

# PUBLIC COMMUNICATION, MASTER OF ARTS

Offered by the Department of Communication (<http://catalog.unk.edu/graduate/departments/communication/>)

## Program Information

The Master of Public Communication is an online master's program designed to serve students who are currently working in a career or who progressing directly from their baccalaureate degree to improve their credentials. Public communication is the art of translating information from jargon-specific terms to lay terms. The goal of this program is to teach students to communicate expert knowledge to broader audiences. Students will learn how to take specialized knowledge (e.g., health or political science) and communicate that knowledge to larger publics. They will learn how to utilize mass media and public relations strategies to synthesize knowledge in a specific field and present to and persuade public audiences. While communication to the public is a primary focus, internal communication skills are also emphasized.

Students will have two degree-completion options. They may opt to complete a practicum or write a thesis. These options will allow students to tailor the degree to their own professional/academic goals. The program prepares students to learn how to lead outreach programs within their chosen discipline yet offers the flexibility to prepare students for a Ph.D. program.

## Admission Requirements

Admission to the Public Communication MA program is based on resume, letter of intent, and references. An applicant interested in pursuing an MA in Public Communication should:

1. Meet the requirements for admission set forth by the Office of Graduate Studies and Academic Outreach.\*
2. Submit official college/university transcript showing the conferment of a bachelor's degree.
3. Submit two professional references with name, relationship to applicant, phone number, and email address.
4. Submit a letter of intent that describes the applicant's interests and goals in obtaining a degree in Public Communication.
5. Submit a professional resume.

\*Students with an undergraduate GPA lower than 2.75 may still be considered for the program based on their other strengths. These students will be conditionally admitted for the first semester and must achieve a 3.0 GPA to be fully admitted to the program. Conditional approval will be considered for students who have especially strong work history and/or students whose undergraduate GPA in the major is markedly higher than their overall GPA.

International students will be required to meet the minimum TOEFL score of 213 on the computerized test and 550 on the paper test.

## Public Communication, Master of Arts

Code	Title	Credit Hours
<i>Courses Required</i>		
SPCH 802	Introduction to Graduate Study in Communication	3
SPCH 899	Applied Communication Theory	3
<i>Choice of one research methods course</i>		3
SPCH 846	Introduction to Communication Research	
SPCH 882	Rhetorical Criticism	
<i>Specialization (Determined in Consultation with Advisor)<sup>1</sup></i>		9
<i>Select one of the following options</i>		
<b>Practicum Option</b>		
SPCH 875	Public Communication Practicum <sup>3</sup>	3
Electives <sup>2</sup>		15
<b>Thesis Option</b>		
SPCH 876	Public Communication Thesis <sup>4</sup>	6
Electives <sup>2</sup>		12
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		<b>36</b>

1

Specializations may be customized based on student's career goals in areas including but not limited to: organizational and leadership communication, health and science communication, political communication, media, public relations, and more.

2

Electives for Practicum and Thesis Options:

- Practicum Option: Students taking the practicum option will complete 15 hours of electives and 3 hours of practicum credits
- Thesis Option: Students completing the thesis option will complete 12 hours of electives and 6 hours of thesis credits

3

Students will enroll in 3 credits of SPCH 875: Practicum. Students will connect their graduate curriculum to professional experience in an effort to demonstrate an ability to apply coursework within an organization. Students will develop a completion paper that explains accomplishments in the practicum experience and connects these accomplishments to the graduate curriculum. Students will present their practicum findings to faculty.

4

Student will enroll in 6 credit hours of SPCH 876: Thesis. In conjunction with their adviser, students will prepare a research project based on graduate coursework. The student's adviser and 2 additional graduate faculty will serve as the student's Thesis Committee. The committee will assemble for an oral defense of the thesis.

### Additional Program Notes:

- At least 18 hours (not including thesis or practicum) must be from Department of Communication at UNK, unless authorized by advisor and graduate program chair in advance
- All courses completed must be 800-level or higher to count toward degree program
- A maximum of 50% of all coursework may be paired or "P" classes (in alignment with campus guidelines)

- Students must complete a program of studies during their first semester with approval from advisor