DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

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Programs of the Department
The Department of Mass Communication offers the following programs of study:

- Major in Mass Communication
- Minor in Mass Communication
- Master of Science in Communication Management

Why Study Mass Communication?

Do you want to:

1. Expand your understanding of the world and mass media and prepare to tackle the most complex global, cultural, political and business challenges?
2. Pursue a career in advertising, journalism or public relations, or use your skills in healthcare, financial services, information technology, federal agencies or nonprofits?
3. Learn to choose and use the most effective communication tools and strategies to promote messages, products and programs?

Then, Mass Communication may be the right choice for you.

The mission of the Department of Mass Communication is to prepare students for careers in journalism, advertising or public relations that are enhanced by a solid foundation in broad liberal arts education. Using a forward-thinking, practical, and experiential learning approach, the department cultivates the student body's natural curiosity about the world and fosters skills in media literacy, narrative storytelling, critical thinking, strategic communication and ethical decision-making. Graduates will come away with the ability to make a positive contribution to their profession and become fully engaged citizens.

The department develops students who are:

- Effective communicators with strong skills in written, oral, and visual communication.
- Skilled in the use of the latest technology and tools required to thrive in their chosen fields.
- Creative problem solvers with original ideas and flexible thinking.
- Critical thinkers and ethical decision makers with strengths in systematic analysis of evidence.

- Engaged learners with openness to ambiguity, differences and risk-taking.

The department provides a learning environment in which students are:

- Mentored by diverse faculty who are excellent teachers through a healthy balance of academic training and industry experience.
- Guided by a curriculum that fosters strong partnerships and connections with the region's journalism, advertising and public relations industry.
- Equipped with up-to-date technological tools that meet industry standards.
- Given ample opportunity for experiential learning in internships, study abroad courses and simulation-based course work.
- Valued for their differences, unique life experience and perspectives.

The faculty members of the department are committed to scholarly research and/or creative productions in the department's various areas of expertise. Many faculty worked professionally in the advertising, public relations and journalism fields, and bring their industry experience into the classroom. The department provides service to TU and to a larger community in a variety of ways, such as through the American Advertising Federation, Public Relations Student Society of America, Society of Professional Journalists, as well as faculty and student presentations, workshops and professional networking.

Internship Program Guidelines

The department strongly encourages students to participate in internships. Most Mass Communication majors complete one or more internships during their undergraduate career.

In order to receive academic credits for an internship, students must be admitted to the major and have obtained junior/senior status, met the minimum GPA requirement and completed the prerequisites.

Visit the department website for information on the internship application and approval process. All internship work sites must be approved by the department's internship coordinator.

Departmental Scholarships

The Department of Mass Communication offers its majors a number of scholarship opportunities.

The Patrick John O'Connell Memorial Scholarship is available for Mass Communication students with a special interest in broadcast journalism, journalism, advertising or public relations. Other scholarships include the Eddie Ballard Award for Journalism, the Chrystal Marie Clifford Memorial Scholarship, the Kathryn Dudek Scholarship, the Sam Lacy Sports Communication Scholarship, the Steven and Laura Murfin Scholarship, the George F. Rogers Jr. Memorial Scholarship, the Elizabeth Wainio Memorial Scholarship, and the J. Reg Murphy Scholarship. For scholarship information and deadlines, contact the department scholarship coordinator or visit the department website.
Student Organizations
The department supports the following student organizations: the TU Ad Club, TU PR Group and the student chapter of the Society for Professional Journalists.

Honors Program
The department recognizes students for academic excellence by participating in TU’s honors program. Mass Communication majors with an overall GPA of 3.25 and a 3.50 in their major are eligible for the honors program. To graduate with honors in Mass Communication, students must complete at least 6 units from internships (MCOM 460 or MCOM 461), independent studies (MCOM 496), or honors thesis (MCOM 499) in Mass Communication. In addition, the student is required to make an oral presentation to the Thesis Committee, which is open to the public. At graduation, students will be recognized for honors both on the diploma and permanent transcript. Students interested in departmental honors should consult with the department’s honors coordinator no later than the first term of their junior year.

Graduate Program
The department offers a master’s degree in Communication Management. Information regarding the master’s program is included in the Graduate Catalog (http://catalog.towson.edu/graduate).

Students interested in becoming undergraduate Mass Communication majors must first become Pre-Mass Communication students (PMCO) and enroll in three required screening courses:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 102</td>
<td>WRITING FOR A LIBERAL EDUCATION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 131</td>
<td>PUBLIC SPEAKING</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOM 101</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO MASS COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
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Students cannot apply for MCOM as a major until they have completed these courses.

Note: This requirement applies to incoming freshmen, transfer students, currently enrolled Towson University students and students working on a second bachelor’s degree.

Students are eligible to apply for admission to the Mass Communication (MCOM) major after completing at least 30 units at TU or elsewhere, and earning a minimum GPA of 2.75 in the three courses named above. In addition, the student’s overall GPA must be 2.75 or above at the time of application. No more than one of the screening courses can be repeated for the purpose of determining eligibility.

Students should apply for the MCOM major by completing an online application (https://www.towson.edu/cofac/departments/mass-communication/undergraduate/fine-arts-communication/mass-communication/mass-communication-minor) on the department’s website (https://www.towson.edu/cofac/departments/mass-communication). The application deadlines are May 20, August 15, and December 20 each year. Students who are denied may re-apply once. Appeals should be addressed to the department chair in the form of a letter.

- Major in Mass Communication (http://catalog.towson.edu/undergraduate/fine-arts-communication/mass-communication/mass-communication)
- Minor in Mass Communication (http://catalog.towson.edu/undergraduate/fine-arts-communication/mass-communication/mass-communication-minor)

Courses

MCOM 100 USING INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY IN MASS COMMUNICATION (3)
Effective and ethical gathering, evaluation, application and presentation of information in the study of mass communication. Prerequisite: freshmen and sophomores only. GenEd I.B.

MCOM 101 INTRODUCTION TO MASS COMMUNICATION (3)
Issues, theories and structures of mass communication and careers in the mass media.

MCOM 102 HONORS INTRODUCTION TO MASS COMMUNICATION (3)
Issues, theories and structures of mass communication and careers in the mass media. Honors College course.

MCOM 214 PRINCIPLES OF ADVERTISING (3)
Review of contribution made by advertising to the United States economy and of the principles and practices as applied to mass media. Prerequisites: COMM 131 and MCOM 101.

MCOM 253 PRINCIPLES OF STRATEGIC PUBLIC RELATIONS AND INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION (3)
History and development of the field as a profession; strategic management; research; legal and ethical issues; communication theories; strategies and tactics; global trends. Prerequisites: COMM 131 and MCOM 101.

MCOM 255 NEWSWRITING (3)
Newswriting from the standpoint of style, structure, and readability. Prerequisites: MCOM 101 and ENGL 102.

MCOM 256 WRITING FOR THE MEDIA (3)
Principles of good writing with emphasis on writing basics, research, and analysis to create effective communication in a variety of venues. Prerequisites: MCOM 101 and ENGL 102.

MCOM 257 JOURNALISM/NEW MEDIA I (3)
An introduction to writing skills required in print, broadcast, and online journalism, and emerging news media formats. Prerequisite: MCOM 101. Lab/Class fee will be assessed.

MCOM 258 JOURNALISM AND NEW MEDIA II (3)
Advanced skills in new writing, interviewing, reporting, and editing required in print, broadcast, and online journalism, and emerging new media formats. Prerequisite: MCOM 257. Lab/Class fee will be assessed.

MCOM 310 UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY THROUGH MASS MEDIA (3)
An overview of the ways that mass media frame disability for the general public through journalism, TV, film, advertising, photography, documentary, comic art and the Internet. Prerequisites: MCOM 101; junior/senior standing.

MCOM 323 ADVERTISING MEDIA PLANNING (3)
Application of advertising media principles to the development of a media plan that involves objectives, strategy, and execution of electronic, print and new media. Prerequisites: MCOM 214; majors only. Lab/Class fee will be assessed.

MCOM 325 ADVERTISING COPYWRITING (3)
Creative process and production of copy for various media including print, broadcast, direct mail, out-of-home, and new media. Prerequisites: MCOM 214 and MCOM 256; majors only. Lab/Class fee will be assessed.
MCOM 327 EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM AND MASS MEDIA (3)
Examines the current state of American journalism by tying today's media environment to its historical roots. Focuses on the technological, political, economic, cultural and professional forces that have shaped the country's media system over the past 250 years. The course also explores various historical narratives that have come to dominate our understanding of the past and present. While the course primarily focuses on journalism, it examines the development of public relations and advertising as well. Prerequisite: MCOM 101 or EMF 140 or COMM 201; sophomore/junior/senior standing.

MCOM 330 ADVERTISING ACCOUNT PLANNING (3)
Designed to provide students with an understanding of the strategic planning process and how it is integrated into persuasive brand communication plan development. The focus is on how to mine the consumer insights from research and integrate into effective advertising strategies. Prerequisite: MCOM 214.

MCOM 333 SOCIAL MEDIA AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION (3)
Examines the changing world of social media, strategic implications, and its usefulness to advertising, journalism, and public relations practitioners. Prerequisite: MCOM 214 or MCOM 253 or MCOM 257.

MCOM 341 DIGITAL PUBLISHING (3)
Computer technology to create publications for delivery in print and online. Prerequisite: MCOM 257. Lab/Class fee will be assessed.

MCOM 350 MEDIA LAW (3)
Examination of libel, slander, invasion of privacy and copyright. Legal considerations in reporting on judicial and governmental activities. Prerequisites: MCOM 101; junior/senior standing; majors only.

MCOM 352 MEDIA CRITICISM (3)
Theory and practice of media criticism intended for various audiences, including consumer oriented criticism, social criticism, and scholarly criticism. Prerequisite: MCOM 101 or EMF 140 or COMM 201.

MCOM 356 FEATURE WRITING (3)
Researching and writing journalistic articles for publication in newspapers, magazines, and other media. Requires grade of C or better to fulfill Core or GenEd requirement. Prerequisites: ENGL 102 and MCOM 256 or MCOM 258. Core: Advanced Writing Seminar or GenEd. I.D.

MCOM 357 PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING (3)
Composing, editing, and producing media materials for both internal and external audiences. Requires grade of C or better to fulfill Core or GenEd requirement. Prerequisites: ENGL 102, MCOM 253, and MCOM 256. Core: Advanced Writing Seminar or GenEd I.D.

MCOM 358 NEWS EDITING (3)
Practice in editing and headline writing for print and online media. Prerequisites: MCOM 257; majors only. Lab/Class fee will be assessed.

MCOM 381 BROADCAST JOURNALISM I (3)
Theory and practice of broadcast journalism. The gathering, writing and presentation of news for audio-only and audio-visual media. Ethical standards for broadcast journalism will be analyzed. Prerequisites: MCOM 258; junior/senior standing. Lab/Class fee will be assessed.

MCOM 383 NEWS REPORTING (3)
Experience in reporting. Coverage of specific news beats on and off campus and general assignment work. Consideration of news-gathering techniques, including direct and participant observation, use of survey research data and use of official records. Prerequisite: MCOM 258.

MCOM 385 MASS MEDIA AND SOCIETY (3)
Seminar on current issues and effects of mass communication. Prerequisite: MCOM 101 or EMF 140.

MCOM 390 MASS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH (3)
Survey of methods and uses of research in mass media fields. Prerequisites: junior/senior standing; majors only. Not open to students who have successfully completed MCOM 490.

MCOM 391 PHOTOJOURNALISM I (3)
Photography for the mass media. History, aesthetics and ethics are covered. Prerequisite: MCOM 258 or consent of instructor. Lab/Class fee will be assessed.

MCOM 402 SPORTS JOURNALISM (3)
Covering sports through news articles, features, broadcast reports, podcasts, and other forms of audio, visual and digital storytelling. Prerequisite: MCOM 257.

MCOM 407 MULTIMEDIA REPORTING CAPSTONE (3)
Research and create multimedia news and feature articles incorporating hypertext, graphics, photographs, audio and video elements. Capstone course. Prerequisites: MCOM 341 and MCOM 356; majors only. Lab/Class fee will be assessed.

MCOM 409 LITERARY JOURNALISM (3)
Literary technique and dramatic structure for print and online journalistic media. Prerequisite: MCOM 356.

MCOM 411 COMMUNICATION PROCESS (3)
Prominent theories and research on mass media and human communication. Prerequisites: COMM 131/COMM102 and junior/senior standing.

MCOM 415 MASS MEDIA GRAPHICS (3)
Communication potential of design elements in a variety of graphics using computer technology. Prerequisites: MCOM 101; junior/senior standing.

MCOM 419 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT (3)
A survey of practical theories and applications that are related to corporate communication practices. Topics include group and individual behaviors in corporate environments, managing conflict, culture, change, and innovation; and leadership/management communication. The particular emphasis will be placed on advertising, public relations, or brand communication organizations. Not open to students who have successfully completed COMM 419. Prerequisites: MCOM 253, MCOM 357, and MCOM 390; junior/senior standing; majors only.

MCOM 431 PUBLIC OPINION AND THE PRESS (3)
Journalistic aspects of public opinion and propaganda; the impact of mass communication media on the formation of public opinion. Techniques of polling and testing public opinion. Prerequisites: MCOM 101; junior/senior standing.

MCOM 433 MEDIA ETHICS (3)
Ethical principles, issues, dilemmas in mass communication; professional codes; personal, interpersonal, small group, organizational, and societal factors affecting ethical mediated communication. Prerequisites: MCOM 101; junior/senior standing; majors only.

MCOM 440 ADVERTISING MEDIA SALES (3)
Procedures for selling media space and time; strategy, training, and preparation. Prerequisites: MCOM 214; junior/senior standing.
MCOM 443 INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS (3)
Role of advertising and public relations in the world marketplace. Consideration of global and local perspectives, key decisions in agency operations, creative aspects and media. Prerequisites: MCOM 214 or MCOM 253; junior/senior standing.

MCOM 445 CORPORATE INSTITUTIONAL ADVERTISING (3)
Techniques used by corporations to develop institutional messages for public presentations. Prerequisites: MCOM 214 and MCOM 253.

MCOM 447 ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS (3)
Application of advertising principles and practices to the development of campaigns and the preparation of a plan book. Prerequisites: MCOM 323, MCOM 325, and MCOM 390; majors only.

MCOM 451 PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS (3)
Fundraising and development, implementing and evaluating public relations campaigns for nonprofit organizations. Prerequisite: MCOM 357.

MCOM 453 STRATEGIC PUBLIC RELATIONS & INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGNS. (3)
Research, planning, implementing and evaluating programs and campaigns. Prerequisites: MCOM 357 and MCOM 390; majors only.

MCOM 457 PHOTOJOURNALISM II (3)
Color photography for the mass media including electronic imaging. Prerequisite: MCOM 391.

MCOM 458 MAGAZINE PUBLISHING (3)
Examination of the principles, practices, problems and trends in magazine publishing through tracing the process of a magazine from copy to bindery. Steps in periodical production stressing emphasis on layout factors. Intensive analysis of magazine markets and case studies of magazine publishing problems. Prerequisites: MCOM 341 and MCOM 358; majors only.

MCOM 459 PROFESSIONAL ISSUES IN STRATEGIC PUBLIC RELATIONS AND INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS (3)
Technical, managerial, legal, ethical and accreditation issues and concerns involved in the practice of public relations and integrated communications. Prerequisite: COMM419 or MCOM453 or MCOM447.

MCOM 460 INTERNSHIP IN ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS (1-3)
Students work as interns with a professional in the field of advertising or public relations. Graded S/U. Students are allowed to repeat internships. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 units, but only 6 units may be counted toward the major. Prerequisites: junior/senior standing; cumulative GPA of 2.75 and 3.00 in the major; completion of appropriate courses determined by the department.

MCOM 461 INTERNSHIP IN JOURNALISM AND NEW MEDIA (1-3)
With approval from the department and under faculty supervision, students work as interns with a professional in the field of journalism. Graded S/U. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 units, but only 6 units will apply to the major. Prerequisites: junior/senior standing; cumulative GPA of 2.75 and 3.00 in the major; completion of appropriate courses determined by the department; majors only.

MCOM 477 SPECIAL TOPICS IN JOURNALISM (3)
In-depth study of a selected area within journalism, dependent upon faculty and student interest. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: junior/senior standing or consent of instructor.

MCOM 478 SPECIAL TOPICS IN ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS (3)
In-depth study of a selected area within advertising and public relations, dependent upon faculty and student interest. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: junior/senior standing or consent of instructor.

MCOM 479 SPECIAL TOPICS IN MASS COMMUNICATION (3)
In-depth study of a selected area dependent upon faculty and student interest. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: junior/senior standing or consent of instructor.

MCOM 481 BROADCAST JOURNALISM II (3)
Advanced news and feature writing, interviewing, reporting, and editing for broadcast and new media. Prerequisites: MCOM 381 or EMF 373 and consent of instructor. Lab/Class fee will be assessed.

MCOM 496 INDEPENDENT STUDY IN MASS COMMUNICATION (1-3)
Directed study through readings, projects, papers, or seminars. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units.

MCOM 499 HONORS THESIS IN MASS COMMUNICATION (3)
Intensive research paper or media production project in the areas of newspaper/ magazine journalism, photojournalism, public relations, advertising, or new media as chosen by the student in consultation with the thesis adviser. Restricted to candidates for Departmental Honors in Mass Communication. Prerequisites: 3.50 GPA in major, 3.20 GPA overall; junior/senior standing.