

**University of San Francisco**  
**Communication Studies**  
**Assessment Plan**  
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**1. Introduction**

Communication shapes patterns of social interaction, the expression of cultural values and norms, political practices and relations of power, and our positions as local and global citizens. In our effort to explore this conception of communication, the division of Communication Studies has identified several key framing questions: How does communication proceed in everyday life? How is political space negotiated and constructed discursively? How is communication a cultural practice? These questions anchor our foundational courses and drive the curriculum. We do not have ‘tracks’ in our major and we see crossover between the different methodological and theoretical commitments of our faculty. The division provides students with methodological tools, critical acumen, theoretical resources, and communicative skills to analyze and engage in a wide range of discourse: from the circuits of publicity that structure our relationship to consumer products, politicians, and social movements to the everyday interactions of family, friends, and strangers. We teach students how research and theory inform how social and political power is constructed, executed, and modified through communication. Our division seeks to educate students about the social and cultural impact of discourse and deliberation and prepare students to use their knowledge to work for a just and more humane world. We believe that this education will provide a strong preparation for work, personal life, and citizenly engagement regardless of future career or life paths.

The major and minors provide students with a coherent, yet flexible education. The program is structured in a logical, sequential, and consistent manner that provides students with challenges and opportunities throughout the program. The new major curriculum introduces students to the history of attempts to understand communication from Ancient Greece to the present while they are challenged with the most recent scholarship in various sub-fields. We have not segmented a single course to address the history of the field. Students do, however, learn about historical roots through reading and discussion in the foundational courses and in many of the upper-division courses. We feel that students should understand past efforts to study communication in the context of ongoing intellectual issues and current practices. Our courses as a whole are driven by the latest scholarship in the field.

## 2. Structure of Major

The division of Communication Studies at the University of San Francisco offers a major and a minor in Communication Studies, and a minor in Public Relations. We do not offer a graduate program.

As noted above, ours is a relatively new major, but due to external factors we have significantly revised the major twice in the past 7 years. The first change, in 2001, was the result of the college shifting from 3 to 4 unit classes. We went from a 13 course/39 unit major to an 11 course/44 unit major.

The requirements for the major include the three foundational courses (Rhetoric and the Public Sphere, Communication and Everyday Life, Communication and Culture) and Research Methods at the lower-division, as well as seven upper-division courses of students' choice (for a total of eleven required courses, or 44 units). We encourage students to take at least two of the foundational courses before enrolling in Research Methods. Our three foundational courses also have a writing co-requisite, as each course requires extensive reading and writing. Students must be enrolled in (or have completed) Written Communication II (or higher) when enrolling in our foundational courses. The four lower-division required courses (Rhetoric and the Public Sphere, Communication and Everyday Life, Communication and Culture, and Research Methods) serve as prerequisites for various upper-division courses.

There are no specific courses in the upper-division that are absolutely required for the major, but we do have certain constraints on the combinations of courses students may choose at the advanced level. In an effort to ensure that students have a strong theoretical base in Communication Studies, students are limited to taking only three Advertising or Public Relations courses to count towards the major. Students who wish to take more than three Advertising or Public Relations courses are encouraged to do so as they will count either as elective courses or may count toward the Public Relations minor. We have chosen to staff the Public Relations program with professionals who have extensive experience in the field.

- 195 Freshman Seminar (offered occasionally in fall, topics vary)
- 202 Rhetoric and the Public Sphere (every semester, multiple sections)
- 203 Communication and Everyday Life (every semester, 1-2 sections)
- 204 Communication and Culture (every semester, multiple sections)
- 205 Research Methods (every semester, multiple sections)
- 300 Interpersonal Communication (every spring, pre-requisite 203)
- 306 Family Communication (every spring, pre-requisite 203 & 205)
- 314 Intercultural Communication (once every two years, pre-requisite 204)
- 320 Public Relations Principles and Practices (every fall, pre-requisite 103 or 131)
- 322 Public Relations Law and Ethics (every spring, pre-requisite 320)
- 323 Public Relations Writing (every fall, pre-requisite 320)
- 326 Public Relations Campaigns (every spring, pre-requisite 320)
- 332 Rhetorical Criticism (every fall, pre-requisite 202)
- 334 Rhetoric and Citizenship (every fall)
- 340 Advertising Strategies (every fall, pre-requisite 202)
- 342 Advertising Presentations (every spring, pre-requisite 340)

- 350 Nonverbal Communication (every fall, pre-requisite 205)
- 352 Communicating about Health (every fall, pre-requisite 205)
- 356 Organizational Communication (every spring, pre-requisite 205)
- 358 Persuasion and Social Influence (every spring, pre-requisite 205)
- 360 Language and Social Interaction (once every two years, pre-requisite 204)
- 364 Communication for Justice and Social Change (every spring)
- 365 Geographies of Communication (every other year)
- 366 Ethnography of Communication (once a year, pre-requisite 204)
- 368 Communication and Aging (varies, usually once a year, pre-requisite 205)
- 373 Rhetorical History of the U.S. (once per year, pre-requisite 202)
- 490 Topics in Communication Studies (as needed, topics vary)
- 496 Communication Studies Internship (four times per year, fall, intersession, spring, and summer)

### **3. Learning Goals**

The division's learning goals are as follows:

- 1) Students will be able to understand critically how communication shapes the contemporary world.
- 2) Students will be able to use a variety of methodological tools to analyze communicative practices in both our public and private lives.
- 3) Students will develop and hone the skills to be effective communicators.
- 4) Students will be prepared to use their knowledge of communicative practices to work for a just world.

### **4. General Assessment**

Students' learning is assessed through examinations, presentations, and the writing and research projects that they complete in the foundational courses and throughout their coursework. This learning is evaluated, in part, by the requirement that all majors and minors maintain a "C" average to graduate. Additionally, students must earn a "C-" or higher in all Communication Studies courses to receive credit for that course towards the major or minor.

## **4. Assessment Plans by Program Goals**

### **Program Goal 1: Theory**

Students will be able to understand critically how communication shapes the contemporary world.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- 1a) Students will analyze the taken for granted nature of everyday communication and discuss how theories of communication allow people to understand everyday life;
- 1b) Students will compare and contrast communicative environments from various cultures, identifying how the communicative practices of different cultures reflect and express cultural beliefs, values, and norms;
- 1c) Students will recognize and assess how communication is impacted by rhetorical discourse, political practices and relations of power.

### **Assessment Methods**

- Examinations in foundational and upper-division courses
- Written project papers
- Syllabi Analysis

### **Time Frame**

Evaluation of student work will be done at the end of the semester

### **Who will do the assessment?**

Course instructors will be responsible for assessing individual student learning.

**Program Goal 1: Students will be able to understand critically how communication shapes the contemporary world.**

Outcome	Very Poor Achievement of Outcome	Poor Achievement of Outcome	Average Achievement of Outcome [Benchmark Standard]	Good Achievement of Outcome	Very Good Achievement Of Outcome
<p><b>1.1.</b> Graduates will analyze the taken for granted nature of everyday communication and discuss how theories of communication allow people to understand everyday life</p>	<p>1.1.1. Students exhibit little understanding of how communication shapes everyday life;</p>	<p>1.1.1. Students can use some of the basic concepts of communication scholarship;</p>	<p>1.1.1.Students can analyze current scholarly works focusing on communication as a situated practice in everyday interactions;                      1.1.2. Students can evaluate and compare foundational texts and issues;                      1.1.3. Students can discuss the role of communication and perception in the creation of self; how communication changes over time in relationships; and how conflict is managed in everyday interactions;                      1.1.4. Students can demonstrate knowledge of the different modalities of communication used in everyday interactions, including verbal and nonverbal codes;                      1.1.5. Students can analyze the complexities of beginning, building, and ending relationships, including friendships, romantic relationships, and family relationships</p>	<p>1.1.1. Students exhibit an in-depth understanding of current scholarship and demonstrate the ability to critically analyze them.</p>	<p>1.1.1. Students can integrate knowledge, theory, and experience to discuss in-depth and analyze critically the major contemporary works of communication theory.</p>
<p><b>1.2.</b> Graduates will compare and contrast communicative environments from various</p>	<p>Students exhibit little understanding of the different disciplinary</p>		<p>1.2.1. Students become aware and can analyze the “unconscious” nature of</p>		

<p>cultures, identifying how the communicative practices of different cultures reflect and express cultural beliefs, values, and norms</p>	<p>approaches to cultural/communicative issues.</p>		<p>language in a cultural setting;  1.2.2. Students can identify and discuss the communicative factors that create diversity in human societies;  1.2.3. Students can connect these factors to social dimensions such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity;  1.2.4. Students can recognize how communicative patterns signal belonging to a cultural group;  1.2.5. Students can identify and discuss the relationship between linguistic diversity and inequality;  1.2.6. Students can compare and contrast the effects of global interdependence on contemporary societies, focusing in particular the role of cultural globalization and linguistic flows.</p>		
<p><b>1.3.</b> Graduates will recognize and assess how communication is impacted by rhetorical discourse, political practices and relations of power.</p>	<p>Students exhibit little understanding of rhetorical concepts.</p>		<p>1.3.1. Students can assess the discipline of Communication Studies as both a pragmatic tool for achieving the needs of particular communities and a key force shaping those very communities;  1.3.2. Students can use communication theories and concepts to interpret, analyze, and explain contemporary power relations in the public sphere;</p>		

			<p>1.3.3. Students become more critical, reflexive, and savvy consumers of all kinds of public discourse;</p> <p>1.3.4. Students can apply the knowledge and skills gleaned through reading, writing, and discussion to situations beyond the classroom.</p>		
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## **Program Goal 2: Methods**

Students will be able to use a variety of methodological tools to analyze communicative practices in both our public and private lives.

## **Learning Outcomes 2**

Students will learn the main methods used in Communication Studies to analyze communicative behavior: quantitative methods to study interpersonal communication (surveys, questionnaires, etc.); qualitative methods to study cultural communicative practices (fieldwork, participant observation, recording and transcribing); and textual and discourse analysis to study rhetorical discourse.

## **Assessment Methods**

- Examinations in foundational and upper-division courses
- Written project papers
- Syllabi Analysis

## **Time Frame**

Evaluation of student work will be done at the end of the semester

## **Who will do the assessment?**

Course instructors will be responsible for assessing individual student learning.

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## Communication Studies Outcome Rubric

### Program Goal 2:

Students will be able to use a variety of methodological tools to analyze communicative practices in both our public and private lives.

Outcome	Very Poor Achievement Of Outcome	Poor Achievement of Outcome	Average Achievement of Outcome [Benchmark Standard]	Good Achievement of Outcome	Very Good Achievement Of Outcome
<p>2.1. Graduates will demonstrate familiarity with quantitative methods to analyze interpersonal communication (surveys, questionnaires, etc.); and textual and discourse analysis to study rhetorical discourse.</p>					
<p>2.2. Graduates will demonstrate familiarity with qualitative methods to study cultural communicative practices (fieldwork, participant observation, recording and transcribing);</p>	<p>Students exhibit little understanding of how to use qualitative methods to create a research paper.</p>	<p>Students display an understanding of these methods, but are unable to apply their conceptual knowledge to cultural settings.</p>	<p>2.2.1. Students can create a research paper based on literature review and original research;            2.2.2. Students can design an ethnographic research project: identify and get access to a particular organization with an active agenda for social change;            2.2.3. Students know how to use recording technologies to capture a small group interaction and produced a verbatim transcript;            2.2.4. Students can analyze the communicative style of a particular event, group of people, or setting;</p>	<p>Students display in-depth understanding of the concepts and tools</p>	<p>Students display comprehensive knowledge of the concepts and tools of more than</p>

<p>2.3 Graduates will demonstrate familiarity with textual and discourse analysis to study rhetorical discourse.</p>			<p>2.3.1. Students can create a research paper based on literature review and original research;</p>		
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### **Program Goal 3: Effective Communication**

Students will develop and hone the skills to be effective communicators.

### **Learning Outcomes 3**

Students will practice the skills of speaking, writing, and critical thinking, and will use these skills in their professional, and public lives.

### **Assessment Methods**

- Examinations in foundational and upper-division courses
- Written project papers
- Syllabi Analysis

### **Time Frame**

Evaluation of student work will be done at the end of the semester

### **Who will do the assessment?**

Course instructors will be responsible for assessing individual student learning.

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## Communication Studies Outcome Rubric

**Program Goal 3: Students will develop and hone the skills to be effective communicators.**

Outcome	Very Poor Achievement Of Outcome	Poor Achievement of Outcome	Average Achievement of Outcome [Benchmark Standard]	Good Achievement of Outcome	Very Good Achievement Of Outcome
<p><b>3.1.</b> Graduates will master the skills of speaking, writing, and critical thinking, and will use these skills in their professional, and public lives</p>	<p>Students exhibit a very limited understanding of communication skills.</p>		<p>3.1.1. Students will analyze and construct cogent and well-structured arguments, including clear thesis statements, coherent organization, and sound reasoning.            3.1.2. Students will identify, use, and properly cite credible evidence.            3.1.3. Students will demonstrate facility in public and scholarly discourse and in the adaptation of argument to their audiences.            3.1.4. Students will practice speaking and writing as a public art of citizenship, using key concepts from communication studies to inform civic judgment.</p>		

## **Program Goal 4: Applied Knowledge**

Students will be prepared to use their knowledge of communicative practices to work for a just world.

### **Learning Outcomes 4**

Students will assess, from a communicative perspective, the ethical and socio-cultural issues as they arise in communicative environments (from face-to face interactions to public debates and discussions), identifying the possibilities, problems, and history of communication in social settings. Furthermore, they will employ their communicative skills to develop their own recommendations for how communication can reduce social inequality.

### **Rubrics 4**

Learn how to get access to a particular organization with an active agenda for social change;

Provide 30 hours or more of service learning to this community partner;

Acquire the communicative skills necessary for establishing and developing relationships with people from this organization;

Evaluate intercultural issues as they arise in public debates, and discuss the relevance of these issues with others in society;

Develop recommendations for how communication can work for social justice and reduce social inequalities.

### **Assessment Methods**

- Examinations in foundational and upper-division courses
- Written project papers
- Syllabi Analysis

### **Time Frame**

Evaluation of student work will be done at the end of the semester

### **Who will do the assessment?**

Course instructors will be responsible for assessing individual student learning.



**Communication Studies Outcome Rubric**

**Program Goal 4: Students will be prepared to use their knowledge of communicative practices to work for a just world.**

Outcome	Very Poor Achievement Of Outcome	Poor Achievement of Outcome	Average Achievement of Outcome [Benchmark Standard]	Good Achievement of Outcome	Very Good Achievement Of Outcome
<p>4.1. Graduates will be able to assess, from a communicative perspective, the ethical and socio-cultural issues as they rise in communicative environments (from face-to face interactions to public debates and discussions).</p>			<p>Students demonstrate the ability to assess the impact of</p>		
<p>4.2. Graduates will be able to identify the possibilities, problems, and history of communication in social settings, in particular in dealing with non-profit organizations..</p>			<p>4.2.1. Students know how to get access to a particular organization with an active agenda for social change; 4.2.2. Students have acquired the communicative skills necessary for establishing and developing relationships with people from outside organizations;</p>		
<p>4.3. Graduates will employ their communicative skills to develop their own recommendations for how communication can reduce social inequality.</p>					