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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualifying Exam Required</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Exam Required</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam/Dissertation Defense Required</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Deposit Required</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum GPA</td>
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Information listed in this catalog is current as of 09/2023
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.

for the Doctor of Philosophy in Communications & Media

1. Students gain knowledge of both important historical themes and
current trends in media and communication scholarship, such that
they can recognize, relate, and evaluate their fundamental concepts,
principles, and theories.

2. Students develop expertise in at least one research methodology, and
general familiarity with both quantitative and qualitative methods,
since both methods have informed research traditions in media and
communication studies. Expertise in these two methods is one facet
of our doctoral program's emphasis on interdisciplinary perspectives
and research practices. Students in our program are encouraged to
design a program of study across departments, within and beyond
the College of Media.

3. Students apply their knowledge and skills to produce new inquiry
and ideas in media and communication studies by formulating
research questions, designing original research, and communicating
conclusions.

4. Students successfully contribute to learning and instruction in
media and communications studies, including by demonstrating
pedagogical proficiency as a teaching assistant.

5. Students are able to recognize and employ professional academic
practices such as presentations, feedback and review, organizational
membership, conference participation, and publishing.

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