

# PH.D. IN COMMUNICATION

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The Ph.D. in Communication trains scholars, teachers, and professionals to engage social, political, and professional challenges using advanced expertise in the field of communication.

The program is shaped by the three areas of expertise present in our department. These three areas examine communication and engagement from three perspectives:

1. **Interpersonal, Intercultural, and Organizational Communication:** For many individuals, engagement with the public world grows out of their relational lives and is expressed in the organizations to which they belong and in which they work. Professors and students in this area explore communication in relational or interpersonal systems, organizing and work contexts, and within national and global arenas. Here, the focus is on exploring how individuals respond to and participate as active members in various forms of community, paying special attention to the ways in which communicative actions can create, sustain, and disable engaged citizenship.
2. **Film and Media Studies:** In the contemporary, globalized world, engaged citizenship often flows through media and is represented and enacted within popular culture. Professors and students in the area explore the mediation of public culture with particular attention to film, television, digital discourse, and the globalization of media institutions. Here, the focus is on the construction of critical media literacies and understandings of how our mediated forms of communication engage or disengage individuals as community members, empowering or disempowering them as political agents.
3. **Rhetoric and Civic Engagement:** In popular conversation, “rhetoric” is often understood to mean empty speech. Communication scholars, however, trace the meaning of “rhetoric” to antiquity when thinkers such as Aristotle and Cicero placed rhetorical studies at the center of democratic engagement. Since then, rhetorical studies have explored public engagement and community building, examining the role of communication in civic life. The resurgence of rhetorical studies in the humanities is founded on a renewed sense of the importance of rhetoric to engaged citizenship in the 21st century. Professors and students in this area explore the role of public communication in creating, maintaining, and undermining civic culture.

Although these three areas of departmental emphasis are distinct, the strength of the program is the collaborative overlapping of these three areas. As a community, we developed a cutting-edge doctoral program that takes advantage of the shared commitment to study and engage in transformative communication.

[Students interested in graduate work should refer to the Graduate and Professional Bulletin.](#)