

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
THE MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION

PLANNING YOUR MASTER'S PROGRAM OF STUDY

Preparing a Permanent Program of Study requires the graduate student to make three important choices. First, the student must select a permanent advisor and file the necessary form. Second, the student, in consultation with the permanent advisor, must select a set of courses that fulfill the requirements of the degree. Third, the student, in consultation with the permanent advisor, must decide which capstone experience he/she wishes to complete to fulfill the requirements of the degree. The student and the advisor should complete and file **Form II: Permanent Program**.

Prior to registration each semester, the graduate student should consult with his/her advisor (temporary or permanent) to gain approval for the courses selected and to review the Permanent Program as planned. All course selections should be made in consultation with an advisor, but in particular, enrollment in course work outside the School of Communication and course work at the 5000-level must have prior approval by an advisor.

THE PERMANENT PROGRAM

A Graduate Student Permanent Program of Study lists all courses and other requirements necessary for completion of the degree program. The Graduate Student Permanent Program of Study (**Form II**) is signed by the graduate student and his/her advisor and the program must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of the School of Communication. The Permanent Program is filed in the Registrar's Office with the appropriate graduate auditor at the time of application for graduation.

Changes to the Permanent Program should be made in consultation with the student's permanent advisor. Any changes made after the Permanent Program has been filed with the auditor should be reported to the Director of Graduate Studies using **Form III: Request for Modification of Permanent Program**. The Director of Graduate Studies then will report such changes to the auditor.

FULL- AND PART-TIME STUDENT STATUS

Full-time graduate students must enroll in a minimum of six (6) credit hours each fall and spring semester, while three (3) credit hours constitutes part-time status. In Summer I and Summer II sessions, three hours in either session constitutes full-time status for that session and two hours constitutes half-time status. Students who have

completed all course work and who only have a thesis to complete must enroll in a minimum of one credit hour to maintain continuous enrollment status. Students on assistantships are encouraged to review FICA regulations and some federal loan deferment regulations with regard to full- versus part-time status.

All students on graduate assistantship must be enrolled in at least six credit hours. Occasionally a student who holds a GA appointment will take only 3 credit hours. The student must seek permission from the Graduate College to underenroll for the semester (a Graduate College form is used for this purpose and is available on the Graduate College website under Forms).

COURSE PLANNING

The Master's program in Communication requires the completion of thirty credit hours. A full-time Master's student taking six credits each in fall and spring semesters and one course in summer I and another course in summer II of that first year should be able to graduate in April of the second year of his/her program. Part-time students (taking three credits a semester) typically are able to complete their studies in two and a half to three years, if they complete a course during each semester and each summer term.

The scheduling of courses is always subject to availability of faculty and sufficient enrollments. However, to facilitate the planning of your Permanent Program, the School of Communication offers the following guidelines.

- **Number of courses:** We try to offer 4 graduate classes each fall and spring semester and try to offer one (1) graduate course in summer, typically in summer I.
- **Research Foundations:** COM 6010 Introduction to Communication Theory and Research is offered every fall and is required of all entering graduate students. COM 6020 Quantitative Communication Research typically is offered in the spring semester. COM 6050 Qualitative Communication Research, depending on personnel available, typically is offered in summer I. We do our best to ensure that the research courses are offered each year.
- **Communication Foundations:** COM 6820, COM 6740, and COM 6450 are offered on a semester-by-semester rotation during the regular academic year.
- **Communication electives:** Two communication electives are offered every fall semester and every spring semester. One elective may be offered in either summer I or summer II, provided personnel and funding are available.