

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:

degree: 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/>).

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Entering with a Bachelors Degree

Code	Title	Hours
Proseminar		
MDIA 571	Proseminar I	4
MDIA 572	Proseminar II	4
Two research methods courses, 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative		8
Elective Hours		64
MDIA 599	Thesis Research (min/max applied toward degree)	16
Total Hours		96

Entering with an approved Masters Degree

Code	Title	Hours
Proseminar		
MDIA 571	Proseminar I	4
MDIA 572	Proseminar II	4
Two research methods courses, 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative		8
Elective Hours		32
MDIA 599	Thesis Research (min/max applied toward degree)	16
Total Hours		64

Other Requirements

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

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.

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1. Knowledge of both important historical themes and current trends in Media and Communication scholarship.
 2. 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 & Communication Studies. Expertise in these two methods is one facet of our doctoral program's emphasis on interdisciplinary perspectives theory 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. Teaching proficiency, as demonstrated by serving as the Instructor of Record (IOR) for at least one course as a graduate student.
 4. Understanding of the various professional nuances of academia, including the job-search process, promotion and tenure, institutional differences (e.g. Carnegie classifications), research/teaching/service expectations, etc.
 5. Presence in a community of scholars through organizational membership, conference participation, etc.

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Institute of Communications Research

Director of the Institute of Communications Research: Sela Sar

Director of Graduate Studies: Amanda Ciafone
Institute of Communications Research website (<https://media.illinois.edu/icr/>)
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College of Media

College of Media website (<https://media.illinois.edu/>)

Admissions

Graduate College Admissions & Requirements (<https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/>)