Section 1: Doctoral Program Overview

The School of Communication Studies (COMS) at Ohio University is a world-renowned program for advanced and specialized study within the discipline of Communication. A diverse group of talented faculty, staff, and students forms the basis for a strong sense of community. Although we care deeply about the success of our community members, our concerns also extend to those who live and work in our university, city, state, nation, and world. The doctoral program in the School of Communication Studies provides scholarly experiences for individuals who wish to enter the professoriate or public, private, and non-profit sector jobs.

About Ohio University

Ohio University’s origins lie in the Northwest Territory Ordinance of 1787, which stipulates that “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” As a “top 50” national public university, OU has become an internationally known institution for higher learning comprised of 11 colleges:

- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Business
- College of Fine Arts
- College of Health Sciences and Professions
- Gladys W. and David H. Patton College of Education
- Graduate College
- Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Honor Tutorial College
- Russ College of Engineering and Technology
- Scripps College of Communication
- University College

Additional degree-granting units include the Center for International Studies and the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs. Nearly every academic program offers Master’s degrees, and several departments also confer doctoral degrees.

Ohio University has more than 1300 full time faculty, 300 part-time faculty, and over 1200 graduate teaching associates, graduate research associates, and graduate staff members. Approximately 18,000 undergraduate students and over 5,000 graduate attend the Athens campus. The university is residential in orientation, which means that nearly all undergraduate students spend at least two years living on campus in residence halls. The history of Communication Studies at Ohio is nearly as old as the university itself. In 1808, just four years after Ohio University opened, the curriculum included courses in classical rhetoric and oratory. The history of speech and debate at the university dates back to 1812—one of the oldest ongoing speech and debate programs in the country. In 1968, five different academic units were combined to form the College of Communication:
E.W. Scripps School of Journalism
J. Warren McClure School of Communication Systems Management
School of Communication Studies
School of Media Arts and Studies
School of Visual Communications.

The College also consists of special programs and centers, including the Game Research and Immersive Design (GRID) Lab, WOUB Public Media, and the Barbara Geralsds Institute for Storytelling and Social Impact. In Fall 2006, the College of Communication at Ohio University became the Scripps College of Communication.

On May 13, 2008, then Ohio University President McDavis announced a $7.5 million lead gift from alumnus Steven L. Schoonover and his wife, Barbara, for the new integrated communication facility. The Schoonover Center for Communication now houses the Scripps College of Communication. Notably, the Scripps College of Communication constitutes one of the first Colleges of Communication in the world and, currently, one of only a handful of “named” Colleges of Communication.

The Scripps College of Communication has been named a “Center of Excellence” and a model for all state-supported colleges and universities in Ohio by the Ohio Board of Regents. Nationally renowned programs within the college create and sustain a level of excitement and respect difficult to replicate elsewhere on campus or at other universities. Over 4500 students have majors within one or more of the college’s programs. The School of Communication Studies is well positioned as a key academic unit within the Scripps College of Communication. The school teaches over 4500 students each academic year, with 18 full-time, tenure-track faculty, and has approximately 30 residential graduate students.

About the OU School of Communication Studies

The study of Communication finds its roots in antiquity with the teaching of rhetoric and oratory by classical scholars like Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero. Although rhetoric dominated the study of communication for centuries, the contemporary discipline of Communication is quite multifaceted in its approach, with multiple professional associations that house over 60 distinct scholarly units.

Members of associations (such as the National Communication Association, International Communication Association, Central States Communication Association, Eastern Communication Association, Southern States Communication Association, and Western States Communication Association) study a wide range of phenomena related to human communication, ranging from mediated mass communication to interpersonal communication. The Ohio University School of Communication Studies is committed to diverse approaches to the study of human communication. As a scholarly community, we encourage “multi-perspectival thinking” in our approach to the discipline. In our respect and valuing of multiple theoretical perspectives and multiple methods for research, we discourage the view of a single “correct” way of investigating communication.
Undergraduate students in the School of Communication Studies explore how messages and relational interactions shape and, in turn, are impacted by institutions, emerging technologies, and globalization. COMS offers undergraduate emphases in Organizational Communication, Health Communication, and Communication and Public Advocacy. The school typically has between 400 and 500 undergraduate majors at any one time.

The doctoral program in COMS has developed into an internationally distinguished program for graduate study, research, and practice, with 30-40 students in residence each year. Our curriculum provides students with opportunities to attain rich understandings of theoretical foundations and frameworks, to develop methodological expertise for addressing Communication-based questions, to appreciate theoretical and conceptual intersections within the discipline of Communication, and to establish strong portfolios of teaching, research, and service that serve them well as they pursue positions beyond Ohio University. The doctoral program in the School is the second oldest PhD program at Ohio University, and our current tracks include Health Communication, Interpersonal and Organizational Communication, and Rhetoric and Culture.

Collectively, we envision scholarship as both a privilege and responsibility. Faculty in the School of Communication Studies remain committed to fostering high quality scholarship and serving the needs of the university, community, and discipline. Our faculty and graduate students have a long and successful history of collaboration, community engagement, service to the discipline, and scholarly productivity.
Section 2: Community Expectations and Objectives

The Ohio University School of Communication Studies strives to foster a collegial, collaborative environment, especially with regard to the COMS Doctoral Program. Through their time at Ohio University, we hope that our doctoral students develop as scholars, teachers, and citizens, and we work actively to encourage a supportive, enriching culture that embraces diversity, creativity, and excellence.

Learning Objectives
(Approved 8/23/18 by COMS faculty)

All doctoral program graduates will be able to:
1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of contemporary Communication Studies.
2. Demonstrate substantial knowledge of more specialized areas within Communication Studies, accompanied by the ability to locate and synthesize scholarship in these areas.
3. Demonstrate the ability to conduct original research.
4. Demonstrate the ability to write scholarly essays.
5. Demonstrate the ability to present original research to appropriate academic audiences.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of teaching and learning scholarship.
7. Demonstrate the experience to teach in Communication Studies.
8. Demonstrate participation in scholarly communities.

Preferred Community Practices

Although no single “path” works for every individual, we affirm that the following community practices enables our doctoral students to co-construct a supportive and enriching academic environment. As such, we ask that all members of our COMS community adhere to these practices during their time in our program:

1. Respect “otherness.” Respect others’ space as well as theoretical, methodological, philosophical, political, cultural, religious, relational (and other) perspectives, positions, and/or differences.

2. Communicate deliberately. Whether participating in a graduate seminar, attending a colloquium, or standing in the hallway, please participate in a manner that reflects consideration for colleagues, for the space, and for the situation. For example, we ask that members of our community treat the reception area in the Schoonover suite as a workplace and that they understand that actively embracing a “loud silence” (noticeably avoiding discussion and interaction) or a “silent loudness” (speaking very often but not saying much) comprise potentially problematic actions. In short, active engagement in our community involves an ideal combination of listening, thinking and talking.

3. Demonstrate caring. In addition to caring about other members of COMS, COMS has a long tradition of engaging in research that benefits others in some meaningful way. Faculty members and graduate students routinely pursue opportunities to connect their
classrooms and/or research projects to issues facing communities beyond the academy, and we encourage such ventures.

4. **React thoughtfully.** Whether reacting to an article, taking part in a class discussion, or writing a reflective essay, we encourage our doctoral students to ask questions, engage in dialogue, and thoughtfully offer their own perspectives while considering those of others.

5. **Express gratitude.** Many people work hard to foster an exciting, rigorous, and productive learning environment. We hope that members of our community take time to thank others for their efforts, no matter how large or small, as well as to celebrate the success of others.

6. **Participate actively.** The School of Communication Studies and the Scripps College of Communication sponsor various academic programs, lectures, and other events throughout the year. Although, from time-to-time, it may be necessary to miss such a particular function, every member of the community is expected to attend when possible for two key reasons. First, each event comprises an opportunity for personal and professional growth. For example, as we watch a job talk, we learn about an individual’s research as well as gain ideas about the interview process. Second, each event offers an opportunity to be part of our scholarly community, enabling us to develop professional relationships and celebrate accomplishments.

7. **Take care of yourself.** Academic work at this level can be exhilarating but also exhausting. We urge members of our community to prioritize health and wellness and to remember that life does exist outside of the Schoonover Center and the Radio-TV Building. Every member of the school has the right to say “no” as necessary to promote more balanced living.

**GradCo**

All COMS graduate students are invited to participate in GradCo, the COMS graduate student organization. This organization enables students to develop social and professional activities as well as offer input to faculty as a collective.

Doctoral students in the department elect officers (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Faculty Representative) in the spring as well as a First Year Representative (elected in the fall). This officer team serves as the Executive Council of GradCo.

GradCo sponsors research colloquia, helps with hosting guests on campus, nominates graduate students to serve on various committees in the school, and performs other tasks to help ensure the successful accomplishment of the school’s mission. The Executive Council work closely with the Associate Director of Graduate Studies to ensure inclusion of graduate student perspectives in important school decisions.
Section 3: COMS Community Resources

Our community continues to benefit from a strong support infrastructure and meaningful resources for enacting our work as teacher-researcher-citizens. This section spotlights important contacts, policies, and resources available to our graduate students.

Contacts

1. **Overall Questions about the COMS Doctoral Program**: Please direct general questions about the doctoral program as well as issues related to our doctoral curriculum and community to the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies. This individual is responsible for recruiting potential doctoral students, coordinating professional development panels and opportunities, and fostering an overall collegial and productive learning environment within our doctoral program.

2. **Questions about Teaching Assignments**: Please direct questions about assignments to teach particular courses to the COMS School Director. This individual is responsible for seeking information about courses that doctoral students plan to take and prefer to teach as well as for developing the teaching schedule for each semester.

3. **Questions about Contract, Salary, or Benefits**: Please direct questions about these important financial matters to our Department Administrator. This individual is responsible for processing contracts and facilitating budgetary transactions.

4. **Questions about Room Assignments, Copying, and Instructional Materials**: Please direct questions about these important logistical matters to our Administrative Services Associate. This individual is responsible for finding space to hold classes and meetings as well as ordering instructional supplies, requesting maintenance on office equipment, and helping to oversee our undergraduate office associates.

5. **Questions about Courses and Instruction**: Please direct questions about pedagogy, in general, as well as COMS 1030 to the Director of the Basic Course. This individual is responsible for mentoring our graduate students with regard to effective pedagogical practices and facilitating the Teacher Training Academy each fall for incoming doctoral students. Additionally, several multi-section courses (COMS 2040, 2050, 2060, 2150, and 2350) have Course Directors. Course Directors are responsible for ensuring consistency across sections and providing instructional resources and feedback to course instructors.

6. **Questions about Academic Progress, Program of Study, Professional Goals, and Job Search**: Each incoming doctoral student will be initially mentored by the Associate Director of Graduate Studies until that student selects his/her Dissertation Advisor. Although all faculty should be considered to be invaluable contacts throughout each student’s journey through the COMS doctoral program, the Dissertation Advisor and Doctoral Dissertation Committee take on the responsibility for guiding the student through coursework, comprehensive exams, portfolio,
dissertation proposal, dissertation, and job search. The Dissertation Advisor should be selected by no later than the Friday before Advising Week in Spring semester of the first year.

Policies/Resources

I. Teaching Assignment Policy: The School of Communication Studies prides itself on not only equipping our doctoral students with superior pedagogical instruction but also on affording our doctoral students with opportunities to develop a teaching portfolio with varied courses. First year doctoral students will instruct COMS 1030 for both semesters of the first year. For second, third, and fourth year graduate students, the School Director will ask each doctoral student for a list of courses that s/he plans to take in the upcoming semester and ones that s/he would prefer to teach. As the School Director makes instructional assignments, s/he will begin by determining the needs of our undergraduate students when deciding on courses to be offered in the schedule and then fill in faculty member assignments before inserting graduate teaching assistants in the schedule. Although all teaching staff (faculty and graduate students) should be available for teaching assignments on Monday through Friday (and might, on rare occasion, be assigned to teach on all of those days during a given semester), graduate teaching assignments will be prioritized in terms of:
  a. alternating MWF and TR so that graduate students will likely teach MWF for one semester and then TR in the next semester
  b. alternating time slots so that graduate students will not likely teach very early or very late in the day in concurrent semesters
  c. seniority in the program (beginning with Fourth Year, then Third Year, then Second Year students)
  d. requests of faculty members for particular teaching assistants
  e. opportunities for graduate students to instruct new courses

The School of Communication Studies Graduate Teaching Assignments Policy
(Adopted 10/06/1989; Replaced in 1992; Replaced and adopted 09/26/2003; Replaced and adopted 03 2009; Approved 05/29/2009; Revised and adopted 11/06/2013; Revised and adopted 12/5/18)

Principles:
1. Core undergraduate courses in the School should be taught by faculty as well as TAs.
2. With the increased pool of qualified instructors for undergraduate core courses created by our pedagogical pro-seminars for graduate students, the director should shift more faculty teaching power to courses beyond the core.
3. The School director makes all teaching assignments. The director will typically consult the course director, if one exists, or the TA’s advisor before assigning a TA to a course beyond 1030.

Guidelines
The School director shall make TA assignments based on the following criteria, in order of importance.
1. Departmental scheduling needs and fit with the student’s course schedule for the semester in question.
2. Good academic standing in our graduate program, defined as GPA > 3.0, timely completion of all requirements to date (e.g., POS, annual reports, etc., as outlined in the COMS graduate handbook), no outstanding grades of I or unjustified grades of PR except for dissertation hours, and quantitative teaching evaluation scores > 3.0 on a 5-point scale.
3. Professional relevance of the course material, research expertise in the subject matter, and training in the delivery modality (e.g., onsite, online, correspondence)
4. Seniority in the doctoral program.
5. Balance between prior experience and distribution of opportunity. TAs who have taught COMS 2XXX once in the past have preference for a second opportunity, as the School and our students benefit from their prior teaching experience in the course, and the repeat assignment gives them an opportunity to refine their instruction of the course and minimize the time demands of a new preparation. However, after two terms of teaching a course, a TA should go to the end of the queue to give other graduate student colleagues the opportunity to teach it and thereby develop their experience and resumés.
6. GPA in doctoral study at OU in the case of ties, to rank those TAs who qualify for an assignment after the above criteria have been applied.

II. **Graduate Assistant/Research Assistant Policy:** The School of Communication Studies offers a number of opportunities for administrative assignments for graduate students (such as Assistant to the Basic Course Director, Assistant to the Associate Director of Graduate Studies, Communication Resource Lab Coordinator). Further, faculty who serve as journal editors or professional association officers also routinely select a graduate student as an assistant. On some occasions, a faculty member might have resources to be assigned a Research Assistant. The following principles usually guide practices pertaining to Graduate Assistant/Research Assistant selection:
   a. Typically, the faculty member will issue a call for applications to all graduate students who will be on assistantship during the semester(s) when the faculty member needs assistance.
   b. The faculty member will review applications and then interview top candidates for the position, based on that faculty member’s criteria for the position.
   c. The faculty member will determine the individual with the skill set that best matches needs for the position.
   d. The GA/RA position will typically comprise only half of the overall assistantship load for each graduate student so that s/he still has an opportunity to gain teaching experience during the academic term.

III. **Office Assignment Policy:** All graduate students who are on assistantship will be assigned to an office. During Spring semester, students who will be continuing in the next academic year may express interest in moving into one of the office spaces that will become available when fourth year students leave at the conclusion of the current academic year. (Continuing students may opt to stay in their current space or to consider moving to a new office.) The names of individuals who are interested in office spaces that will become available in the next academic year will be placed in a lottery, and
selection of open office space will occur on a first-come, first-serve basis. First year students will be assigned to remaining available office space.

IV. **Office Equipment Policy**: All graduate students who are on assistantship have access to an office, computer, and printer. If graduate students need any assistance with office furnishings, equipment repair, printer cartridges, etc., they should immediately communicate with the Department Administrator and/or Administrative Services Assistant. COMS graduate students can also access a computer lab on the lower level of Schoonover Center for Communication. Lab computers are equipped with most of the commonly used software packages used by members of the school (Microsoft products, NVivo, SPSS, etc.). The School does not provide software for personal computers although discounted packages may be purchased through the Tech Depot in Baker Center.

V. **Printing Policy**: COMS graduate students have access to a printer in each graduate student office. Printers in individual offices should be used only for small print jobs. Any printing that entails more than 40 pages MUST be requested (in advance and in writing) in the COMS suite on the fourth floor of Schoonover. Please allow at least 48 hours for printing requested materials. Further, please note that all printing must be related to instructional purposes. Printing for personal use (such as copying dissertations, portfolios, readings for graduate seminars, etc.) should not be done on COMS printers.

VI. **Travel Funding**: The School of Communication Studies routinely has money available to fund graduate student travel to conventions. Notably, these funds depend on budget constraints. When we can offer travel funding to COMS graduate students, the Associate Director for Graduate Studies will issue a call for applications. Interested parties must (a) list the name of the accepted paper or panel, (b) specify any other convention-related activity (such as chairing panels, serving as a division officer, etc.), and (c) provide an itemized budget of travel-related expenses. Usually, COMS graduate students can apply for up to $500. To qualify for funding, students must be on the program to present a paper or participate in a panel as well as be in good standing with the department.

To qualify for funding, doctoral students must be on the program to present a paper or participate on a panel. Additionally, to be eligible for a travel grant, full-time doctoral students must (a) attend the mandatory COMS Graduate Student Retreat at the beginning of the given academic year, (b) submit the required annual report by the specified deadline each year, and (c) make satisfactory Progress toward Degree. Part-time doctoral students should consult with the Graduate Director to determine their eligibility for travel funding. (Amended Policy Approved: March 6, 2019)

VII. **Financial Considerations**: Graduate assistantships include waiver of in-state tuition, waiver of out-of-state tuition, and a modest stipend. To be on assistantship, all students must register for at least 12 credit hours per semester.

a. Additionally, the university has, on occasion, budgeted funds to offset a small portion of the cost of university health insurance. Notably, students can opt to waive university health insurance if they are covered under another health
insurance policy. If they do not opt out of health insurance, they will be charged that fee, in addition to other university fees.

b. Students need to ensure that they are taking at least 12 hours each semester to maintain their assistantship as well as to avoid inadvertent automatic enrollment in the Ohio Retirement Fund (ORF). (For example, some courses outside of COMS are only 3, not 4, credit hours.) If students accidentally register for 3 classes but less than 12 hours (and inadvertently get enrolled in the ORF), they risk losing money from their paycheck that cannot easily be refunded.

VIII. **Policy for Assigning Graduate Teaching Associates to Online Teaching:**

a. Graduate Teaching Associates are expected to be in residence while receiving assistantship support for their graduate studies, and they will, in nearly all cases, not receive all-online assignments.

b. Any doctoral student may submit a request for partial online or all-online teaching assignment to the School Director along with a rationale for such a request.

c. If and when online teaching assignments for Graduate Teaching Associates are available, the Director, in consultation with the Graduate Committee, will prioritize the requests.

d. Requests from doctoral students qualified to teach online classes based on an instructional need will generally be prioritized as follows: (1) Doctoral students who are collecting data for their dissertation research on-site at a site located outside of the continental United States; (2) doctoral students who are collecting data for their dissertation research on-site at a site more than 100 miles from Athens, Ohio; (3) doctoral students enrolled in a study abroad program approved by the Office of Education Abroad that is part of the Program of Study approved by the doctoral student’s committee, and/or (4) doctoral students who, as part of a faculty-sponsored research or creative activity endeavor that constitutes one-half of the student’s assignment, are assigned to activities at a site more than 20 miles from Athens, Ohio; (5) doctoral students who are collecting data for their dissertation research on-site at a site more than 20 miles, but less than 100 miles, from Athens, Ohio; (6) doctoral students who request online teaching for non-academic reasons (e.g., family, health); (7) if personal health issues are the primary factor, a signed doctor’s letter must be provided that states that onsite teaching is not possible because of a major life activity that is limited by the medical condition being experienced. The letter must name the limited relevant major life activity that prevents onsite teaching, but the letter need not disclose a specific diagnosis. The letter must also provide a return-to-onsite-work date, even if it must be changed later – an ‘indefinite’ leave from onsite teaching without a return-to-onsite-work date may not be considered reasonable.

e. Graduate Teaching Associates with online courses should be available to switch to onsite teaching if low enrollments necessitate cancellation of online courses. If classes are cancelled, the School will make every effort to reassign teachers to other courses/sections. However, the School cannot guarantee reassignment to online sections. If online teaching is not available to a Graduate Teaching Associate and the Graduate Teaching Associate cannot commit to teaching in
person, the Graduate Teaching Associate will need to decide if he or she will relinquish his or her teaching assistantship.

g. Graduate Teaching Associates may receive all-online assignments to classes on a semester-by-semester basis only. Typically, a Graduate Teaching Associate will not be assigned an all-online schedule for two consecutive semesters.

h. Graduate Teaching Associates teaching an all-online schedule are expected to perform School service assignments as assigned.

IX. Policy for Summer Teaching Opportunities: Limited summer teaching opportunities exist, depending on demand for sections by undergraduate students. In the Spring semester, the School Director will invite doctoral students to express interest in teaching during the upcoming summer session, and sections will be filled based on seniority.

X. Policy for Graduate Teaching Associate Office Hours: Graduate Teaching Associates must post and hold office hours each week. For each class (whether MWF or TR), the GTA must be available for 1 ½ hours weekly.

XI. Annual Review Policy: All doctoral students are REQUIRED to complete and submit Annual Report materials via e-mail to (a) the Associate Director of Graduate Studies, (b) the COMS Awards Committee Chair, and (c) their Interim or Doctoral Program Advisor by no later than the first Friday of Spring Semester. (If third year doctoral students want to be considered for the Kantner Award, they must submit the Annual Report materials to the COMS Awards Committee Chair by no later than the announced deadline.) Mirroring the annual review process used by the COMS faculty, the annual review process for doctoral students serves four key purposes:

a. First, annual report materials enable faculty to ensure that doctoral students are making adequate progress toward degree completion. Although doctoral students typically receive funding for four years, graduate assistantship contracts remain contingent on satisfactory progress toward degree and good standing in the program, and we make that determination on an annual basis. If a student is not making adequate progress (i.e., by not completing milestones as specified in Sections 4-7 of the COMS Doctoral Program Handbook) or fails to achieve good standing in the School (i.e., by failing to maintain at least a 3.0 GPA or to fulfill assigned teaching responsibilities), that student’s contract will not be renewed for the following academic year.

b. Second, annual report materials provide faculty advisors with useful information that enables them to mentor their advisees regarding progress in the doctoral program as well as career development.

c. Third, annual report materials offer important information to the COMS Awards Committee as members make decisions about COMS awards and scholarships. (See next sub-section for additional details.)

d. Fourth, annual report materials are integral to ongoing program assessment efforts by the School of Communication Studies.
XII. **COMS Awards and Scholarships:** During Fall semester, the COMS Awards Committee will encourage all doctoral students to apply for available School awards and scholarships. Doctoral students should carefully review the application process for each award, per the Awards Committee call. For some recognitions, the annual report form will suffice as an application. Other awards and scholarships involve additional materials (such as an essay, application, and/or recommendation letters). Students who are interested in a particular award or scholarship should feel free to clarify the specific process and selection criteria by contacting the Chair of the COMS Awards Committee. The deadline for applying to be the COMS Kantner nominee will be announced each year by the COMS Awards Committee, and the deadline for other awards and scholarships is the first Friday of Spring semester.

XIII. **COMS Progress Toward Degree Policy (Approved: March 6, 2019)**

COMS admits both full and part-time doctoral students. Part-time students typically progress toward degree at a pace slower than our full-time doctoral students. This policy outlines expectations for Progress toward Degree for full-time doctoral students in COMS. As the appointment letter specifies, all individuals appointed as a Graduate Teaching Associate are expected to make adequate Progress toward Degree in order to be renewed for a GTA position in subsequent academic years.

1. All doctoral students who are appointed as a Graduate Teaching Associate must be a full-time student and take at least 12 credit hours per semester.

2. All doctoral students who are appointed as a Graduate Teaching Associate must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0.

3. All doctoral students who are appointed as a Graduate Teaching Associate must meet all milestones as specified in the COMS Doctoral Program Handbook. Milestones include filing a Program of Study, successfully completing preliminary exams/comprehensive exams/portfolio, etc. as detailed per year in the COMS Doctoral Program Handbook.

4. Failure to meet any of these requirements or milestones will constitute failure to make satisfactory Progress toward Degree and jeopardize continued appointment as a Graduate Teaching Associate:
   a. If a GTA fails to maintain a 3.0 GPA, that individual will be placed on academic probation. Continuing as a GTA during probation requires successful appeals to the Scripps College of Communication Associate Dean of Graduate Studies as well as the Ohio University Graduate College. Two consecutive semesters below a 3.0 GPA will result in dismissal from the program.
   b. If a GTA drops below 12 credit hours in a semester, that individual may continue as a GTA for that semester. If a GTA enrolls in 12 credit hours for a subsequent semester and drops below that requirement again (for two consecutive semesters below the
required 12 credit hours), that individual will no longer be eligible for re-appointment as a GTA.

c. If a GTA does not meet key milestones as specified in the COMS Doctoral Program Handbook within one academic year after it was supposed to be met, that individual will no longer be eligible for re-appointment as a GTA. (For example, we specify that comprehensive exams will be taken by third year students in Fall of the third year. If a student opts not to sit for comprehensive exams during Fall of the third year and does not complete that milestone by Fall of the fourth year, that student will not make adequate Progress toward Degree and will be ineligible to remain on a GTA appointment.)
Section 4: Information for First Year Students

We understand that this new journey can be exhilarating as well as overwhelming. This section provides foundational information that can aid in getting started as well as understanding our unique first year experience.

Prior to Fall Semester

Approximately two weeks before Fall semester begins, all incoming doctoral students participate in the COMS Teacher Training Academy. This orientation provides invaluable pedagogical training as well as logistical and academic preparation for the coming year. We also recommend that all incoming students attend to the following details:

1. **Check on contract** with the COMS Department Administrator to ensure all paperwork is in order.

2. **Check on Financial Aid**, if applicable. To apply for a student loan or other type of financial aid, please contact the Office of Financial Aid, which is located in Chubb Hall. (Please note that students must be registered for classes in order to get financial aid.) Disbursements are typically made the first week of class. In exceptional circumstances, the Financial Aid office can issue a “short term loan” as students wait for your disbursement. Students in dire need of funds should take a copy of the FAFSA report or Graduate Appointment letter to Chubb Hall to inquire if a loan might be possible.

3. **Obtain an ID and OHIO email account.** Incoming students should visit the Tech Depot on the first floor of Baker University Center to obtain a student ID. After obtaining an ID, students can then also obtain a university e-mail account and username. Students can activate your account and username by visiting myid.admsrv.ohio.edu/myid/index.cfm. The same username accesses resources at the library, registrar, and many other places. Even if students plan to use another email address as the primary e-mail, they should activate their OU e-mail and set it to forward to other e-mail account(s)—all official communication from the school and university will go to the Ohio University address.

4. **Obtain a parking permit, if desired.** Ohio University parking permits must be purchased in person at the Department of Parking Services, located at 100 Factory Street. A driver’s license and OU ID must be displayed to purchase a commuter permit. If students do not desire to purchase an OU parking permit, limited parking exists on the street near Schoonover Center for Communication or two blocks away at the Athens City Parking Garage.

5. **Complete required paperwork at the Graduate College.** The Graduate College is located in the Research and Technology Center (RTEC) 220.
   a. **I-9 form:** To complete this form, please be prepared to present the Graduate College with two forms of identification (such as a current passport and I-20
for international students or driver’s license and social security card or certified birth certificate for U.S. citizens).

b. **W-4 form**: A required tax form for all students.

c. **Ohio PERS (Public Employees Retirement System) exemption form**

d. **Direct deposit form**: Ohio University pays employees through direct deposit, not paper checks, and this form enables money to get into the proper account.

e. **Personnel Data Profile form** (Optional): This form collects demographic data and asks if contact information may be listed in the campus directory.

6. **Register for classes using the online registration system.** First year students will sign up for COMS 7000 (Professional Seminar in Communication Studies: Pedagogy), COMS 7005 (Introduction to Graduate Studies), and COMS 7020 (Integrated Theory in Communication Studies 1). Students should select a fourth course from an array of options, and we encourage conversations with their respective interim advisor. Please visit [https://www.ohio.edu/registrar/Register.cfm](https://www.ohio.edu/registrar/Register.cfm) to register.

7. **Move into assigned office.** See the Scripps College Building Administrator for a key to the building and the assigned office in RTVC. Please contact the Department Administrator for office assignment information.

8. **Meet with Associate Director of Graduate Studies.** Prior to or during Teacher Training Academy, the Associate Director of Graduate Studies will meet with all incoming doctoral students and provide academic guidance as an initial mentor for navigating Ohio University, the School of Communication Studies, and our doctoral program.

**Overview of First Year Experience**

In Fall, 2004, the School of Communication Studies launched the first cohort in a re-designed Doctoral program, and we have found that the carefully designed first year experience has been very beneficial for our doctoral students. The cohort model fosters the emergence of professional relationships and support systems as cohort members take courses together during the first year. Further, first year coursework equips our doctoral students with an excellent foundation for theoretical analysis, methodological rigor, and teaching excellence as well as the basis for making a highly informed choice about possible areas for specialization. Core classes include Professional Seminar in Pedagogy, Introduction to Graduate Study, Integrative Theory in Communication Studies I and II.

**First Year Milestones**

**Fall Semester**: In addition to taking three core courses plus one course (Primary Area, Related Area, or Research Methods) as well as typically teaching two sections of COMS 1030, first semester doctoral students should:

a. Get acclimated as a student-teacher-departmental citizen.
b. Meet and talk with faculty in their primary area of concentration: This process will be facilitated formally as well as strongly encouraged informally. First year courses include opportunities for meeting faculty as part of class, and the Associate Director of Graduate Studies will also guide students through the process of connecting with faculty in COMS.

c. Look at course offerings in the school and university to determine possible selections in primary and related areas.

d. Begin reflecting on possible faculty members who might be a good fit as a Doctoral Program Advisor. The advisor should be selected by no later than the Friday before Advising Week in Spring semester of the first year.

**Spring Semester:** Students take one core course plus two additional courses (Primary Area, Related Area, or Research Methods) as well as teach two sections of COMS 1030. They should also:

a. Meet with prospective Doctoral Program Advisor to discuss research and teaching goals (see next section for guidance).

b. Select a Doctoral Program Advisor to receive guidance about the program, in general, and assistance in terms of selecting Doctoral Program Committee members. The advisor should be selected by no later than the Friday before Advising Week in Spring semester of the first year.

c. In consultation with Doctoral Program Advisor, begin to develop preliminary statement of research specialization, teaching philosophy, and Program of Study.

**Selecting an Advisor**

Identifying and approaching faculty about being an advisor constitutes an exciting moment for graduate students. When starting the process of selecting an advisor, doctoral students should identify faculty members with some expertise related to their probable area of specialization and/or preferred methodological approach.

After identifying those faculty members, students should schedule an appointment with them to discuss interests and availability. (A faculty member may not be available to commit to another advisee for a range of reasons, including number of current advisees and other professional commitments.) The decision to establish an advisor-advisee relationship comprises a mutual agreement between a particular student and faculty member. When planning for meetings with potential advisors, each student should:

1. **Develop a brief description of the area of specialization.** Although a student does not need to submit a written description in advance of conversations with faculty, preparing such a description can be useful for sparking meaningful dialogue.

2. **Be prepared to talk about ideas.** The initial meeting between a student and potential advisor offers a valuable opportunity to brainstorm. Having a “dissertation topic” during this meeting is much less important than having a robust list of exciting directions, approaches, and thoughts related to the intended specialization.
Program of Study

In consultation with the Doctoral Program Advisor, during the first year, each doctoral student begins to draft a Program of Study (POS) document that outlines courses to be taken as part of the doctoral degree. This document constitutes a working document in that it will likely be revised, depending on course availability, student interests, and other opportunities that arise; however, such changes do need to be documented and justified.

As of Fall, 2018, the Program of Study includes four general areas: Core Classes, Primary Area, Research Methods, and Electives.

1. **Core Classes**: Courses in the core emphasize reading original works of prominent theorists in the humanities and social sciences, research methods, communication pedagogy, and professional seminars as an orientation to graduate study.

2. **Primary Area**: The primary area focuses on a student’s area of specialization (Health Communication, Rhetoric and Culture, or Interpersonal and Organizational Communication). Usually, the primary area courses will be from COMS, but some outside courses can be included as determined appropriate by each student’s committee.

3. **Research Methods**: Because of the depth and expertise of our faculty, we offer quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical methods courses in COMS.

4. **Electives**: Students select elective courses from within COMS or another program with the guidance of the doctoral committee.

5. **Additional Materials**: In addition to completing the initial POS form, students need to draft (a) Preliminary Research Statement (typically, a one page description of preliminary research interests), (b) Preliminary Teaching Statement (typically, a one page description of preliminary teaching interests), and (c) Curriculum Vita. These materials should be provided to the Doctoral Program Advisor by the end of the first year.

6. **Transfer Credit Policy**: A small number of doctoral level courses taken after the completion of a MA degree may be considered for inclusion on the POS, upon approval of the POS advisor, COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies, and the Scripps College Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Approved courses must be documented on a Credit Transfer Form (Grad Form 2) and filed with the College office.

7. **POS Timeline**: Doctoral students cannot take comprehensive exams in the third year until this form has been signed and filed.
Section 5: Information for Second Year Students

During the second year of the doctoral program, students begin developing advanced knowledge within one or more areas of specialization, with much coursework devoted to courses in the primary and related areas of study. During the second year, opportunities start to emerge for more team-based and/or individual research projects as well as advanced teaching assignments. To facilitate momentum during the second year, doctoral students should:

I. Prepare for teaching courses beyond COMS 1030. During the second year, we provide opportunities for some graduate students to teach courses other than COMS 1030. Per school policy, to be eligible to teach 2050, 2060, 2150, or 2350, students must successfully complete a professional seminar in communication pedagogy for the relevant course (if offered) and/or sit in on a course with a faculty instructor of record prior to teaching it. Limited possibilities exist for co-teaching courses with faculty or instructing specialty courses within areas of emphasis.

II. In consultation with Doctoral Program Advisor, select dissertation committee members and finalize the Program of Study form prior to taking comprehensive exams.

III. Identify papers that could be revised and submitted for review by conferences and/or publication. We strongly encourage doctoral students to develop a track record for research while in graduate school, especially if they plan to pursue a career in the academy. Doing so requires careful revision of papers (that might have been produced as part of doctoral seminars or as part of other research teams) prior to submission for the competitive review process. Ideally, second year doctoral students submit at least three manuscripts for review by conferences and at least one manuscript for review by a publication outlet.

IV. Explore area of specialization. Prior to the second year, we urge doctoral students to decide on a broad area of specialization. With articles accumulated for coursework during the first year as well as additional resources obtained over the summer, we encourage doctoral students to enter the second year with a plan for exploring topics of interest in more depth during upcoming coursework and research projects.

V. Network during professional conferences. Doctoral students should pursue opportunities to present work and to network during professional conferences. Building networks of colleagues at OU and in the Communication discipline serves many purposes, including fostering rich intellectual conversations, nurturing professional relationships, opening doors to possible research projects and/or service roles, and making connections that could be useful throughout the academic journey. Doctoral students in the School of Communication Studies routinely participate actively in the National Communication Association, Central States Communication Association, Eastern Communication Association, Southern States Communication Association, Midwest Popular Culture Association, National Popular Culture Association, Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender,
Organizational Communication Mini-Conference, and a host of other international, national, regional, and specialty organizations. We urge second year doctoral students to begin exploring possible outlets for their work and finding associations that provide the best intellectual and relational fit for themselves and their research.

VI. **Steps for Applying for the M.A. Degree**—*(COHORTS PRIOR TO 2018-2019 only)*: Students who have completed the first year of coursework as well as a capstone experience (such as preliminary exams) qualify for a M.A. degree. To apply for graduation with this degree, the following forms and tasks must be completed:

1. **Students should complete Gradform 7 (Report on the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam).** All committee members must sign this form and submit to the Associate Director of Graduate Studies.

2. **Students should apply for Update of Graduate Academic Program.** This form must be completed (and then signed by the committee chair). The following codes should be used on the form to specify the particular academic program--
   - Rhetoric & Public Culture MA5360
   - Health Communication MA5361
   - Relating & Organizing MA5362

   This form should be taken in person to the Graduate College (RTECH 220). We recommend that students request to receive an email confirmation after the form is processed.

3. **Students should confirm that the M.A. is in their respective program through the DARS degree verification feature.**
   https://www.ohio.edu/registrar/darsonline.cfm

4. **Students should apply for Graduation.** By the deadline specified in the academic calendar, students should apply to graduate in the MyOhio Student Center. This step can only be taken if the M.A. has been added to the DARS.

5. **Students should ensure that Gradform 1 (Graduation Clearance) has been processed.** Students should confirm that the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies has completed this form, submitted it to the Scripps Associate Dean, and received confirmation that the form has been processed.

6. **Students should contact the Registrar** to confirm that all of the graduation paperwork has been processed.
Section 6: Information for Third Year Students

During the third year of the doctoral program, students continue developing expertise in an area of specialization as well as accomplish three major academic milestones. Third year students will (1) complete and defend the scholarly portfolio in Fall Semester, (2) take comprehensive exams in the beginning of Spring semester, and (3) write and defend the dissertation proposal by the end of Spring semester. The third year constitutes an important year of transitioning from a focus on coursework to independent research (as students anticipate the dissertation) and preparing materials for the job search during fourth year. Third year students should consider the following important timeline as they map goals for this important year:

I. Finalizing the Dissertation Committee: As students enter the third year, they should reflect on the likely topic of the dissertation and finalize the Dissertation Committee. Given that interests may change during the second year, students may replace the advisor with another COMS faculty member at any point in the process, with the goal of finalizing the Dissertation Committee prior to the beginning of Fall semester of the third year. Dissertation Committees typically consist of three COMS faculty members (an advisor and two committee members) plus one Dean’s Representative (see next sub-section). The Dissertation Committee evaluates Comprehensive Exams, the Scholarly Portfolio, Dissertation Proposal, and Dissertation.

II. Selecting a Dean’s Representative: Ohio University requires that all doctoral dissertation committees include an individual specified as the “Dean’s Representative.” The Dean’s Representative must be a faculty member with an earned terminal degree from outside of the Scripps College of Communication. Typically, the “Dean’s Rep” will be a faculty member from another school/department from whom students have taken classes or worked closely with in some other capacity. The Dean’s Representative must be named prior to submitting the Scholarly Portfolio. Prior to the dissertation proposal, the Dean’s Rep must be identified by submitting GradForm 8, the report on the dissertation committee and Dean’s Representative, to the Associate Director of Graduate Studies.

III. Scholarly Portfolio: The Scholarly Portfolio mirrors the process that faculty go through for promotion and tenure, and it enables students to produce materials that will support job applications in the fourth year, following a model created by Ernest Boyer (1990). Boyer’s model of scholarship highlights the inter-related activities of the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of teaching, and the scholarship of application. This model offers a valuable and appropriate organizing framework, and our doctoral students have found the materials produced for the Scholarly Portfolio to be incredibly useful during the job search. The Scholarly Portfolio must be produced during the fifth semester in the program.

A. Scholarly Portfolio Specifications: We urge third year students to remember that the boundaries between the components that Boyer (1990) articulated remain fluid rather than fixed, with some activities demonstrating competence across dimensions. We employ Boyer’s model with the vision that it will enhance and enrich students’ creativity
in organizing arguments about and evidence of their scholarly development. Some of these dimensions will be more relevant for particular students than other dimensions. For each dimension, we have identified items that students could include in their portfolio. Students can demonstrate scholarly development across a number of dimensions and as negotiated by students, advisors, and committee members.

a. **The Scholarship of Discovery and Integration**: Traditionally conceived of as “research,” the scholarship of discovery involves rigorous, investigative efforts (both process and product) of individuals to advance knowledge and seek understanding. The scholarship of discovery across disciplines rests at the heart of academic life, and faculty consider it to be absolutely crucial in assessing the development of our students and the success of our program. Students also must demonstrate how their own scholarship of discovery—and that of others—integrates into larger intellectual patterns within (and beyond) the communication discipline. The scholarship of integration can involve interdisciplinary efforts that encompass research at the “boundaries” where fields of study converge.

1. **Statement about student’s program of research** (must be included in everyone’s portfolio): This statement must be no more than 3 pages; the student should describe his or her program of research including theoretical background, research practices, past work and future directions. Importantly, the student must situate him/herself in the broader landscape of knowledge patterns and practices of the communication discipline (and beyond disciplinary “boundaries” as appropriate).

2. **Scholarly products under review, in press, or published**: This section must include all journal articles and book chapters. It can include co-authored products, if accompanied by a statement from the student about his or her contributions to the work

b. **The Scholarship of Teaching**: Teaching, like other scholarly activities, relies on a base of scholarly knowledge that can and ought to be identified and evaluated. When defined as a scholarly enterprise, teachers emerge as co-learners who transform and enlarge knowledge even as they bring an intelligible account of reality/knowledge to students who want to learn.

1. **Teaching Philosophy**: The Teaching Philosophy should consist of no more than 2 pages. The student should articulate how he/she understands education and the learning process, the role of teachers and students in learning, the nexus between teaching and other scholarly activities, etc.

2. **Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness**: This section includes a summary of numerical and qualitative student feedback, letters from the basic course director about teaching performance, and peer feedback.

3. **Examples of innovative pedagogy**: Examples of items to be incorporated under this section encompass an article published in *Communication Teacher*, an assignment or description of other course-related activities or practices created by the student, syllabi created by the student (other than syllabus from the basic course)
c. **The Scholarship of Service:** Some individuals are moved to engage in scholarly activity and define their research agenda because of pressing institutional needs or social issues. For said individuals, the responsible application of scholarly knowledge becomes consequential for diverse stakeholders within and beyond the boundaries of academia. Indeed, most universities aim to serve the interests of the larger communities of which they are a part. When service (in a department, university, learned society, community) involves intellectual work related to one’s disciplinary knowledge, it represents scholarly activity. “To be considered scholarship,” Boyer (1990) argued, “service activities must be tied directly to one’s special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity” (p. 22).

1. **Statement of Service Philosophy:** The Statement of Service Philosophy should be no more than 2 pages. In this document, the student should articulate his/her philosophy on service and outreach activities, how the scholarship of service relates to other scholarly activities, etc.

2. **Other Evidence of Service:** This part of the portfolio may also include COMS committee work, service to the discipline (i.e., as a reviewer or association unit officer), and participation in community service.

d. **Statement of Personal Growth as Communicator:** This statement should be no more than 2 pages. In this statement, the student should articulate how s/he has changed as a communicator as he/she matriculated through the program including philosophical understandings and daily practices and patterns of relating with others.

e. **Statement of Diversity and Inclusion:** This statement should be no more than 2 pages. In this statement, the student should articulate how s/he strives to embrace diversity and inclusivity through teaching, research, and service.

f. **Additional Scholarly Endeavors:** This section could include any additional scholarly work that does not clearly fit under any other categories (such as grant applications, consulting work, etc.)

g. **Curriculum Vita**

B. **Defending the Scholarly Portfolio:** The student will meet with the Doctoral Dissertation Committee to discuss the Scholarly Portfolio. In addition to providing valuable input on this important document, this conversation will serve as a springboard for crafting comprehensive exam questions (see below). **GradForm 7 must be signed and filed to document the successful completion of the Scholarly Portfolio.**

IV. **COMS Comprehensive Exam Policy** (Policy drafted in Spring, 2017; Comprehensive Exams will begin with Cohort entering in Fall, 2018)
a. **Overview:** The written comprehensive examination is comprised of two major components: the preproposal and written responses to two questions for which the student has limited time to answer.

b. **Preproposal Format:** The preproposal is a concise argument (10-20 pages) that forecasts the dissertation proposal to be defended later and includes a working bibliography. The preproposal will include elements of theory and of research design and analysis, but it should not be a simple replication of the two limited time questions.

c. **Exam Format:** These two written questions are intended to be broadly written to allow integrative and synthetic treatments of questions of theory and of research design and analysis. Each student’s committee will write questions individualized to the student. These two questions are not intended to become direct contributions to the dissertation. The student shall identify two 24-hour periods to answer their time-limited questions. The theory question will be given to the student at the beginning of a 24-hour period, and the student shall turn in their written answer no later than 24 hours after the question is given to them. The design and analysis question will be given to the student at the beginning of a separate 24-hour period, and the student shall turn in their written answer no later than 24 hours after that question is given to them. The student may use any scholarly resources they wish as they answer the question, but the answer must be comprised of writing original to the student and any use of resources must be attributed using standard scholarly means.

d. **Comprehensive Exam Timing and Documentation:** In the fifth semester of the program, the student will develop a portfolio comprised, at minimum, of a statement about the student’s program of research and evidence of this program, a statement of teaching philosophy and evidence of teaching effectiveness, a statement of service philosophy and evidence of service, and a curriculum vita. After reviewing this portfolio and providing feedback to the student, the student and their committee will meet to defend the portfolio and to discuss the student’s comprehensive examination questions. **Upon successful defense, the committee will complete and sign Grad Form 7.** A maximum of one rewrite/retake is allowed.

In the sixth semester of the program, and no later than the end of the fifth week, the student will have distributed their written responses to the committee and have distributed a preproposal. The pre-proposal is a concise argument (10-20 pages) that forecasts the dissertation proposal to be defended later and includes a working bibliography. The student will defend the written responses and the preproposal in an oral format. The committee has a minimum of two weeks to review these responses and the preproposal. **Upon successful defense, the committee will complete and sign Grad Form 6A, Grad Form 6B, and Grad Form 8.** A maximum of one rewrite/retake is allowed.
In the sixth semester of the program, and no later than the end of the thirteenth week, the student will have distributed their dissertation proposal to the committee. The student will defend the proposal in an oral format. The committee has a minimum of two weeks to review the proposal. **Upon successful defense, the committee will complete and sign Grad Form 9.** A maximum of one rewrite/retake is allowed.

V. **Master’s Degree Option (as of 2018-2019 cohort):** Upon successfully completing comprehensive exams, doctoral students who do not enter OU with a Master’s degree in Communication may apply for graduation with a MA degree. To do so, the following steps must be followed:

1. **Students should complete Gradform 7 (Report on the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam).** All committee members must sign this form and submit to the Associate Director of Graduate Studies.

2. **Students should apply for Update of Graduate Academic Program.** This form must be completed (and then signed by the committee chair). The following codes should be used on the form to specify the particular academic program--
   a. Rhetoric & Public Culture MA5360
   b. Health Communication MA5361
   c. Relating & Organizing MA5362

   This form should be taken in person to the Graduate College (RTECH 220). We recommend that students request to receive an email confirmation after the form is processed.

3. **Students should confirm that the M.A. is in their respective program through the DARS degree verification feature.**
   https://www.ohio.edu/registrar/darsonline.cfm

4. **Students should apply for Graduation.** By the deadline specified in the academic calendar, students should apply to graduate in the MyOhio Student Center. This step can only be taken if the M.A. has been added to the DARS.

5. **Students should ensure that Gradform 1 (Graduation Clearance) has been processed.** Students should confirm that the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies has completed this form, submitted it to the Scripps Associate Dean, and received confirmation that the form has been processed.

6. **Students should contact the Registrar** to confirm that all of the graduation paperwork has been processed.

VI. **Dissertation Proposal:** Upon completion of the portfolio and comprehensive exams during the third year, doctoral students craft a dissertation proposal. Depending on advisor recommendations, personal writing preferences, and the topic, the proposal
could vary greatly in form and content. Generally speaking, the proposal should clearly explain the topic, provide a rationale for studying that topic, review relevant theory and literature on the topic, pose specific research questions/hypotheses guiding the study, and discuss in detail how the study will be conducted. Students should carefully proofread the proposal for style consistency, compositional effectiveness, and other mechanical considerations. Strong proposals make for smooth dissertation experiences. Consequently, proposals typically happen in close consultation with your advisor.

Upon advisor approval of a proposal, students then distribute copies to the dissertation committee. Students should NOT rely on electronic dissemination unless a committee member specifically requests that format. Students should check with advisors regarding binding and distribution preferences. Committee members should be given at least two weeks to read the dissertation proposal. After committee members indicate that they are ready to proceed with a defense, the student should reserve a room for the defense. **Following a successful defense, the committee will complete GradForm 9.**
Section 7: Information for Fourth Year Students

Students in the fourth year of the program focus on completing the dissertation and finding a job. Fourth year students should consider the following important timeline as they set goals for this important year:

I. Job Search Preparation: Fourth year students should start to prepare for the job search in the summer before Fall semester. Fortunately, the Scholarly Portfolio can serve as a foundation for documents that will be needed during the job search.

1. Letter of Application templates: Each job application will require a customized letter of application that highlights qualifications in relation to the unique position advertised. Although a well customized letter will appear to be made from “scratch,” parts of the letter can be prepared in advance, such as detailing teaching and research accomplishments and skills and summarizing specific accomplishments that reveal your identity as a teacher-scholar. Ideally, the letter of application should enable search committees to quickly identify with a candidate as a potential colleague. Different institutions will likely require slightly different focuses for the letter of application. Generally speaking, creating a “research-focused” template and a “teaching-focused” template provides a solid foundation from which to customize specific letters. Applicants should take the additional step of customizing the letter of application for each position by demonstrating knowledge of the specific department, detailing fit with the particular job description, and specifying how they meet the needs of the department (i.e., specific classes you can teach, etc.).

2. Curriculum Vita. In the summer before the fourth year, students should be sure to update their C.V. to reflect anticipated graduation date, recent publications/convention presentations, new course preps, etc.

3. Teaching Portfolio. The teaching portfolio should include a teaching philosophy statement, a summary of numeric teaching evaluations for each semester, a summary of qualitative comments from students, sample syllabi, and list of any novel or unique assignments.

3. Research Sample. The research sample should be representative of the candidate as a scholar. Applicants should keep their own personal “brand” in mind when selecting samples of scholarship to share, and they should strive to position themselves as potential colleagues who can independently produce smart scholarly contributions.

4. Transcripts. Some institutions require at least a photocopy of transcripts, and some applications even require undergraduate records. Before the job search, applicants should request copies of transcripts that can be reproduced as requested.

5. Contact Information and Social Media: Individuals who plan to search for jobs should create professional voicemail messages and e-mail addresses and ensure that they
represent themselves in a manner consistent with their preferred professional brand on social media.

6. **Letters of Recommendation.** In preparation for the job search, applicants should check with potential letter writers (such as the dissertation advisor, committee members, perhaps a colleague in the field) to learn what they will need in terms of information and time to write letters. When requesting letters, students should keep the following tips in mind:
   a. The application packet should arrive before recommendation letters.
   b. Letter writers should have access to the full set of application materials. So that they can have a complete picture of your qualifications.
   c. Applicants should give letter writers at least a three week notice before a letter is due.
   d. Applicants should strive to group letter requests, rather than asking for letters one at a time.
   e. Applicants should provide letter writers with relevant information about each job.
   f. Applicants should provide an electronic file with the mailing address for each requested letter.
   g. Applicants can certainly send gentle reminders to letter writers as long as they do not overdo the reminders.
   h. Applicants should absolutely send a genuine “thank you” to letter writers.

**II. The Job Search:** If well-prepared and organized, searching for jobs can be a smooth and successful process.

1. Starting in August, individuals who plan to search for jobs should pay attention to the NCA Career Center and the NCA listserv (CRTNET).
2. After identifying job advertisements of interest, applicants should take time to find out more about that university, department, and faculty.
3. After learning about the job, applicants should prepare the application packet by carefully following instructions on each job advertisement.
4. Applicants should be prepared for schools to make initial contact before the job closing date. They should keep a copy of applications materials readily available and develop a list of talking points and questions handy.
5. Applicants should take care to follow directions on the type of presentation that will be part of the job interview. Often called the “job talk,” such presentations can range from a formal presentation of a research article/study to a more global discussion of the applicant as a teacher-scholar. Failure to follow directions is a significant turnoff to faculty.
6. Interviews typically involve meetings with faculty, students, and administrators. During those meetings, candidates should be prepared to engage in conversation and to ask smart questions. Common questions include:
   a. Can you describe two strengths and weaknesses that you have as a teacher? As a researcher?
   b. Why did you apply to __________? How do you see yourself fitting into the department?
c. Talk about specific “success stories” from your experiences as a teacher and researcher.
d. If you were asked to teach _fill in course_ what textbook and assignments would you use?
e. How do you distinguish your research from what people in psychology/sociology/the humanities would do?
f. What about your agenda is actually focused on communication and not one of those other disciplines?
g. How do you react to diversity in your classroom? Can you provide examples?
h. Tell me about your dissertation (have a 2 minute answer and a 7-10 minute answer).
i. What would you like to be doing in 7-10 years? What trajectory do you see for yourself and how do you see getting there?
j. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses in our curriculum?
k. Of the courses (grad and undergrad) in our curriculum, which ones are you most qualified and/or interested to teach?
l. Can you give specific examples illustrating how you practice the “life of the mind?”

7. Good questions to ask chairs and deans (some are appropriate for faculty as well) include:
   a. Can you describe how this department is positioned within the college and university? For instance, is this department most noted for its contribution with service courses, for the publication record of faculty, etc.?
   b. Over the past several years has this unit been forced to absorb budget cuts? If so, how would you describe those cuts in relation to those faced by other units in the college and across campus?
   c. How did the unit absorb the budget cuts?
   d. What is the standard teaching load? Does the unit have a differential load policy? What “release/reassigned times” exist for faculty and how are those determined?
   e. What has the enrollment been in the department over the past several years (both grad and undergrad)?
   f. What objectives would you like to see the unit achieve over the next five years? What steps are being taken to try and achieve those objectives?
   g. What research facilities and support exists within the unit, college, and university?
   h. What kind of students and/or staff support is available for faculty?
   i. What support (or restrictions) exists for travel funding, office supplies, computer upgrades, etc.?
   j. What are the most significant challenges facing the unit? What is being done to confront those challenges?

8. Candidates should always request a copy of the Promotion and Tenure Document and ask about the timeframe for making the decision.

9. If offered the job, candidates should negotiate about salary, startup expenses, moving expenses, etc. Students should consult faculty advisors and other faculty for guidance. In COMS we want you to act ethically with other institutions and not unnecessarily string out job offers. Salary is something that will come up during the interview so students should talk with faculty here about possible ranges. Also, if the institution is public, faculty salaries are probably available through a simple web search.
III. Writing the Dissertation: Books have been written on strategies for writing a dissertation, and no single strategy will work for all students. We urge students to consider their learning and writing styles as they develop their own unique approach to this important project. However, the following tips might be useful to consider:

1. Be mindful of allowing special events (such as the start of the school year, NCA, holidays, job interviews) to distract attention from the dissertation.
2. Strive not to set arbitrary frameworks and timelines, especially without allowing adequate flexibility.
3. Challenge self to do the best possible work yet avoid dwelling on a sentence for hours.
5. Attend workshops on dissertation writing and on preparing electronic dissertations offered by the Graduate College.
6. Commit to setting and accomplishing realistic goals.

The Graduate College also offers workshops on preparing electronic theses and dissertations. Those workshops may be valuable to take very early in the process because they provide instruction on using Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat to format the file correctly.

IV. Preparing for the Dissertation Defense: After the advisor determines that a dissertation is ready for review by the dissertation committee, the student will copy and distribute the dissertation to committee members. Advisors typically ask committee members to give an initial read of the dissertation to make a decision about moving forward with the defense. Committee members MUST be given at least two weeks to read the dissertation before asking them to make a decision about the dissertation or to commit to a dissertation date. Committee members have the option to initially approve the dissertation for oral defense or require additional work before the defense takes place. Approving the dissertation for defense means that moving forward is justified and that any concerns do not warrant significant revision prior to an oral defense. Following committee approval for the defense, committee members must sign GradForm 11 and submit it to the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies (who will ensure that it gets processed by the Dean’s office) at least TWO WEEKS prior to the defense.

V. During the Defense: During the defense, students will likely be asked to briefly comment on the major findings and to discuss the process. Following this short presentation, committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions. Each meeting is somewhat different at this stage; however, students would benefit from reflecting on some issues in advance of the defense:

1. What are the assumptions of the theoretical perspective that you used and how did you enact those assumptions in the process? Were there aspects of the theory that you emphasized or e-emphasized? Why?
2. What were the major gaps in previous research and how did you fill those gaps?
3. If you take issue with major theoretical points or previous research, be prepared to talk in
depth about your position.

4. Why did you do what you did? Committee members love to ask questions about method because the method typically involves the most obvious instances of decision-making on your part. What were the key decisions that you made and why did you make them? Students should be prepared to connect major conclusions explicitly to the data. Committee members may try to determine the fine line between what can be safely concluded from the data at hand and what can be extrapolated from those findings. Make sure that you have thought about that line.

5. How do your findings advance theory and practice? Be able to discuss both issues at length, including hypothetical ways that you could take your findings back to the “field” and implement intervention/change.

6. Understand your limitations. Be able to answer the question, “Why did you not plan for this and prevent it from happening?”

7. What next? Committee members often love to talk about the next step. Be prepared to talk about (a) how you intend to break your dissertation into publishable manuscripts, (b) what you would do differently if re-planning your project, and (c) what immediate plans you have for continuing this program of research (i.e., designing the “next” study).

Students should certainly feel free to talk with committee members in advance and ask them if they are interested in discussing something in particular during the defense. Of course, students should have dialogue with their advisor about the defense.

After the completion of the defense, faculty typically ask the student to leave the room (as well as guests). The committee will make one of the following decisions: (a) that the student needs to do some re-writing and come back for another oral defense, (b) that the student needs to do some revision and committee members need to review those changes before finally signing off (c) that the student has passed the defense but should consider any changes recommended by the committee (you and your advisor are left to determine the extent of those changes), or (d) that the student does not need to make any changes. By far, ‘c’ occurs most commonly.

After the committee reveals its decision to the student, committee members sign GradForm 12. In addition, the student should bring a copy of Grad Form 14 for the Dean’s Rep and ask him or her to complete and submit it directly to the Dean’s Office by using an addressed return envelope provided by the student.
Appendix A: Summary of Forms

Forms provide important documentation of the milestones that doctoral students accomplish as they pursue the doctoral degree. They provide protection for our students by verifying that certain steps have occurred in the process.

GradForm 2: Authorization for Transfer of Credit. (This form should be used to seek credit from M.A. courses for the doctoral program of study.)

GradForm POS: The Program of Study template should be completed, in consultation with your advisor, and distributed to your committee. The signed POS form must be submitted to the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies after the POS meeting.

GradForm 6a: Report on the Written Comprehensive Exam. This form will be signed by committee members when they determine the written comprehensive exam answers to be acceptable. The signed form must then be submitted to the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies.

GradForm 6b: Report on the Oral Comprehensive Exam. This form will be signed by committee members when they determine the oral part of the comprehensive exam to be acceptable. The signed form must then be submitted to the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies.

GradForm 7: Report on the Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio for the Ph.D. This form will be signed by committee members after the student successfully defends the Scholarly Portfolio AND the comprehensive exam, and the signed form must then be submitted to the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies.

GradForm 8: Report on the Dissertation Committee and Dean’s Representative. This form may be completed before submitting the Third Year Portfolio, and it must then be submitted to the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies.

GradForm 9: Approval of the Dissertation Proposal. This form will be completed upon successful defense of the dissertation proposal, and the signed form must be submitted to the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies.

GradForm 11: Arrangements for the Oral Examination of the Dissertation. This form must be signed by all dissertation committee members at least two weeks prior to the dissertation defense date and filed by the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies in the Dean’s Office. The Dean’s Office will then make a formal public announcement of the scheduled dissertation defense.

GradForm 12: Report on the Dissertation and Oral Defense. This form will be completed at
the conclusion of the dissertation defense. The signed form must be submitted to the COMS Associate Director of Graduate Studies.

GradForm 14: Evaluation by the Dean’s Representative. The Dean’s representative must complete this form and return it to the Dean’s office after the completion of the defense.
Appendix B: Useful Links

OU Graduate College (prospective students):
https://www.ohio.edu/graduate/apply

OU Graduate College (newly accepted students):
https://www.ohio.edu/graduate/newly-admitted-students/ohiogso

Scripps College of Communication (home):
https://www.ohio.edu/scrippscolleage/index.cfm

Scripps College of Communication (forms):
https://www.ohio.edu/scrippscollege/currentstudents/forms.cfm

OU School of Communication Studies (home):
https://www.ohiocommstudies.com/

OU School of Communication Studies (doctoral program):
https://www.ohiocommstudies.com/graduate/phd/

OU School of Communication Studies (doctoral program forms):
https://www.ohiocommstudies.com/graduate/forms/

OU Research Compliance (to obtain required human subjects training):
https://www.ohio.edu/research/compliance/human-subjects.cfm

OU Graduate Certificate programs:
1. College of Arts and Sciences (such as Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality) --
https://www.ohio.edu/cas/wgss/grad-certificate.cfm

2. Global Affairs and International Studies (such as Latin American Studies and War and Peace Studies)
https://www.ohio.edu/global/cis/graduate/

3. Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (Environmental Sustainability Graduate Certificate) --
https://www.ohio.edu/envstu/students/current/grad-certificate.cfm

4. College of Health Sciences and Professions (such as Graduate Global Health Certificate) —
https://www.ohio.edu/global-health/academics/graduate-certificate.cfm
OU Graduate Student Senate:  
https://www.ohio.edu/gss/

OU Thesis and Dissertation (TAD):  
https://www.ohio.edu/graduate/etd

OU Teaching Assistant Handbook:  

OU Graduate Student Parental Paid Leave Policy:  
https://www.ohio.edu/graduate/current-students/parental-paid-leave-absence-policy-graduate-students

Original Work Grant and Travel Grant:  
https://www.ohio.edu/gss/grants.cfm

OU Graduate Appointment Information (includes GTA payroll schedule):  
https://www.ohio.edu/sites/default/files/sites/graduate/files/OGA/FY19%20Final%20Graduate-Appointment-Guidelines.pdf

Scripps College of Communication Toolkit:  
https://www.ohio.edu/scripps-college/faculty-staff/communication-tool-kit
Appendix C:
Health Communication Curriculum Outline (as of Fall 2018)

Overall: 61 (non-dissertation) credit hours

Core Courses: 13 credit hours

- 7000 Professional Seminar: Pedagogy (1 credit hour)
- 7005 Introduction to Graduate Study in COMS (4 credit hours)
- 7020 COMS Inquiry I (4 credit hours)
- 7030 COMS Inquiry II (4 credit hours)

Primary Area: 20 credit hours

Required: At least 12 credit hours of the following:

- 8400 Health Communication in Organizations (4 credit hours)
- 8430 Relational Issues in Health Communication (4 credit hours)
- 8440 Health Communication & Society (4 credit hours)
- 8450 Health Communication Campaigns (4 credit hours)

Remaining 4 or 8 credit hours from the following:

- 8420 Health Communication & Culture (4 credit hours)
- 8460 Persuasion & Social Influence (4 credit hours)
- 8470 Health Communication Uncertainty & Risk (4 credit hours)
- 8480 Environmental Communication (4 credit hours)
- 8490 Special Topics in Health Communication (4 credit hours)

Research Competency: 5 courses and 15 credit hours, minimum

Electives: 3 courses and 9 credit hours, minimum

Dissertation: 12 credit hours, minimum

*May need additional courses to reach 61 required total credit hours

**May only take up to 4 courses not in COMS
Appendix D:

Interpersonal & Organizational Communication
Curriculum Outline (as of Fall 2018)

Overall: 61 (non-dissertation) credit hours

Core Courses: 13 credit hours

- 7000 Professional Seminar: Pedagogy (1 credit hour)
- 7005 Introduction to Graduate Study in COMS (4 credit hours)
- 7020 COMS Inquiry I (4 credit hours)
- 7030 COMS Inquiry II (4 credit hours)

Primary Area: 24 credit hours

Required:
- 8200 Foundations in Organizational Communication (4 credit hours)
- 8210 Foundations in Interpersonal Communication (4 credit hours)

Remaining 16 credit hours from choice of the following:

- 8240 Communication & Identity (4 credit hours)
- 8250 Communication in Personal & Social Relationships (4 credit hours)
- 8260 Communication Innovation & Organizational Change (4 credit hours)
- 8270 Narrative & Dialogue (4 credit hours)
- 8280 Topics in Advanced Interpersonal Communication (4 credit hours)
- 8290 Topics in Advanced Organizational Communication (4 credit hours)

Research Competency: 5 courses and 15 credit hours, minimum

Electives: 2 courses and 6 credit hours, minimum

Dissertation: 12 credit hours, minimum

*May need additional courses to reach 61 required total credit hours

**May only take up to 4 courses not in COMS
Appendix E:
Rhetoric & Culture Curriculum Outline (as of Fall 2018)

Overall: 61 (non-dissertation) credit hours*

Core Courses: 13 Credit Hours

- 7000 Professional Seminar: Pedagogy (1 credit hour)
- 7005 Introduction to Graduate Study in COMS (4 credit hours)
- 7020 COMS Inquiry I (4 credit hours)
- 7030 COMS Inquiry II (4 credit hours)

Primary Area: 20 credit hours

Required:
- 8300 Rhetorical Theory (4 credit hours)
- 8340 Rhetorical Criticism (4 credit hours)

Repeatable:
- 8350 Studies in American Rhetoric (4 credit hours)
- 8360 Studies in Communication & Cultural Critique (4 credit hours)
- 8390 Topics in Rhetoric & Culture (4 credit hours)

Research Competency: 5 courses and 15 credit hours, minimum

Electives: 3 courses and 9 credit hours, minimum**

Dissertation: 12 credit hours, minimum

*May need additional courses to reach 61 required total credit hours

**May only take up to 4 courses not in COMS