

# COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES DEPARTMENT

## Goals

Communication studies at Niagara University is designed to give students a strong background in professional and liberal arts concerns with respect to the mass communication media. Consistent with the departmental and university mission, our goal is to produce graduates who appreciate:

- the importance of language in conveying the meaning of events
- the primacy of digital forms of communication in the 21st century
- the dedication of careers in media which serve the interests of social justice, environmental renewal and global peaceful existence.

## Mission Statement

Recognizing that communication is an essential part of society, the Communication Studies Department seeks to instill in its students the important contribution that mass media can play in bettering the human condition. The skills learned in this program can be applied in numerous media careers including journalism, television, radio, advertising, public relations, teaching, research, and non-profit organizations. The ethics and values embodied in the curriculum are meant to produce graduates who understand the significance of mass media in making sense of our world.

Integral to all of these is an understanding of the role played by the commercial, public and non-profit sectors of the media and cultural industries. By emphasizing communication for human needs, we fulfill the mission of the University in focusing concern for the marginalized sectors of our society and world.

## Bachelors

- Communication and Media Studies, B.A. (<http://catalog.niagara.edu/undergraduate/programs-az/arts-sciences/communication-studies/communication-studies-ba/>)

## Minors

- Communication and Media Studies, Minor (<http://catalog.niagara.edu/undergraduate/programs-az/arts-sciences/communication-studies/communication-studies-minor/>)

## Courses

### Communication Studies

#### CMS 101 — Introduction to Media Studies (SS) (3 credits)

A first year seminar for majors and minors, this course is designed to orient students to the field of communications, provide an overview of career possibilities and give students a critical analysis of the importance of communication in today's world. The emphasis on the course is identifying the communications values which reflect the theme of the program-communicating for social justice. Formerly CMS 100.

#### CMS 115 — Digital Media Production (3 credits)

This course is an introduction to the history, basic concepts, and skills of digital media design and production. Through the creation and critique of projects incorporating images, audio, and video, students will gain knowledge of potential careers, acquire life-long production skills, and produce a portfolio of their digital media work. Formerly CMS 245.

#### CMS 120 — Media Writing (3 credits)

A specialized discussion of how to communicate through the mass media, focusing on the planning and writing of effective messages for print, radio, television, and web media. For analysis purposes, the student concentrates on journalism and public relations and their communicative and social role in contemporary society.

#### CMS 200 — Media Theory (H) (3 credits)

The course combines a cross cultural history of the communication field with a survey of the main theoretical models advanced to explain the relationship between media and society during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Students formulate positions on the role and effects of theory in daily media practices. (Satisfies Media and Culture Elective)

#### CMS 201 — Research Methods (3 credits)

This course provides an overview and critique of mass media research methods and techniques. The research process, a survey of scientifically studying mass media as a human phenomenon is explored. The course will also focus on the particular roles and problems of public opinion research and television ratings methodology in determining mass tastes and preferences. Students will also gain a practical understanding of data analysis. Formerly CMS 330.

#### CMS 215 — Video Production and Laboratory (4 credits)

After a detailed survey of the vocabulary, tools, techniques, and conventions of video production, the student is led through a series of creative exercises in both studio and remote video production. Students will learn producing and directing techniques in preproduction, production, and post-production, developing both a critical aesthetic and technical proficiency. Course includes lab exercises and projects in non-linear digital video production. Formerly CMS 215.

#### CMS 221 — Screenwriting (WI) (3 credits)

This course will introduce students to the basics of screenwriting for film. By taking on the role of a professional screenwriter, students experience the complete process of screenwriting by learning how to create plot, theme, characters and dialogue, resulting in an original screenplay. (Satisfies Media Writing Elective)

#### CMS 222 — Digital Media Storytelling (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take CMS\*120 prior to this course.*

This course provides an introduction to writing for digital environments, with specific emphasis on web pages. Students learn about the history of The Internet, the development of network digital information production/retrieval environments, and the forms and practices of writing for a web page. Activities occur in the classroom and in a web-based online lab. (Satisfies Media Writing Elective) Formerly Digital Journalism.

#### CMS 223 — Creative Non-Fiction (H) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take WRT\*100 CMS\*120*

Students will read and write creative nonfiction from a number of sub-genres, including nature writing, personal essay/memoir, profiles, and reportage, considering possibilities for publication. They will explore the literature of reality from the power of true stories, to the fascination of odd facts, to the revelation of insight. (Satisfies Media Writing Elective)

**CMS 226 — Specialty Journalism (MWE) (3 credits)**

*Prerequisite Must have taken CMS\*120;*

This course introduces students to the many kinds of special interest journalism while conducting exercises in the shared skills required to practice any of them. Students learn about the industry as well as the research techniques, writing methods, ethics, and editing procedures used to practice specialty journalism. Areas of content may change from semester to semester. They will include sports, business and finance, ethnicity, the environment, science, technology and the arts. (Satisfies Media Writing Elective)

**CMS 230 — Mass Communications Law (SS) (3 credits)**

This course is designed to give a basic understanding of communications and mass media law. Students will examine free speech, press issues and more contemporary topics in a case law format. Students will learn how First Amendment jurisprudence, as well as common and statutory laws, impact media and media producers. Formerly CMS 395.

**CMS 260 — Sports Broadcasting (EXP) (3 credits)**

Sports Broadcasting is a hands-on course designed around the production and broadcasting of sporting events at Niagara University using live, multiple camera production techniques. Students learn the principles, tools, and techniques of producing for live sporting events aired on ESPN and other web streaming platforms.

**CMS 285 — Intro to Film Studies (H) (3 credits)**

This is an introduction to the interpretation of cinema. Students learn the cultures, practices, genres, directors, theories, technologies, politics and economics that have influenced the development of motion pictures. Required for the Film Studies Minor.

**CMS 310 — Advertising (CMSPS) (3 credits)**

Basic course in the strategy and execution of advertisements for the mass media. Topics include the history of advertising, relationship to economy and society, organization, selection of media, layout, production and use of advertising appeals in radio, television and the press.

**CMS 315 — Public Relations (MWE) (3 credits)**

An analysis of the principles and practices of public relations in corporate, institutional and public service organizations including the technical and human relations skills utilized in the public relations profession.

**CMS 335 — Investigation and Reporting for the (CD) (3 credits)**

*Prerequisite Take CMS\*120 or CMS\*222 prior*

This course focuses on the acquisition of investigative skills, techniques and ethics used for research and writing in academic and journalistic work. Students apply their acquired tools in a semester long investigation of issues within an International Public Affairs sector. In an ongoing lab setting students interact continuously within an Internet environment. (Satisfies Media Writing Elective)

**CMS 340 — Photography (CMSPS) (3 credits)**

This is a course in the fundamentals of digital photography designed for students with little or no previous experience. Students will learn basic photographic skills including manual camera operation and digital image manipulation and printing. Photographic history, and visual theory and criticism will be addressed in class discussions and critiques. The course explores the use of photography as a tool of communication and self-expression.

**CMS 350 — Mass Media and Culture (H) (3 credits)**

This course presents a critical analysis of the meaning and function of the mass media and culture in our world. Fictional programming, entertainment and sport media are analyzed for their impact on individuals, society and the media themselves. (Satisfies Media and Culture Elective)

**CMS 352 — Documentary Film (H) (3 credits)**

Students will study the documentary film genre by learning to critically deconstruct, analyze, and perform deep readings of innovative and important contemporary works. Through film screenings, criticism, readings, and discussion, students will explore the way that the genre addresses ethical, philosophical, technical, and aesthetic representations of the lived human experience.

**CMS 353 — Film and Culture (H) (3 credits)**

This course will examine contemporary cultural perceptions through a variety of cinematic examples taken from feature films. The impact of film on social, historical, and economic cultural traits will be analyzed. Although the primary focus is cultural analysis, thematic discussion will be coupled with an introduction to vocabulary used in cinema and historical discussion of the evolution of the film industry. (Satisfies Media and Culture Elective, Film Studies Elective)

**CMS 355 — Understanding Television (CD) (3 credits)**

This course presents a critical analysis of television and how it impacts our lives. Via in-class screenings, class discussion, and written assignments students will learn the history of television, the business of the industry, and the ways in which a variety of social issues manifest through the medium.

**CMS 360 — Special Topics (3 credits)**

This course is designed as a one-time course to be offered whenever departmental resources are sufficient to do so. It will deal with special topics in the mass media, journalism, or broadcasting according to the research agenda and interests of a particular professor. Topics could include, but are not limited to: ethical, legal, theoretical, and societal issues in the mass media; practical applications of video, photographic, print, and/or computer-based media production.

**CMS 361 — Politics and Media (SS) (3 credits)**

This course examines the role of communications media in a democratic system of governance. We will look at the media's performance in electoral and other public campaigns, the role of the news media in presenting information on national and global issues and how political themes surface in non-news media genres. (Satisfies Media and Society Elective)

**CMS 363 — Stereotyping in the Media (SS) (3 credits)**

There are many oversimplified categorizations by which societies make distinctions among their members, including race, class, gender, and age. Such distinctions often lead to an inequitable distribution of political power, social well-being, and the resources available to individual members of society. In this course we seek to increase our awareness and understanding of such inequities and the power of the mass media in creating and potentially destroying them. (Satisfies Media and Society Elective)

**CMS 365 — Comics and Graphic Novels (H) (3 credits)**

This course introduces students to the study of comics as medium and narrative art form. Students explore important examples of comics storytelling, fundamentals of comics theory, and significant comics scholarship. The course may be focused on a particular creator, genre, or topic (e.g., the relationship between comics and other media).

**CMS 367 — Environmental Humanities (H) (3 credits)**

Environmental humanities deconstruct how climate change and environmental issues are represented in different media and humanities content. Students will explore representations of the environment in film and television, literature, social media, music, gaming, graphic novels, news/journalism and others to understand what the environment and climate change mean to our culture.

**CMS 375 — Women and Film (H) (3 credits)**

This course focuses exclusively on films about young women and girls in the United States and other countries. We will examine how their lives and experiences are represented in coming of age films from the 1990s to the present. To these ends, we will analyze multicultural representations of young women and girls in order to understand the complex ways in which identity and experience shape growing up female and the transition from girlhood to womanhood. This course is part of the Women's Studies Minor and Film Studies Minor.

**CMS 401 — The Horror Film (H) (3 credits)**

This course aims to introduce students to the cinematic genre of horror and the ways in which classic and modern horror films have reflected various social and cultural dynamics throughout history and continue to do so today.

**CMS 403 — Honors Thesis I (3 credits)**

Individual research of a substantive nature pursued in the student's major field of study. The research will conclude in a written thesis or an original project, and an oral defense. Required for University and Departmental Honors students.

**CMS 404 — Honors Thesis II (3 credits)**

Individual research of a substantive nature pursued in the student's major field of study. The research will conclude in a written thesis or an original project, and an oral defense. Required for University and Departmental Honors students.

**CMS 421 — P.R. Campaigns (CMSPS) (3 credits)**

*Prerequisite Take CMS\*315 previously*

**CMS 440 — Advanced Photography (CMSPS) (3 credits)**

*Prerequisite Must have taken CMS\*340;*

This course is a continued exploration of the medium of digital photography, which begins where Basic Photography ends. The course includes creative problem solving through alternative photographic techniques, advanced digital imaging, and an introduction to the practices of photojournalism and social documentary photography.

**CMS 445 — Advanced Video Production (CMSPS) (3 credits)**

*Prerequisite Must have taken CMS\*345;*

An upper-level course in video production. Student will apply knowledge of production aesthetics and theory in producing short videos. Course covers effective message design, script writing, video production, and non-linear postproduction. Assignments focus on producing videos for non-profit organizations and for submission to various video festivals.

**CMS 460 — Senior Seminar (WI) (3 credits)**

A research seminar designed to evaluate areas of media effects, creative media projects, and critical analysis of media content. Majors will complete an individually designed research or media production project. Oral defense and written documentation will be required.

**CMS 491 — Internship (EXP) (3 credits)**

The media internship is an independent applied experience in the field of mass media. With guidance from the instructor, students are expected to contact an appropriate organization and set up guidelines for working. The course allows students to apply class room knowledge while exploring a professional position in the mass media. Determination of credit hours will be established at pre-registration by the chair of the department in consultation with the dean. Junior or Senior ranking.

**CMS 492 — Internship (EXP) (12.00 credits)**

The media internship is an independent applied experience in the field of mass media. With guidance from the instructor, students are expected to contact an appropriate organization and set up guidelines for working. The course allows students to apply class room knowledge while exploring a professional position in the mass media. Determination of credit hours will be established at pre-registration by the chair of the department in consultation with the dean. Junior or Senior ranking.

**CMS 493 — Communications Co-Op (6.00 credits)**

A junior or senior work study program providing relevant paid employment experience. The student must work full-time for one semester. Registration will occur at the beginning of experience. The objective of the program is to integrate classroom theory and practical work experience, thus lending relevancy to learning and providing the student with a realistic exposure to career opportunities.

**CMS 494 — Communications Co-Op (6.00 credits)**

A junior or senior work study program providing relevant paid employment experience. The student must work full-time for one semester. Registration will occur at the beginning of experience. The objective of the program is to integrate classroom theory and practical work experience, thus lending relevancy to learning and providing the student with a realistic exposure to career opportunities.

**CMS 495 — Communications Co-Op (6.00 credits)**

A junior or senior work study program providing relevant paid employment experience. The student must work full-time for one semester. Registration will occur at the beginning of experience. The objective of the program is to integrate classroom theory and practical work experience, thus lending relevancy to learning and providing the student with a realistic exposure to career opportunities.

**CMS 496 — Communications Co-Op (6.00 credits)**

A junior or senior work study program providing relevant paid employment experience. The student must work full-time for one semester. Registration will occur at the beginning of experience. The objective of the program is to integrate classroom theory and practical work experience, thus lending relevancy to learning and providing the student with a realistic exposure to career opportunities.

**CMS 497 — Independent Study (CMSMC) (3 credits)**

The independent study elective provides an opportunity to do intensive work in an area of particular interest to the student under the supervision of an individual faculty member. Departmental approval necessary.

**Graduate Courses****CMS 550 — Special Topics (3 credits)**

This course is designed as a one-time graduate-level course to be offered when-ever departmental resources are sufficient to do so. It will deal with special topics in the mass media, journalism, or broad-casting according to the research agenda and interests of a particular professor. Topics could include, but are not limited to: ethical, legal, theoretical, and societal issues in the mass media; practical applications of video, photographic, print, and/or computer-based media production.

## **Speech**

### **SPK 100 — Effective Speech (AS) (3 credits)**

Directed to beginning speech students, with the goal of helping them express themselves clearly, succinctly, and with some degree of persuasiveness. The course is also intended to make them aware of the responsibilities engendered by the art of persuasion. The basic theme of the course is that the message is the message as it is received. (Formerly SPK 101)

### **SPK 101 — Public Speaking (AS) (3 credits)**

Directed to beginning speech students, with the goal of helping them express themselves clearly, succinctly, and with some degree of persuasiveness. The course is also intended to make them aware of the responsibilities engendered by the art of persuasion. The basic theme of the course is that the message is the message as it is received.