Master of Communication Studies
(Coursework degree)

OUTLINE 2011

Enquiries:

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Statement of Objectives

The objective of the Masters in Communication Studies is to develop and extend your understanding of the field of Communication Studies:

- in a series of coursework units, sustained and close attention to particular concepts, texts, and critical / theoretical / creative issues;
- in practically oriented units, hands-on practical work with contemporary digital media applications;
- in a dissertation, development of a significant research project in Communication Studies, which will be built on and supported by the preparation of a research proposal and critical bibliography, the acquisition of research materials, and the study of an introduction to methodology.

Eligibility

You are eligible for Masters in Communication Studies enrolment if you have completed a Bachelors pass degree from UWA or another institution. The program allows you to complete the core units in the Communication Studies undergraduate program, plus a number of higher-level components, and therefore does not assume a familiarity with the field.

The higher level components, and the research dissertation, will enable you to work towards a developed understanding of the field, and to pursue your own interest area in a research environment.

"Information in this publication was correct as at October, 2010 but is subject to change from time to time. In particular, the University reserves the right to change the content and/or the method of presentation and/or the method of assessment of any unit of study, to withdraw any unit of study or program, and/or to vary arrangements for any program,"

Course Components and Structure

To complete the Masters Communication Studies, a student must complete 72 points of study by taking nine coursework units (each worth 6 points; a total of 54 points) and a dissertation (worth 18 points). This work can be completed full-time (over three semesters) or part-time (over a period of not more than five years).

2011 enrolment pathway:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1</td>
<td>COMM2201 Communication and Mass Media</td>
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<td></td>
<td>COMM2203 Digital Media</td>
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<td></td>
<td>COMM3301 Case Studies in Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semester 2</td>
<td>COMM2202 Cultures, New Media and Communications</td>
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<td>*COMM3302 Communications Project</td>
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<td></td>
<td>COMM4406 Research Methodologies</td>
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<td>1 unit from Table A below</td>
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<th>2nd Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Semester 1</td>
<td>COMM8501 Communication Studies Dissertation (18 points)</td>
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<td>1 unit from Table A below</td>
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**TABLE A**

- COMM7481 Communication Studies Honours Seminar unit (semester 1)
- COMM7483 Communication Studies Honours Seminar unit (semester 2)
- 1 Communication Studies Option unit from the list below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Studies Option Units:</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANTH2239 Anthropology of Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASIA2212 Chinese Media and Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM3304 Designing Virtual Play</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM7701 Science Communication – Writing</td>
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<td>COMM7702 Science Communication – Displays and Exhibits</td>
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<td>COMM7703 Science and the Media</td>
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<td>COMM7403 Science Communication – Community Presentations</td>
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<td>ENGL2280 Professional Writing</td>
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<td>EURO2212 Communication and Culture – Survey</td>
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<td>HUMA2210 Arts Practicum I</td>
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<td>HUMA2211 Arts Practicum II</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLS2231 Politics of the Mass Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>WOMN2205 Self.Net: Identity in the Digital Age</td>
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*Students beginning mid-year are required to take COMM3302 in their 3rd semester. Please see the Communication Studies office for advice.

- **Dissertation**
  (12,000 words; 18 points)

The dissertation is written on an approved topic of your choice, and supervised by a staff member from Communication Studies. Students are normally required to complete “COMM4406 Research Methodologies” before enrolling in the dissertation unit: a key outcome of that unit is the formulation of a research proposal for the dissertation.
In any case, students intending to complete the dissertation in Semester 1 of 2012 must confirm their topic area with the Communication Studies Coordinator no later than the end of January 2012, and at that stage ensure the Supervision Agreement form (second last page) is signed and submitted.

The deadline for submission of the dissertation is one week after the last teaching day of the relevant semester. We will confirm the actual date.

No late submissions will be accepted without the prior approval of the Chair of Communication Studies.
Completing a dissertation with an *empirical research* component.

The Masters coursework thesis is *primarily* a piece of library and/or creative media research, based on academic literature dealing with the topic in question but, depending on the project, it is permissible to include a limited amount of supplementary field research.

Student requests to conduct a small number of interviews or utilise other forms of empirical research will be considered on a case by case basis by the supervisor and the Chair of Communication Studies. Each request will be determined by:

- The quality of the proposal and the degree to which the student demonstrates that the project requires empirical research
- The practical nature of the student's timeline for data collection
- The degree to which the student demonstrates awareness of and ability to consider the ethical nature of the research.

If the request is approved the student must design and conduct the research in a manner consistent with Communication Studies guidelines on empirical research. These guidelines, and their application to the particular project, must be discussed in detail (and mutually agreed) with the supervisor.
Important Points to Note:

• We expect you to have read this information booklet carefully.
• You should notify the Chair of Communication Studies of changes to your selection of units, and you will require you to complete a formal Change-of-Enrolment with Student Administration.
• Students are expected to attend classes! (Any changes to texts or timetables or assessment-methods may be worked out by mutual consent during classes.)
• Students writing a dissertation are expected to meet with their supervisors regularly and to submit written draft-work regularly, meeting the Stages-of-Progress deadlines set out elsewhere in this booklet.
• Students are not permitted to repeat units in the degree; the grades achieved for the units you take will be factored into your overall results – so plan your program wisely.
• If you have any problems or worries or queries, please come and talk about it! We’re here to help, and usually we can help a lot - but you need to let us know of the problem and give us time to deal with it. So don’t feel that it is an imposition to come and talk; you’ll be welcome.
• Be aware that you must not “recycle” material taken from other assignments. All class papers, essays and dissertations must be new and original material. If in your Masters work you return to a text or topic you have written on before, there can be no re-use (or even partial re-use) of material. No part of a submitted essay may form part of your dissertation, and an essay or assignment presented for assessment in earlier years may not reappear, even in part.

___________________________________________________________________________

Plagiarism

The seminar units, like all Communication Studies units, and the dissertation, require the production and submission of original material - that is, material created by the student with NO unacknowledged debt to some other writer or source. To pass off written work as your own, whether you have copied it from someone else or from somewhere else, is to deprive yourself of the real benefits of the course and to be guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a serious offence. It is University policy that plagiarism, the unacknowledged quotation of material from other people’s work, is a ground for failure.

All material taken from published secondary sources must be acknowledged by footnote references; in addition, all quotation must be acknowledged by the use of quotation marks, or indentation in the case of longer passages.

___________________________________________________________________________
The Dissertation
Key Dates
(Students Submitting Dissertations in June 2012)

Note that this schedule is a guide only, to be revised in consultation with your supervisor. Once your schedule is established, Communication Studies expects students to meet the following deadlines as they progress with their dissertation. Failure to meet these deadlines will be viewed seriously, and may constitute unsatisfactory progress.

October 2011 Formal Topic Proposal

Your formal dissertation Topic Proposal is the key component of the Research Methodologies unit, and will normally be completed, after discussion and feedback, in October of 2011. At this time Communication Studies will appoint a supervisor for your dissertation.

Late 2011 First discussion(s), and first chapter/section

You should arrange to meet your supervisor before the end of the year for a first discussion of your plans. Although this is sometimes difficult, you should aim to make at least a start on the writing of the dissertation before the end of the year, and submit (electronically if necessary) a first chapter or section of 1,000-2,000 words.

Early February 2012 Progress deadline: next chapters/sections

At the end of January you will have been working on the dissertation for more than 3 months and—taking into account holidays—you should have around 3,000-4,000 words of your dissertation written.

6 April 2012 Progress deadline: next chapter/section

This should be submitted to your Supervisor by this date. At the end of March you should have around 6,000 words of your dissertation written.

27 April 2012 Progress deadline: next chapter/section

This should be submitted to your Supervisor by this date. At the end of April you should have around 9,000 words of your dissertation written.

18 May 2012 Progress deadline: full draft completed

By this date you should be able to submit a full draft of the dissertation to your Supervisor. This should be around 12,000 words in length. You now have two weeks for revision and careful proof-reading.

1 June 2012 Submission

Two bound copies of your dissertation must be submitted to the Communication Studies Office before 4.30pm. Then celebrate!
Questions about supervision of the Dissertation

How do I know who my Supervisor will be?
• Once you have a broad idea about your area of study, and following the completion of the Methodologies unit, you should make an appointment to discuss your idea with the Chair of Communication Studies, who will give you the names of possible supervisors. There will sometimes be a number of members of staff who may be appropriate to supervise your topic. In this case, we may suggest that you have an informal chat with each of the people named, then let us know the people seemed to you to be most appropriate as your Supervisor. At this stage you should have signed, and submit, the Supervision Agreement form, at the end of this booklet.

How often should I meet with my Supervisor?
• It will vary, for we try to be flexible and to meet student needs. In general, though, you should not go more than 3 weeks without meeting with your Supervisor. Once you have written work to present, you would probably meet for about 30-45 minutes every 2-3 weeks.

One other point: if you are going to hand in written work for your supervisors to read and discuss with you, you should submit this work a week or so before the planned meeting date. If you want your work to be given careful consideration, please allow the time for careful consideration!

Writing the Dissertation

Note-taking:

Very important: Always note the exact publishing details of a book, and keep track of the pagination. Make sure you record details of authors/editors; publisher; place-of-publication; year-of-publication. When taking a photocopy, write the details on the first page. This saves much time in the writing-up stage. Record clearly what is quotation (or paraphrase) and what is not.

Take some notes from anything you read, even if you don’t think highly of it. Your opinion might change later, and you won’t have time to read the book or article twice.

Don’t just take notes. From an early stage, write more connected, discursive passages about what you’re working on. These are much easier to write when work is fresh in your mind, and much easier to work from later than jotted notes. Your best ideas are likely to come to you while you’re writing. Even the jotting down of a few connected sentences is worthwhile. You may find your topic growing out of what you write.

Drafts:

Attempt a first draft early and be prepared to change it. It need not include the introduction. If you’re held up over some problem with the topic, a draft of a chapter or a particular section will provide a useful test for solving the problem, and should keep your work from stalling. Once you have begun to write, you will probably feel less awed by specialist studies in the field and you should be able to read them with more profit.

Taking supervision:

Make sure you understand your Supervisor’s comments. Don’t incorporate suggestions you don’t understand or disagree with. Try not to write your way around an objection, but to meet it. In this way you will avoid any sudden gap or reversal in your argument. It usually helps to let a few days pass between writing something and receiving comment on it; comments can then be viewed more objectively. Consult regularly with your Supervisor.

The final draft:

Allow plenty of time for this, since ideas will come to you as you write and you will need time to include them and reshape your work. Final work on footnotes, bibliography, and proof-reading usually takes considerably longer than expected, so allow for this.
PRESENTATION OF THE DISSERTATION

You are required to submit TWO bound copies of your dissertation to the Communication Studies Office on the due date. (Binding can be organised cheaply and speedily through UniPrint at the UWA Guild Village.)

These copies should observe the following conventions:
• Lines of text must be set out with one-and-a-half spacing or double-spacing, except for quotations and footnotes, which can be single-spaced.
• Quotations of three lines or more must be indented.
• Leave generous margins all round the page. We recommend 3cm for the left margin, 2cm for the top, bottom, and right margins.
• Number all pages consecutively.
• Paper size: A4
• Follow the Communication Studies style guide for referencing.
• Ideally footnotes should appear at the foot of the page, but they may be grouped together at the end of the dissertation, if this is easier.
• Divide the thesis into chapters or major sections of some kind.

The presentation of creative projects will depend on the genre and format you are working with. Consultation with your supervisor/s about presentation is essential.

You should set out the title page of your dissertation as follows:
• Your name
• Dissertation title
• Year submitted
• Name of your supervisor
• Name of the course: (Masters in Communication Studies).

The general order of contents for the dissertation would be as follows:
• Title page
• Declaration
• Acknowledgements
• Abstract
• Contents page
• Dissertation
• Reference List.

The declaration must state the following:

Declaration:

This dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for any award of any other degree of diploma in any University, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation.

Requests for Extensions

Extensions are handled by the Faculty, and requests must be submitted in writing through the Chair of Communication Studies. (If you are thinking of applying for an extension, you must see the Chair of Communication Studies first.)
Although formal enrolment in the dissertation is for a period of one semester, your proposal will be completed up to six months earlier than this. We expect careful planning and time-management! Therefore students applying for an extension would be expected to face exceptional circumstances.

Examination of Dissertations

Dissertations are marked independently by two examiners, each of whom writes a brief report on the work. In some cases it may be necessary to appoint one external examiner. Because of the possible involvement of this external examiner, it is important that dissertations be submitted to deadline. (You will receive a copy of each Examiner’s report when you collect your dissertation.)

Return of Dissertations

One copy of your dissertation will be available for collection from the Communication Studies Office, together with copies of the Examiners’ reports, normally 6-7 weeks after the scheduled submission date. (The other copy of your dissertation is held in the Communication Studies archive for a minimum of 6 years.)
MASTERS (COMMUNICATION STUDIES)
Supervision agreement.

Please take this page to your supervisors for your first meeting (no later than the first week of the relevant semester).

After it is completed, you should make a copy for your own records, and pass the original to the Chair of Communication Studies.

Student name: ________________________________

Student ID: ________________________________

Broad topic area:

______________________________________________________________________________

Submission date:

Supervisor 1 (name and signature):

______________________________________________________________________________

Supervisor 2 if applicable (name and signature):

______________________________________________________________________________

Student statement:

I have read the Communication Studies Masters Booklet. I understand it is my responsibility to make regular appointments to consult with my supervisors, and to work to the schedule detailed in the Booklet.

Signature ________________________________ Date __________________
The University of Western Australia - Communication Studies

PROGRAM INFORMATION 2011-12

MASTERS (COMMUNICATION STUDIES)

Submit this form to the Chair of Communication Studies by February 25, 2011.

Name:
________________________________________________________________________

Student number: __________________________ Phone: ____________________________

Address: ___________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________ Postcode: __________

Email: __________________________________________________________

Please CIRCLE or LIST the appropriate answers to the following:

1. Proposed status: FULL-TIME PART-TIME

2. List the units you plan to take:
   SEMESTER 1, 2011
   SEMESTER 2, 2011
   SEMESTER 3, 2012

3. Dissertation Broad Topic Area (if known): _________________________________

Student's signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________