Nebraska Wesleyan University

Communication Studies

Catalog

2025-2026

About the Program

The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) are academically equivalent within the department. Students who major in Communication Studies must also complete another major or minor in another discipline.

Department Learning Outcomes
Majors will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of communication in a variety of contexts.
2. Effectively utilize communication theories to understand the social world.
3. Communicate competently (oral)
    - Demonstrate clarity of thought;
    - Create and deliver effective presentations;
    - Participate competently in group discussion and dialogue;
    - Listen effectively;
    - Identify appropriate communication strategies for various groups and organizational and cultural contexts
4. Communicate competently (written)
    - Effectively organize written presentations (introduction, logical development of points, transitions, conclusion);
    - Utilize appropriate language style for the purpose and audience (vocabulary level, sentence structure and length, stylistic techniques);
    - Use appropriate language mechanics (punctuation, spelling, usage, accurate word choice).
5. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to undertake research in the discipline of communication.
    - Read and understand research reports;
    - Write literature reviews and critical analyses of research and theory;
    - Utilize APA style appropriately;
    - Design and complete a research project; write a research report.
        - Describe a research question;
        - Write a literature review that synthesizes information;
        - Utilize a theory to guide the work;
        - Describe research methods (i.e., surveys, interviews, etc.);
        - Discuss findings and their relation to a literature review;
        - Discuss implications/directions for future research.

Majors, Minors & Degrees

Majors

1. Communication Studies (B.A., B.S.)

Minors

1. Communication Studies

Courses

COMM 1250 Introduction to Communication Studies

4 hours

This course is designed to help students develop the skills necessary to effectively communicate in public, private and professional settings. The course will focus on a broad base of communication theory, concepts, and skills and offer students the opportunity to apply those skills. Students will explore several modes of communication, including persuasive and invitational speaking, dialogue, and interpersonal communication. Students will explore the foundations of the communication discipline and consider the importance of communication for our personal, professional, and civic lives.

Normally offered each semester.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Speaking Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Identity Thread

COMM 1510 Intercultural Communication

4 hours

The study of cultural differences that influence the exchange of meaning between individuals and groups of different cultural and/or racial backgrounds. The course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the uniqueness of cultures and the resulting variations in communication styles and preferences, and to provide strategies and skills for successfully communicating across cultural barriers. Students will spend at least 20 hours during the semester working with community agencies serving clients from different cultures.

(Normally offered each semester.)

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Discourse Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Experiential Learning: Exploratory
Archway Curriculum: Foundational Literacies: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – U.S.

COMM 1900 Selected Topics

1-4 hours

A topical course designed to investigate relevant subject matter not included in any standard courses. The title and the content will be determined by current mutual interests of students and faculty. This course may be offered to meet a requirement for a major only by approval of the department chair.

COMM 1950 Independent Study

1-4 hours

This is a research course. The student initially meets with the department chair to select a study topic and review research methods. At this time the student will be assigned a faculty resource person to guide his or her work and assist in an advisory capacity. A copy of the student's work is filed in the archives for the department. Independent study may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Senior standing or permission of the department chair.

COMM 1960 Special Projects

1-15 hours

Supervised individual projects for students on topics selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. Special Projects may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the instructor.

COMM 2300 Communication Theory

4 hours

Students will explore theories and research questions investigated by social scientists interested in the processes of human communication.
Prerequisite(s): Sophomore standing.
(Normally offered each semester.)

COMM 2360 Experiencing the Culture of Italy

3 hours

This course will provide students a direct encounter with the culture of Italy. Specifically, students will study cultural indicators of Florence such as verbal and nonverbal communication, food, transportation, business climate, politics, religious beliefs, and interpersonal relationships. Students live in Florence, read texts, listen/give presentations, view art, attend concerts, experience the culture of Florence through walking, watching, eating, shopping and navigating the city and reflecting on these experiences.
Prerequisite(s): Instructor permission and sophomore standing.
(Normally offered in odd numbered summers.)

Archway Curriculum: Foundational Literacies: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Global

COMM 2400 Communication and Leadership

4 hours

Students will explore components of leadership theory, skills, and behaviors, and will examine and practice effective communication behaviors as related to leadership processes and roles.

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Power Thread

COMM 2550 Health Communication

3 hours

Health Communication is the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community decisions that enhance health. We will be exploring a wide range of messages and media in the context of health maintenance and promotion, disease prevention, treatment and advocacy. Through readings, discussion, written assignments, along with shadowing and interviewing a variety of health care professionals, you will learn theories focusing on the communication patterns and practices that shape health care in the U.S. as well as in other cultures.
(Normally offered in the spring semester.)

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Discourse Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Human Health and Disease Thread

COMM 2600 Mass Media

4 hours

A study of the development of types of media including books, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and film. The interaction of these media and their impact on society and the individual are included.
(Normally offered each spring semester.)

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Democracy Thread

COMM 2900 Selected Topics

2-3 hours

A topical course designed to investigate any relevant subject matter not included in any of the standard courses. The title, content and credit will be determined by current mutual interests of students and faculty.
Prerequisite(s): To be determined by the instructor.

COMM 2950 Independent Study

1-3 hours

A departmental research project. Either a proposition or a conclusion is to be defended orally by the student before persons in the department. Independent study may not duplicate courses described in the catalog. *Prerequisite(s): Approval of the department chair.*

COMM 2960 Special Projects

1-15 hours

Supervised individual projects for students on topics selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. Special Projects may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the instructor.

COMM 2970 Internship

1-8 hours

The Sophomore/Junior-Level Communication Internship has been developed to provide an enriching, applied-learning experience for a student's major or minor. This elective internship can help the student determine the type and location of her or his future internships or professional activities. It is also a useful option as an elective credit in the student's senior year after the COMM 4970 Internship requirement has been filled.
Pass/Fail only.
Prerequisite(s): Sophomore standing and permission of the internship coordinator or department chair.
(Normally offered each semester and summer.)

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Experiential Learning: Intensive

COMM 3200 Persuasive Communication

4 hours

A study of theories and practices of persuasion within a variety of communication contexts. Students will be expected to apply these concepts to out-of-class persuasive situations.
Prerequisite(s): Junior standing.
(Normally offered each semester.)

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Speaking Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Power Thread

COMM 3300 Public Relations

3 hours

The course in Public Relations is a study of the nature of public relations, the persons involved, its relationship to public opinion, and the channels of communication that are used. Special attention is given to the application of public relations strategies for particular events or organizations.
(Normally offered each semester.)

COMM 3500 Research Methods

4 hours

This course is designed to help students understand, use, and evaluate the quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical methods Communication scholars employ to investigate and write about their scholarship. Application of each method will be achieved via a semester-long case study conducted at a Lincoln nonprofit organization. Additionally, by reading a variety of social scientific research articles, students will understand how operational definitions, theories, research questions and hypotheses, a literature review, and data analysis work together to support written research reports or proposals. The semester will culminate with an original scholarly research report using appropriate APA style. This report will also be presented in a public forum.
Prerequisite(s): Sophomore standing and COMM 2300 Communication Theory (may be taken concurrently) or permission of instructor.
(Normally offered each semester.)

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Writing Instructive

COMM 3600 Principles of Advertising

3 hours

This broad-based course overviews the history and criticism of advertising, as well as the fundamental aspects of targeting, positioning, media selection, and creative strategy.
(Normally offered each semester.)

COMM 3700 Organizational Communication

4 hours

Students will explore the intersection of the theory and practice of communication in an organizational context. Particular emphasis will be placed on understanding how power within and between organizations is shaped by and shapes society. Topics include identity, power, globalization, technology, and ethics. Prerequisite(s): Junior standing and Communication 2300 and Communication 3500 or instructor permission of a prerequisite waiver. (Normally offered each fall semester.)

Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Power Thread

COMM 3800 Communication through Dialogue

4 hours

This course is designed to help students develop theoretical and practical understandings of dialogic communication. Students will develop the skills necessary to effectively participate in and facilitate transformational dialogue. In addition to developing a comprehensive understanding of current dialogic research, students will have several opportunities to practice their facilitating skills by helping NWU and Lincoln community groups engage impasse through dialogue.
Prerequisite(s): Sophomore standing.

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Discourse Instructive
Archway Curriculum: Integrative Core: Chaos Thread

COMM 3900 Selected Topics

1-4 hours

A topical course designed to investigate relevant subject matter not included in any standard courses. The title and the content will be determined by current mutual interests of students and faculty. This course may be offered to meet a requirement for a major only by approval of the department chair.

COMM 3950 Independent Study

1-4 hours

This is a research course. The student initially meets with the department chair to select a study topic and review research methods. At this time the student will be assigned a faculty resource person to guide his or her work and assist in an advisory capacity. A copy of the student's work is filed in the archives for the department. Independent study may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the department chair.

COMM 3960 Special Projects

1-15 hours

Supervised individual projects for students on topics selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. Special Projects may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the instructor.

COMM 4100 Communication in the Professions

4 hours

Students will create and deliver presentations for a variety of communication contexts and audiences. Skills in interviewing and group problem solving will be also be developed.
Prerequisite(s): Junior standing and instructor permission.
(Normally offered each semester.)

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Speaking Instructive

COMM 4900 Selected Topics

2-3 hours

An advanced topical course designed to investigate any relevant subject matter not included in any of the standard courses. The title, content, and credit will be determined by current mutual interests of students and faculty.
Prerequisite(s): To be determined by the instructor.

COMM 4910 Directed Readings

1-8 hours

An opportunity for students, under the supervision of a faculty member, to pursue scientific literature not covered in other coursework.

COMM 4950 Independent Study

1-4 hours

This is a research course. The student initially meets with the department chair to select a study topic and review research methods. At this time the student will be assigned a faculty resource person to guide his or her work and assist in an advisory capacity. A copy of the student's work is filed in the archives for the department. Independent study may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Senior standing or permission of the department chair.

COMM 4960 Special Projects

1-15 hours

Supervised individual projects for students on topics selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. Special Projects may not duplicate courses described in the catalog.
Prerequisite(s): Permission of the instructor.

COMM 4970 Internship

2-4 hours

The Senior-Level Communication Internship has been developed to provide a culminating experience for the student's major, thus senior status (successful completion of 90 or more credit hours) is required. In addition, it is often the case that a senior-level internship offers amazing career exploration opportunities. The Senior-Level internship should be viewed as seriously as one would a full-time job.
Pass/Fail only.
Prerequisite(s): Senior standing and permission of the internship coordinator or department chair.
(Normally offered each semester and summer.)

Archway Curriculum: Essential Connections: Experiential Learning: Intensive

COMM 4980 Communication and Contemporary Society

4 hours

The capstone course in communication, this seminar will include a review of major communication theories and research methods and their application to a variety of contexts, settings, and contemporary issues as well as discussions of communication careers and graduate study.
Prerequisite(s): Senior standing and a major in communication or permission of the department chair.
(Normally offered each spring semester.)

COMM 4990 Senior Project

0-4 hours

Independent field research for all majors.