

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMMUNICATION ARTS MAJOR

Clarke Rountree, Chair

Changes Sought

- We want to increase the required hours for the major from 33 to 36 by adding a sixth elective course. The rationale below explains why we seek this change.
- As expressed in our proposal for a BA in Writing, we want to formally end the Technical Writing track (which is covered by that new program), end the Rhetoric track, and have all majors take the same curriculum (which is, effectively, the old Rhetoric track). The 2015 external review committee for our departmental self-study recommended we eliminate the term “Rhetoric” from our major’s title, because it is poorly understood by those outside academia.

Rationale

Only three other AHSS majors are less than 36 hours (HY and PH at 30; SOC at 34). The CM major was 36 hours until the early 1990s; the decrease in hours was made to help grow the department in the early 1990s when it was at its nadir because of low enrollments due to the lack of a strong, regular (non-acting) chair. The goal of the decrease was to make it easier to double major (sidling up to more popular majors) and to make our major more attractive (by making it quicker to finish). That stimulus is no longer needed. Last year the department graduated more majors than any other department in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.

Under the current requirements, which require only two lower-level CM electives, students have less incentive to take such electives, many of which we have added in recent years. We have added CM 260 Video Production and CM 220 Introduction to Public Relations, and revived CM 251 Decision Making in Small Groups and CM 110 Voice & Diction (now TH 110, though CM students are allowed to take two TH classes for credit). Because many students take TH 122 Theatre Appreciation as a fine arts elective (which may count in the CM major), they often are left with only one lower-level elective. If they also take TH 221 Acting or TH 225 Elements of Production they will have none. This is particularly problematic for students interested in pursuing public relations, which requires they take both CM 205 Introduction to Journalism and CM 220 Introduction to Public Relations.

Another problem this addresses is student interest in taking CM 400 Internship and also completing an internship as part of CM 431 Senior Capstone in Communication Arts. The chair has instituted a rule that requires that students who do an internship prior to taking CM 431 may not take the internship option in the senior capstone class. His rationale is that with only 33 hours of required courses, having six hours devoted to outside, hands-on work leaves too little engagement in academic course work and dilutes the academic strength of one’s major work. Adding another elective would allow us to eliminate that rule and avoid the class management problems that follow it.

Finally, adding a sixth elective course would encourage students to explore the growing number of electives we have created with the growth of our faculty and their course offerings. This includes the lower-level classes noted above, as well as CM 335 Social Media, CM 433 Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication, CM 444 Advertising, CM 420 Public Relations, CM 440 Public Relations Campaigns, CM 408 Classical Rhetorical Theory, CM 409 Contemporary Rhetorical Theory, CM 416 Women Orators, CM 418 Legal Argument, CM 426 Burkeian Theory & Criticism, CM 451 Organizational Theory & Training,

and CM 454 New Media Writing & Rhetoric, as well as new theatre offerings and new cross-listed classes to come in the Writing major.

This change should not create any problems for our majors completing their degrees in 120 hours. Only the now-defunct Technical Communication track made it challenging to stay under that wire.

The proposed changes are noted below.

CURRENT REQUIREMENTS (EXCLUDING ELIMINATED TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION TRACK)

Core Classes in Communication Arts

CM 113 Introduction to Rhetorical Communication (a public speaking class)

CM 231 Foundations of Human Communication (which introduces students to basic communication concepts and a range of communication contexts, including interpersonal, small group, organizational, and mass communication)

CM 331 Communication Theory (a survey of human and mass communication theory) - OR-

CM 408 Classical Rhetorical Theory - OR-

CM 409 Contemporary Rhetorical Theory

CM 370 Communication Methods (an introduction to social scientific approaches to studying communication)

CM 375 Rhetorical Criticism (which teaches critical analysis of persuasive texts)

CM 431 Senior Capstone in Communication Arts (a capstone requiring a service project, internship, or thesis)

Elective Classes in Communication Arts

9 hours of upper-level elective courses in Communication Arts

6 hours of lower-level or upper-level elective courses in Communication Arts

PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL CM MAJORS

Core Classes in Communication Arts

CM 113 Introduction to Rhetorical Communication (a public speaking class)

CM 231 Foundations of Human Communication (which introduces students to basic communication concepts and a range of communication contexts, including interpersonal, small group, organizational, and mass communication)

CM 331 Communication Theory (a survey of human and mass communication theory) - OR-

CM 408 Classical Rhetorical Theory - OR-

CM 409 Contemporary Rhetorical Theory

CM 370 Communication Methods (an introduction to social scientific approaches to studying communication)

CM 375 Rhetorical Criticism (which teaches critical analysis of persuasive texts)

CM 431 Senior Capstone in Communication Arts (a capstone requiring a service project, internship, or thesis)

Elective Classes in Communication Arts

9 hours of upper-level elective courses in Communication Arts

9 hours of lower-level or upper-level elective courses in Communication Arts