



COMMUNICATIONS AS A MAJOR

Roger Woolsey, Director of Career Services, Colby College

Choosing a major while in college is one of the most critical endeavors. Often, family and friends will question why you chose to study a specific discipline. It is best to research and appreciate a discipline before declaring a major. Why study communication? What is communication? What can you do with a degree in communication? These are some of the questions surrounding a decision to major in communications.

What does it mean to be a communication major? The communication major is both art and science. Communication as a discipline is concerned with the analysis, criticism, research and practice of the humanistic and scientific approaches to communication. Specifically, the study of communication is practical and can lead to exciting internship and job opportunities. In fact, many graduates of communication programs enter careers in advertising, broadcasting, communication education, journalism, and public relations, to name a few. Communication majors have also had success in fields related to communication such as business, finance, education, government/politics, health, international relations and negotiations, and social and human services. Finally, many majors have successfully completed graduate programs in business, entertainment, and law.

The communication major is quickly becoming one of the most popular majors in colleges across the country. The communication field offers a variety of concentrations that can lead to many different jobs after college. Here are some of the areas of emphasis that fall under the communication major:

Advertising

Advertising is the study and practice of market research, media strategy and planning, and creative execution (art direction and creative copywriting).

Public Relations

Public relations is the study and practice of managing media relations, media planning, special events, crisis management, corporate communications, journalism, and community outreach programs.

Visual Communication

Visual communication is the analysis and practice of visual data, such as architecture, photography, visual art, advertising, film, and television as it relates to communication.

Communication Law

Communication law is the study of law related to freedom of speech, new media, entertainment, and sales of goods.

Organizational Communication

Organizational communication is the analysis of interaction within organizational environments,

including language structure, content dissemination, supervisor and subordinate interaction, leadership, and cultural characteristics.

Broadcast Journalism

Broadcast journalism is the study and practice of television news, radio and internet programming.

Print Journalism

Print journalism is the study and practice of a variety of writing styles used for magazines, newspapers and online media. Professional standards of journalism include reporters, writers, columnists and editors.

Radio and Television Production

Radio and television studies are the analysis and practice of production management, programming, sales, audience research and content analysis.

Intercultural and International Communication

Intercultural communication is the analysis of communication styles within and between cultures and subcultures, including both verbal and nonverbal characteristics.

Health Communication

Health communication is the study and promotion of health related content within healthcare and in education, which fosters doctor-patient interaction and public health awareness campaigns.

Electronic Media

Electronic media is the study of interactive media, web-entertainment, and new media technologies and the influence these new media have on their intended audiences.

Rhetorical Studies

Rhetoric is the analysis and critique of historical texts and events that lead to a critical appreciation of persuasive techniques used in all media forms.

There are many other exciting aspects of the communications field not mentioned here. To learn more about the communication major and undergraduate programs visit the National Communication Association's website www.natcom.org.
