

MASTER OF ARTS IN THE FIELD OF MEDIA AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

The master's program in media and strategic communication is geared toward aspiring media and political communication experts. The program blends analytical and applied skills, giving students a grounding in the function and influence of the media. The most comprehensive strategic communication program in the heart of Washington, DC, this graduate program prepares students to achieve advocacy goals in today's fast-paced media environment.

Students learn to design and implement campaigns, develop messaging to target audiences, support campaigns, and encourage action. They perform analytics and data analysis and learn how to apply insights from media effects, public opinion and persuasion. They also gain the knowledge to advance their careers in fields of public and nonprofit management, government media relations, academia, or even public relations and communications consulting.

The flexible curriculum allows students to focus their studies on sustainability, science, public health, peacebuilding, or other public affairs issues.

Visit the program website (<https://smpa.gwu.edu/media-strategic-communication/>) for additional information.

ADMISSIONS

Admission deadlines: Fall – April 1 (February 1 for applicants applying for assistantships/fellowships);

Spring – October 1

Applications completed after these dates will be considered on a space-available basis only.

Standardized test scores: The GRE general is not required. However, if you feel as though submitting scores for the GRE will strengthen your application, you are welcome to submit them.

International students: The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the PTE Academic is required of all applicants except those who hold a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree from a college or university in the United States or from an institution located in a country in which English is the official language, provided English was the language of instruction.

Minimum scores for the program are:

- Academic IELTS: an overall band score of 7.0 with no individual score below 6.; or

- TOEFL: 600 on paper-based or 100 on Internet-based; or

Recommendations: One (1) recommendation required; more than one recommendation preferred.

Prior academic records: Transcripts are required from all colleges and universities attended, whether or not credit was earned, the program was completed, or the credit appears as transfer credit on another transcript. Unofficial transcripts from all colleges and universities attended must be uploaded to your online application. Official transcripts are required only of applicants who are offered admission.

If transcripts are in a language other than English, English language translations must be provided. The English translation alone should be uploaded into your application.

Statement of purpose: In an essay of 250 – 500 words, state your purpose in undertaking graduate study in your chosen field. Include your academic objectives, research interests, and career plans. Also discuss your related qualifications, including collegiate, professional, and community activities, and any other substantial accomplishments not already mentioned on the application. If you are applying for an assistantship or fellowship, you should also describe any teaching experience you have had.

International applicants only: Please review International Applicant Information (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/international-graduate-applicants> (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/international-graduate-applicants/>)) carefully for details on required documents, earlier deadlines for applicants requiring an I-20 or DS-2019 from GW, and English language requirements.

Supporting documents not submitted online should be mailed to:

Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Office of Graduate Studies
The George Washington University
801 22nd Street NW, Phillips Hall 107
Washington DC 20052

For additional information about the admissions process visit the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Frequently Asked Questions (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-admissions-faq/>) page.

Contact:

askccas@gwu.edu
202-994-6210 (phone)

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday

REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled:

The general requirements stated under Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Programs (<http://bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/#regulationsgraduate>).

36 credits, including 15 credits in core courses, 3 credits in skills courses, 6 credits in capstone courses, and 12 credits in elective courses. In lieu of the 12 credits in elective courses, students can choose to complete a 12-credit focus area **in** climate and sustainability communication.

Code	Title	Credits
Required		
Core courses ¹		
SMPA 6202	Media Effects, Public Opinion, and Persuasion	
SMPA 6204	Strategic Political Communication	
SMPA 6208	Politics and Public Relations Fundamentals	
SMPA 6241	Research Design	
SMPA 6242	Analytics and Data Analysis for Strategic Communication	
Skills course		
SMPA 6201	Strategic Communications Skills (taken twice on different topics for a total of 3 credits) ²	
Capstone ³		
6 total credits taken as 3 credits in each of the last two semesters in the program. Students fulfill this requirement in one of the three options below, selected in consultation with the advisor.		
Research thesis		
SMPA 6999	Thesis Research (taken twice for a total of six credits)	
or		
Media project		
SMPA 6297	Media Capstone Project (taken twice for a total of six credits)	
or		
Strategic communication project. The courses for this option are taken in the order shown.		
SMPA 6220	Strategic Practicum	
SMPA 6298	Strategic Communication Capstone Project	
Electives		
12 credits in courses selected in consultation with the advisor.		

Optional focus area in climate and sustainability communication

In lieu of the 12 credits in elective courses normally required for the program (above) students can choose to complete a 12-credit focus area in climate and sustainability. Requirements for the focus area are as follows:

Required course

SMPA 6280	Science and Environmental Communication
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One course dealing with the science of climate and environmental change selected from the following:

GEOG 6218	Arctic Systems
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GEOG 6220	Seminar: Climatic Change ³
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PPPA 6101	Environmental Sciences I: Physical Sciences
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PPPA 6102	Environmental Sciences II: Life Sciences
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Two courses selected from the following or other courses approved by the director of graduate studies:

GEOG 6232	Migration and Development
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GEOG 6243	Seminar: Urban Geography
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GEOG 6244	Urban Sustainability
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IAFF 6151	Environmental Policy
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IAFF 6153	Science, Technology, and National Security
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PHIL 6281	Environmental Philosophy and Policy
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PPPA 6140	Introduction to Environmental Law
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PPPA 6066	U.S. Environmental Policy
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¹On the basis of academic or professional preparation, students can petition to waive any required course with substitution of another approved course.

²Students can take an additional 3 credits in SMPA 6201, to be counted as an elective.

³Students who select the strategic communication capstone option cannot count SMPA 6220 as an elective.

With the permission of the advisor, a limited number of upper-division undergraduate courses can be taken for graduate credit, provided additional work is required by the instructor.