



SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

The School of Communication

Graduate Handbook

2017-2018

San Diego State University: The School of Communication

Disclaimer: The *Graduate Handbook* represents the best available summary of policies and procedures for graduate studies in communication, as approved by the Graduate Committee. However, the *Graduate Bulletin* provides the University's official position on all issues related to graduate studies at SDSU. In any instance where this *Handbook* differs from the official policies of the University, as stated in the *Graduate Bulletin*, the *Handbook* is in error, unless prior arrangements have been officially established. In regard to policies specific to the School of Communication, the School reserves the right to alter and/or interpret policy described in this *Handbook* as circumstances dictate, and through due process of decision-making by the Graduate Committee, the Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the Director and faculty of the School of Communication. In the event of substantive changes, reasonable efforts will be made to inform students affected by said policy changes in a timely manner.

School of Communication: <http://communication.sdsu.edu>

SDSU: www.sdsu.edu

Graduate Division: <http://gra.sdsu.edu/research.php>

Compiled, Authored, Arranged by:

Dr. Kurt Lindemann, with Dr. Brian H. Spitzberg, Dr. Patricia Geist-Martin, Dr. Valerie Renegar, and graduate student assistants

WELCOME TO GRADUATE STUDIES IN COMMUNICATION

Welcome New Graduate Students!

We are delighted that you have selected San Diego State University for your master's degree in Communication. We look forward to working with you, and know that you will have a challenging and enriching experience in our program.

Graduate school is an exciting adventure; I know that you will find your time here both personally and professionally rewarding. Our faculty and staff work very hard to create an environment that will allow you to thrive. There is no question, however, that you will ultimately take from our program what you put in to it. To that end, I encourage you to take advantage of all of the rich resources around you, including your coursework, collaborative relationships with your faculty and peers, colloquia presentations, campus events, professional conferences, and SoCal social events. Your time here will inevitably seem to fly by, and I want for you all to leave with a wealth of memories and experiences.

The *Graduate Handbook* is designed as a reference guide for your two-year program. The purpose of this *Graduate Handbook* is to provide answers to many of the questions you may have about graduate studies in communication at SDSU. For all **official** statements of University policies and practices, see the SDSU *Bulletin of the Graduate Division* (hereafter referred to as the *Graduate Bulletin*): <http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/catalog/bulletin/>. Although we make every effort to ensure you receive the most up-to-date information possible, please be sure you're looking at the Graduate Bulletin for your year of admission.

This handbook provides many of the answers that you will need, but you are in no way limited to this. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need guidance. Similarly, you will find the faculty willing to talk or help in almost any regard, and the senior graduate students can be a good resource as well. It is important for you to have all of the information you need in order to map out your time here. If there is something that I can help with, please come and see me.

Best wishes for an outstanding new year. Welcome!

Kurt Lindemann

Kurt Lindemann, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies
School of Communication
San Diego State University
comm.ma@mail.sdsu.edu

Graduate Calendar and Deadlines

See the *Graduate Bulletin* for a full list of important dates and deadlines. As dates may change, please check all thesis deadlines at <http://www.montezumapublishing.com/thesis1/ThesisDeadlines.aspx>. Check graduation application deadlines at http://aztecgrad.sdsu.edu/gra/files/08258-Graduation_Deadlines_S18Su17F17_v2.pdf

Fall Semester 2017

Tues, Aug 22, 2017	First day of Fall semester
Mon, Aug 28, 2017	First day of classes
Mon, September 4, 2017	Labor Day: Faculty/Staff holiday (Campus closed)
Mon, Sept 11, 2017	Last day to apply for December 2017 graduation Schedule adjustment deadline (add, drop, withdraw from university)
Fri, Sept 15, 2017	DUE: Comprehensive Exam Request Form OR Thesis Chair Designation form to the Director of Graduate Studies
Tues, Sept 19, 2017	1 st Required Comp Exam Colloquium 12:30-2:00, COM 209
Tues, Oct 10, 2017	2 nd Required Comp Exam Colloquium 12:30-2:00, COM 209
Fri, Oct 27, 2017	Last day for submitted theses to Division of Graduate Affairs/ Aztec Shops Montezuma Publishing for thesis review to ensure graduation in December 2017.
Friday, Nov 3, 2017	First Draft of 15 source Reading List for Take Home Exam due to Chair of Comprehensive Exam Committee by 4:00 pm
Tues, Nov 7, 2017	3 rd Required Comp Exam Colloquium 12:30-2:00, COM 209
Friday, Dec 2, 2017	Final Draft of 15 source Reading List for Take Home Exam due to Chair of Comprehensive Exam Committee by 4:00 pm
Oct 30, 2017-Dec 29, 2017	Theses may be submitted to the Division of Graduate Affairs/Aztec Shops Montezuma Publishing on an at-risk basis. However, December 2017 graduation is contingent upon completion of final processing by noon, December 18, 2017 . Students missing this deadline will be required to reapply for graduation for the term in which they expect to graduate.
Wed, November 10, 2017	Veterans Day Observed Faculty/Staff Holiday (Campus closed)
Wed, November 23, 2017	No Classes (Campus open)
Thu, Nov 24-25, 2017	Thanksgiving Break: Faculty/Staff Holiday (Campus closed)
Fri, Dec 1, 2017 4:00 p.m.	For Spring 2018 graduation. DUE to School of Communication: Thesis proposals (10 pages or more) and abstracts with cover sheet signed by all three members of the thesis committee (submit to Bessie who will then post them on the Bb site for faculty review).

BEFORE this date students MUST submit their full proposal to all committee members, arrange and hold a thesis proposal meeting, pick up the Thesis Committee form from Graduate Division, and submit the signed form to Graduate Division after the thesis proposal meeting.

Thurs, Dec 14, 2017	Last day of classes
Fri, Dec 15 – 21, 2017	Final Examinations
Mon, Dec 18, 2017, NOON	For December 2017 graduates , thesis must be reviewed by this date to avoid reapplying for graduation
Mon, Dec 25 – 28, 2017	Winter Break (Campus closed)
Fri, Dec 29, 2017, 11pm	Last day of Fall semester, grades due from instructors For December 2017 graduates , last day for submitting thesis for review without enrolling in 799B
Mon, Jan 1, 2018	New Year's Day (campus closed)

Spring Semester 2018

Mon, January 15, 2018	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Campus closed)
Tues, January 16, 2018	First day of Spring semester
Wed, January 17, 2018	First day of classes
Fri, January 19, 2018	IN-CLASS Comprehensive Exams, 9-12
Fri, January 26, 2018	TAKE-HOME Comprehensive Exam Essay Due to Committee, by 4:00 p.m. (also should be uploaded to turnitin via the MA BB site)
Tue, January 30, 2018	Last day to apply for May 2018 graduation
Fri, February 5-9, 2018	Outcome of Comprehensive Exams Communicated to Candidate
February 12-March 9, 2018	Oral Defense for Comprehensive Exams
Fri, March 16, 2018	Re-Take In-Class Comprehensive Exams
Fri, March 23, 2018	Re-Take Take-Home Comprehensive Exam Essay Due
March 23, 2018	No Risk Deadline: Final day for submitting theses to the Division of Graduate Affairs/Aztec Shops Montezuma Publishing for thesis review to have <i>best likelihood</i> for graduation in May 2017
March 26–March 30, 2018	Spring Break
Fri, March 30, 2018	Cesar Chavez Day (Campus closed)
Fri, April 6, 2018	Outcome of Comprehensive Exam Re-Take Communicated
April 7– May 1, 2018	Oral Defense for Comprehensive Exams
March 26– May 17, 2018	Theses may be submitted to the Division of Graduate Affairs/Aztec Shops Montezuma Publishing after this date on an <i>at-risk basis</i> . However, May 2017 graduation is contingent upon completion of final processing by noon, May 17 . Students missing this deadline will be required to reapply for graduation for the term in which they expect to graduate
Friday, May 4, 2018	4:00 p.m. For Fall 2018 (December 2018) graduation. DUE to Director of Graduate Studies: Thesis proposals (10 pages or more) and abstracts with cover sheet signed by all three members of the thesis committee (also submit to Bessie who will then post them on the Bb site for faculty review).

Thu, May 3, 2018 Last day of classes

Thu, May 3, 2018 Last day for reporting results on comprehensive examinations to the Division of Graduate Affairs by department or college.

Fri, May 4-10, 2018 Final Examinations (beginning at 4pm on Fri May 9)

Thu, May 11-13, 2018 Commencement – San Diego Campus

Wed, May 17, 2018, NOON Final day for depositing approved theses at Aztec Shops Montezuma Publishing to *avoid* enrolling for Summer 799B hours (students submitting theses at this time will have to re-apply for graduation and pay graduation fees again)

See:
<http://www.montezumapublishing.com/thesis1/ThesisDeadlines.aspx> for more information on deadlines

Wed, May 17, 2018, 11pm Last day of spring semester, grades due from instructors

ABOUT THE SDSU SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts
237 Communication Bldg.
San Diego State University
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182-4560
Telephone: (619) 594-0716; Fax: (619) 594-0704
School URL: <http://communication.sdsu.edu/>
E-mail: socdesk@mail.sdsu.edu

About the School

The School of Communication is an academic unit within the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts. The School of Communication has more than 700 undergraduate majors, and about 50-60 graduate students. The distinguished faculty includes approximately 10 full-time professors. The university is the flagship of the 22 campuses in the California State University system, the largest higher education system in the country. Recently, US News and World report named SDSU as the top small research program in the nation. Additionally, the SDSU School of Communication is consistently ranked as one of the top ten MA programs in North America by Eduniversal, an independent Masters ranking institution: <http://www.best-masters.com/ranking-master-in-usa/master-communications.html>.

Mission Statement

The School of Communication's mission is to advance the theory and understanding of human communication. This mission includes the following objectives: to improve the practice of human communication; to study and teach the art, science, and practice of communication; and to provide an educational environment encouraging excellence, leadership, and creativity in communication scholarship and professional practice. The School is dedicated to teaching, research, and development of integrated, interactive, international, and intercultural communication for the 21st century. The Graduate program in communication has been ranked in the top five M.A. programs in the United States.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION: SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY:
THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION i**

Welcome to the Graduate Studies in Communication
Graduate Calendar and Deadlines
About the School
Mission Statement
Table of Contents
Chapter Breakdown

CHAPTER 1: GETTING STARTED AND CREATING A PROGRAM OF STUDY 9

Meet with your Temporary Advisor
Meet with the Director of Graduate Studies
Submit an official Program of Study
Selecting Courses
Pre-Registration
Blackboard
Transfer Coursework
Retaking Courses
Master's Thesis or Comprehensive Examination
Changes in Program of Study

CHAPTER 2: COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS14

The Comprehensive Examination
Eligibility
Exam Timeline
Comprehensive Exam Committee
Procedures Prior to Comprehensive Exam
Content of Comprehensive Exam
Process of Taking the Comprehensive Exam
Comprehensive Examination Oral Defense
Passing or Failing the Exam

CHAPTER 3: THESIS 19

Masters Thesis
Approximate Thesis Timeline
Forming a Thesis Committee
Finalizing Thesis Proposal
Arranging a Thesis Proposal Meeting
Submitting Thesis Proposal to The School Of Communication
Submitting a Proposal to IRB
Submitting Thesis Committee Form to Graduate Division
Registering For Comm 799A (Thesis)
Writing a Thesis and Working With a Committee
Formatting Thesis
Thesis Oral Defense
Thirty-Day-To-Completion Deadline
Final Review and Duplication
Potential Intellectual Property Rights Criteria

CHAPTER 4: FILE AN APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION 28
File an Application for Graduation

APPENDICES.....30

- Faculty School of Communication M.A. Degree Program
- School of Communication MA Degree Program
- Tentative Course Schedule for the School of Communication 2013-2014
- Plagiarism
- Academic Dishonest Policy of the School of Communication
- GPA Standards
- Grading and Advanced Scholarship
- General Policy Appeals
- Communication Graduate Student Organization
- Petition for Adjustment of Academic Requirements
- SDSU Study Abroad Academic Approval Form
- Instructions to Petitioners to Retake Core (COMM 601)
- Comprehensive Exam Request Form
- School of Communication MA Defense Evaluation Form
- Sample Comprehensive Exam Cover Sheet
- Comprehensive Exam Study Tips
- Thesis Contract between Thesis Chair and Thesis Candidate
- Sample Thesis Proposal Cover Page Format
- Sample Invitation to Thesis Defense
- Pre-Screening Intake Form: SDSU Thesis Review Service
- Thesis Processing at Montezuma Publishing
- Get Involved with Professional Communication Organizations
- Professional Organizations and Conferences
- Resources for Career Search
- Process for Requesting Letter of Recommendation



Getting Started and Creating a Program of Study

GETTING STARTED

Success as a graduate student is a result of hard work, good research, and organization. It is important to utilize the resources available to you in order to progress through the program at the rate you choose. Most students complete the program in 4 or 5 semesters (usually two academic years and the summer between them). If this is your aim, it is important to begin planning with that goal in mind.

Meet with your Temporary Advisor

At the beginning of the semester, each new student was assigned a Temporary Advisor. Please take the time to meet with this faculty member in the first few weeks of the semester to get acquainted and discuss your plans. Your temporary advisor can answer questions, suggest avenues of research, recommend courses, or help steer students to an appropriate advisor for the comprehensive exam or thesis.

Meet with the Director of Graduate Studies

While the Director of Graduate Studies is always available to answer questions, all students must schedule a meeting in the second semester in order to file an Official Program of Study (PoS). The PoS is a list of all the classes that a student has completed and intends to complete in order to satisfy the requirements for the MA. There is a worksheet available in the Appendix and on Blackboard to help you create a program.

Submit an Official Program of Study

The Program of Study outlines a plan of action by listing all the courses that make up your program of study. The PoS must be filed with the Graduate Division through the Director of Graduate Studies in the School of Communication upon completion of 12-15 units, which is why we require all students to submit this in their second semester. The Director of Graduate Studies can help you develop and complete your study plan and to submit your Program of Study.

Selecting Courses

The best advice for choosing courses (see appendix for extensive list) is to select courses:

- (a) in subject matters that interest you or that you are curious about
- (b) that expand your expertise
- (c) that give you exposure to a variety of professors.

Note: COM 601 is designed to introduce you to professors, theories, topic areas, and methodologies. While some students come into the program with focused interests, it is worthwhile to push beyond a comfort zone, to explore theories and methods that are different from what you have become expert in.

Contrary to popular belief, there is no one course or set of courses that prepare you best for teaching, business, or a Ph.D. program. The best preparation for your career after graduate school is to utilize your two years in the MA program to get as much as you can out of coursework, research projects, teaching, colloquium, conference presentations, and socialization through the Graduate Student Organization (see appendix) and getting to know other graduate students and faculty.

According to the Graduate Bulletin, 27 of your 30 units must be 600-level or higher. You are allowed 1 500-level course and may petition the School of Communication Graduate Director for an additional 500-level course. Approval of this additional course is not guaranteed.

Pre-Registration

Pre-registration is not optional. The pre-registration forms and information will be distributed through email. Students will choose a slate of classes and then be assigned slots based on demand and seats available with an eye toward creating a balance in our courses.

Blackboard

All pertinent graduate program information is posted to the Comm MA Blackboard site, and this is also the means by which information is emailed to the graduate students. As such, it is important to have a current email address on blackboard in order to receive these notifications. Blackboard also provides the contact information for other graduate students and faculty members and can be a useful tool for communicating within the department. The blackboard link is as follows: <https://blackboard.sdsu.edu>

Transfer Coursework

Graduate students are allowed up to 6 units of transfer work. For the graduate coursework to transfer, this work must unambiguously constitute “graduate level” work at accredited institutions, it must be relevant to the degree the student is seeking through the School of Communication, and the student must have achieved at least a B or higher in this coursework. Your adviser will make recommendations and then may recommend acceptance of between 0-9 units of graduate credit to the Graduate Division, which is the final arbiter of such transfer (see appendix transfer details).

School of Communication Comm 601 Course Policies

- Students must enroll in Communication 601 during their first semester.
- Students admitted to the program need a grade of “B” or higher in COMM 601 to continue in the program.
- Students who obtain less than a “B” average in COMM 601 may only continue their studies in the School of Communication upon approval of a petition (Contact graduate advisor in order to file a petition to continue on the program). Students will be allowed to retake Comm 601 one time.

Minimum Grade Point Average

Students must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 in order to be considered in good standing in the graduate program. A GPA of 2.85 or below will put the student on academic probation with the university. After that point, the student must earn a 3.0 in the subsequent semester. If this requirement is met, the student will have an additional semester to raise their overall GPA to a 3.0.

Retaking Courses

In the event that a student fails a graduate course, especially in regard to Comm 601 and tools courses, a student may consider re-taking a course. Courses can be “retaken” only with consent of the Director of Graduate Studies. A form (see appendix) authorizing the student to re-take a course will be expected of any professor teaching a student for a second offering of a course for a given student.

Master's Thesis or Comprehensive Examination

Completing your program of study requires making the decision about completing a comprehensive exam or a thesis. While this decision can be changed, you must make a tentative decision about writing a master's thesis or taking the comprehensive exam at the time that you file the Program of Study. If you elect to write a master's thesis, the thesis (COMM 799A) is specified as one of the 10 courses in your Program of Study; otherwise students choosing to complete the comprehensive exam will choose to 10 graduate-level courses. Both options are discussed in the pages to follow in the "Master's Thesis" and "Comprehensive Exam" sections.

Changes in Program of Study

If you make any changes in the Program of Study after the Director of Graduate Studies has submitted it online then you:

- (a) fill out the form Petition for Adjustment of Academic Requirements (see appendix) or go to http://newscenter.sdsu.edu/gra/images/petition_for_adjust_of_acad_require.pdf
- (b) submit the form to the Director of Graduate Studies (along with a copy of your program of study) for review and signature
- (c) submit the form to the Graduate Division.

It is important that your Program of Study be correct every semester. This is especially important for those students who serve as GTAs since the graduate division will not approve your contract if you are not registered for the courses listed on your PoS at the time that they review your contract.

Degree Time Limitations and Leave of Absence Policy

All requirements for advanced certificates and master's degrees coursework must be completed within six consecutive calendar years after initial registration. Time spent on leave of absence is

counted toward the degree time limit. Students who do not graduate by this deadline will be subject to administrative disqualification by the graduate dean. Leave of absences must be applied for each semester and cannot entail more than 4 consecutive or non-consecutive semesters without a plan of completion approved by the School of Communication Graduate Director and approval from the graduate dean.

With the approval of the program or department graduate adviser, a student in the sixth academic year of graduate study may appeal to the graduate dean for a one-year time limit extension. Students validating by examination will be required to specify a date-certain by which all requirements for the degree will be completed. Only in exceptional circumstances will this time limit exceed one calendar year from the date of validation. A course or program may be validated by examination only once.

Students who exceed the time limit and wish to continue their studies must formally apply for new admission. Programs readmitting students who have been disqualified for exceeding the time limit should consult with the student at the time of readmission to determine whether credits previously earned will meet current degree requirements. Disqualified and readmitted students will be held to current Graduate Bulletin requirements and will need approval from their program adviser to use expired courses. Expired courses from an outside university cannot be used toward the fulfillment of degree requirement



Comprehensive Exams

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

Revised 6-11/2015

Choosing the Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam is designed as an opportunity to review the knowledge students have gained throughout their MA coursework and to demonstrate their comprehension of this material through a written and oral examination. The Comprehensive Exam (Plan B) is a written and oral examination covering material common to all Master's degree candidates and material specific to the courses the candidate personally took in his or her *Official Program*. Students choose the comprehensive exam option because they value the opportunity to review what they have learned and to make connections across the seminars they have completed. In this way, students gain a sense of the whole of what they have learned, apply that knowledge to a particular area of interest, and reveal to the faculty that they have demonstrate competency in their knowledge of Communication in the written and oral portions of the comprehensive exam.

Policy and Procedures

Students may opt to take a comprehensive exam, along with 30 units of coursework on their Program of Study, in order to fulfill the requirements of graduation. The exam is offered every spring.

Students who elect to take comprehensive exams must file the Comprehensive Exam Request Form with the Graduate Director in the fall semester (no later the **third Friday in September**) in order to take the exam in the spring (see Graduate Calendar located at the beginning of this document). Before this form can be filed, students shall have secured the agreement of a faculty member to serve as the Chair of the student's Comprehensive Exam Committee. The Graduate Director, in consultation with the Director of the School of Communication, and in light of the student's Program of Study, will select two other faculty members to round out the Comprehensive Exam committee for each student. Students will be informed about the constitution of their committee by **the second week of October**.

The comprehensive exam will occur in three parts, as described in the next section. In order to pass the comprehensive exam, a student will be expected to pass each of these three parts to the satisfaction of the committee. The graduate program plagiarism policy will be in effect for this exam.

PART ONE: IN CLASS SHORT-ESSAY EXAM

Preparation: By September 1, the pool of comprehensive exam questions will be posted on Blackboard. These questions will be broad-based questions applicable to all students of communication regardless of their particular program of study.

Students will ask a faculty member to serve as the chair of their Comprehensive Examination Committee and together fill out the Comprehensive Exam Request Form. By **the third Monday in September**, the Form must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies.

From September until January, students will use this list of questions as a guide for their preparation for the three hour in-house comprehensive exam to be given on the **third Friday in January** 9:00-12:00 in COM 209.

Before the day of the exam, students will load Respondus Lock Down Browser on their computers: <http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=469641291>

The Day of the Exam: On the day of the exam, students will report to the designated classroom 30 minutes early to set up their personal laptops. Students will be asked to write answers to three of the comprehensive exam questions selected by the comps chair. These will be drawn from the pool of questions previously posted on blackboard, but students will not know which three questions have been selected for each of them until the time of the exam. The written exam does NOT allow for the use of notes or any other supplementary material.

PART TWO: TAKE-HOME ESSAY EXAM

Focus: The Take-Home portion of the comprehensive exam offers students the opportunity to demonstrate their critical thinking skills in a focused area of expertise. Students are asked to gather information within a subject area represented in their 15 source reading list and use it to construct a thoughtful, well-conceived analysis, critique, rationale, and conceptualization that applies this knowledge toward thoughtful extensions for future theorizing/ research AND/OR toward a communication-based perspective on a practical, applied, problem in the world

Preparation: Preparation for the take-home exam will begin in September. In consultation with their committee Chair, students will develop an area of communication they feel they have mastered and work toward creating a reading list of no more than 15 sources that reasonably reflect the depth and breadth of the scholarship associated with that area of communication. The purpose of this reading list is to provide a foundational domain of scholarly literature considered essential to comment upon that topic, and the topics considered important to grounding that topic in its intellectual context(s).

By **the first Friday in November** students must submit the READING LIST to their chair for approval. The reading list must be typed in APA style. The chairperson may add or delete sources from the list, and inform the student of these changes. By **the first Friday in December** the reading list must be finalized with the chairperson of the comps committee.

The Day of the Exam: At the conclusion of Part One: In-class Short Essay Exam, the student will be given a take-home question created by the comps chair based on the reading list. Students will then have ONE WEEK to complete an essay of 6-7 double-spaced 12-point Times

Roman font, standard APA-formatted manuscript pages (not including reference pages). The take-home portion will be due the Friday after the exam was given, in hard copy, to the thesis committee mailboxes no later than 4:00 pm. The essay must also be submitted to Turnitin.com AND e-mailed to all three committee members AND the Director of Graduate Studies by this deadline to ensure academic integrity. If any student is found to have shared their take home essay with another person or gained feedback (even editing) from another person, they will automatically fail the exam and thus not be eligible to complete the requirements for a master's degree.

The committee will read and review the in-class and take-home exam and determine if the written portion of the exam demonstrates sufficient competency to warrant an oral examination. If so, the student will move forward as described below to set up the oral defense. If not, the student will have the opportunity to retake the written exam in March.

PART THREE: ORAL DEFENSE

Once students gain approval from the chair of their committee to move forward with the oral defense, they should schedule a 60-90 minute block of time for the oral defense—at a time that is convenient for the Comprehensive Exam Committee. Faculty members are extremely busy, and we recommend scheduling this meeting as soon as you are made aware of the composition of your committee (i.e., in October), a date that could be canceled. Students are encouraged to use Doodle, an on-line scheduling tool, to determine the best meeting time: <http://doodle.com/>. The defense must take place at least three weeks after the submission of the essay portion. Students should endeavor to be as flexible as possible when scheduling this meeting. Once a time has been decided upon, students must schedule a room for the defense by contacting the Administrative Coordinator in The School of Communication.

After completing Part 1 and 2 of the comprehensive exam, students should review their answers and consider the questions that their committee could ask. During the oral defense, members of the committee may ask questions about the students' answers in Part 1, Part 2, or other questions of general knowledge and mastery of the material presented in the student's Program of Study. Students may discuss what to expect generally during this meeting with the chair of their committee, but students should not contact committee members to determine what they will specifically be asked in the defense

Demeanor and conduct: The oral exam is an examination, and competency must be demonstrated in all of its facets to the exacting standards of intellect, knowledge, and expression expected of the written exam. As such, it should not be treated as a social affair, students are not to bring food or drink, and students should take care to remind and confirm with their committee the time and place of the defense. The oral exam will focus on defending the written exams, but in the process, any or all of the student's M.A. education will be eligible for examination in the context of defending the written exams. So, if questions about the written extend in their intellectual

content to aspects of the student's coursework, readings, assignments, or core disciplinary knowledge, the student will be held accountable for demonstrating competency in the oral defense of their written answers.

Passing or Failing the Exam

There are 4 possible decisions that the Comprehensive Exam Committee may make, based on combined written responses and the oral defense. The Committee signs a form specifying its decision for each candidate. The form is forwarded to the Graduate Division and Research office through the Director of Graduate Studies.

1. **Unconditional pass**—The candidate passed the exam without further need to demonstrate in writing mastery of content. An oral defense may be scheduled.
2. **Conditional pass**—The candidate demonstrates passing performance on EITHER the in-class OR the take-home portion of the written examination, while failing other part of exam. The candidate has the option to demonstrate mastery of the failed section in a Re-take of that portion of the Comprehensive Exam during the dates specified for the Re-take Comprehensive Exam. The student will answer DIFFERENT questions in the Re-take.
3. **Conditional fail**—The candidate did not demonstrate mastery of Program material, but the Committee thinks the candidate should be given another chance to perform the Re-Take Comprehensive Exam. The student will answer DIFFERENT questions in the Re-take.
4. **Unconditional fail**—The candidate did not demonstrate mastery of program material and the Committee does not see sufficient basis for another attempt.

Candidates who conditionally fail the written or oral Comprehensive Exam may not reconstitute a new committee for the purpose of retaking the Exam. A member or members of the original Comprehensive Exam Committee may be excused from the Committee and a new member or members added only with the advanced written permission of the Comprehensive Exam Committee member, the Committee chair, and the candidate's Director of Graduate Studies.

If the candidate passes the written, but fails the oral, on the first attempt, the candidate may be asked to rewrite either the in class or take home portions, according to the dates of the re-take examination schedule.

Upon successful passage of all areas of the Comprehensive Exam, the recommendation of the Committee is forwarded to the candidate's Director of Graduate Studies by the Comprehensive Examination Committee chair. In turn, the Director of Graduate Studies files a *Report of Final Examination* form with the Graduate Division and Research. As a candidate, you should check with your committee Chair and the School of Communication Director of Graduate Studies to confirm that this "Report" has been signed and submitted in a timely manner.



Thesis

The Master's Thesis

Another option for completing the requirements necessary graduation is the thesis.

The master's thesis is a multi-semester project of original research conducted by the master's candidate, under the supervision of a faculty thesis chair. The project is initiated by the student who collaborates with the thesis chair and then submits a thesis proposal to the faculty committee. After the thesis proposal is accepted and signed by three faculty members, the proposal is routed to School of Communication office and to the Director of Graduate Studies for review.

Approximate Thesis Timeline

By end of Semester Two

- Develop Abstract of Your Thesis Topic
- Form Thesis Committee

Semester Three

- Finalize Thesis Proposal
- Arrange a Thesis Proposal Meeting
- Submit Thesis Proposal to the School of Communication (Main Office)
- Submit Thesis Proposal Abstract and Cover Sheet (see appendix) to all faculty mailboxes
- Apply for Institutional Review Board proposal approval
- Submit Thesis Committee Form (see appendix) to Graduate Division
- Register for COMM 799 Thesis for following semester (add code is provided by the graduate division office)

Semester Four: Completing the Thesis

- Defending the Thesis
- Formatting the Thesis (refer to Graduate Division website)
- Submit thesis to Graduate Research Division for review
- Submit thesis for publishing

Forming a Thesis Committee

Your committee must consist of three SDSU Professors (tenure or tenure-track): two from the School of Communication and one outside of the department. The committee chair is usually the director of your research.

- Set up an appointment with the person you would like to be the chair of your committee. Prior to the appointment provide the faculty member a copy of your abstract. At the meeting, ask the person if he or she would be willing to chair your committee. This meeting gives the faculty members an opportunity to tell you if they are available to serve on your committee.

- Next, set up appointments with the professors whom you would like to serve as second and third members of your thesis. At the appointment, tell them who is serving as your chair, give them a copy of the 2-3 page description, then ask the following questions:

- (a) Would you be willing to serve as a second/third member of my thesis committee?
- (b) What suggestions do you have for readings and/or methods?
- (c) What type of role do you like to play in the thesis process (e.g., only see it when it is close to completion, one chapter at a time, etc.)?

Provide all committee members with a TENTATIVE timeline of your thesis research process, from the date you plan to complete your thesis proposal to the date you plan to defend your thesis.

Finalizing Thesis Proposal

Generally, the thesis proposal provides a description of the focus and rationale for your research/project, a review of related literature, procedures for conducting your research/project, and the format of the final thesis. Thesis proposals vary somewhat across graduate specializations and degree programs in the School of Communication.

However, each thesis proposal is a plan for the conduct of a specific research or creative project. The proposal serves as a "blueprint" or "understanding" between thesis committees and the graduate student regarding the scope of the proposed project. A detailed proposal reduces the chance of misunderstandings between chairs, committees, and graduate students. The proposal typically translates to a head start on chapters one and two.

The deadline for completing your proposal is the Friday, two weeks prior to the end of the semester. However, it is recommended that the proposal be completed early in the semester before midterm, for a number of compelling reasons:

As you work on drafts of your proposal and thesis, it is very important for you and your committee to keep track of each version of your work. We recommend that you develop a system for labeling each version on the cover page and for labeling the document electronically.

Proposal drafts:

Student Last name-First Initial.**Proposal**-SemesterYr-brief title-Version# (e.g., Spitzberg-B.Proposal-F07-Stalking & Threats-V12)

Thesis versions:

Student Last name-First Initial.**Thesis**.SemesterYr-brief title-Version# (e.g., Spitzberg-B.Thesis-F07-Stalking & Threats-V5)

Arranging Thesis Proposal Meeting

After selecting a thesis chair and committee, developing the thesis proposal, gaining a thesis committee form from graduate division, circulating the completed thesis proposal and thesis abstract to the thesis committee, the student is to set up a thesis proposal meeting (coordinating the date, time, and location- The use of Doodle's scheduling tool is recommended <http://doodle.com/>). While not mandatory, it is advisable for the candidate to provide a light snack for the committee members at this meeting.

There are a number of important objectives for this meeting:

1. Committee members meet each other for the first time
2. Committee members have an opportunity to dialogue with you and one another about your proposal and ideas for refining the thesis project
3. The committee establishes a timeline for completing the thesis
4. The committee articulates the roles each member of the thesis prefers to play (ranging from being involved at each step or seeing only the completed project)
5. The student asks any questions they may have about the thesis process
6. Members sign the thesis committee form required by the Graduate Division
7. Committee members sign the Thesis Cover sheet required by the School of Communication

Submitting Thesis Proposal to the School of Communication

Your complete thesis proposal, approved by your chair and members of your thesis committee, is then routed to each member of your committee and the School of Communication office usually by **4:00 FRIDAY, TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE END OF FINAL EXAMINATIONS.**

The cover sheet for the proposal should include the title, your name, and the names and signatures of your committee members. In addition, **by this same deadline**, you must complete and circulate to ALL School of Communication faculty, a one to two page abstract of your proposal, with a cover sheet identical to the one attached to the proposal (see appendix).

NOTE: Once the faculty has reviewed your abstract, you are eligible to enroll in thesis credit, and you have submitted the signed thesis committee form to the Graduate Division, you will be eligible to enroll in thesis hours (COMM 799A). **IF YOU FAIL TO MEET THE THESIS PROPOSAL DEADLINE YOU CANNOT ENROLL IN 799A IN THE FOLLOWING SEMESTER.** See the Graduate Schedule and Deadlines section of this Handbook for the exact date.

Submitting Proposal to The Institutional Review Board (IRB) (If applicable)

If you are going to study people (as opposed to content analysis, legal research, rhetorical research, or historical research), you need prior approval from the IRB. No study of human subjects on this campus may proceed without approval from this committee. Depending on the nature of your research you would fill out one of three types of protocols:

- (a) Exempt
- (b) Expedited, or
- (c) Full Committee Review.

Information about which type of form you need to fill out, the process of preparing a protocol for review, and copies of the forms can be gained by contacting the Institutional Review Board at SDSU. Information and forms also are available on the SDSU web page <http://gra.sdsu.edu/irb/>. Ask your thesis committee chair to assist you in considering the necessity and/or procedures for human subjects approval.

Submitting Thesis Committee Form to the Graduate Division

Obtain a Thesis Committee Form from Graduate Research Division. Complete the form, including the names of the persons who have agreed to serve on your thesis committee. Then ask each member of your committee to sign the form (this will already be accomplished at the Thesis proposal meeting). Take the form to the Director of Graduate Studies to sign and then submit it to the Graduate Division. This form can be submitted only after your program of study has been filed. IRB will contact the Graduate Research Division for you. Once this happens, you will be able to call in and receive a code to register for COMM 799A.

Late add of 799A Thesis

Although the deadline for enrolling in COMM 799A is the same as it is for any other class (i.e., the last day to add classes), there is a way to add the class after the add deadline and up to three weeks before the end of the semester by submitting a Late Change of Program card. **HOWEVER**, you may only add late as long as you are already enrolled in another class. Please contact the Graduate Division for help in this regard

Writing Thesis and Working with Committee

1. Visit the members of your committee periodically and report on your progress. This suggestion serves several functions. Frequent consultation serves to recharge your creative batteries and helps you finish your thesis more quickly.
2. Provide each member of the committee with his or her own copy of the next-to-last draft of your thesis **AT LEAST ONE-WEEK PRIOR TO THE DEFENSE DATE**. Most faculty members resent being asked to a thesis defense when they have not seen it until a few days before the defense or if it is presented to them as a "finished product."

3. Find resolutions to differences of opinions. You do not have to accept all suggestions about minor changes; but you should listen carefully to major objections.

Formatting the Thesis

The master's thesis is a formal document that is catalogued and saved in the University library for study by other scholars of communication for years to come. Therefore, the form and style of the thesis is quite exacting. To aid you in writing your thesis, Montezuma Publishing provides guidelines for thesis formatting: <http://www.montezumapublishing.com/thesis1/Formatting.aspx>.

Thesis Oral Defense

- It is a good idea to contact the committee members the day before to remind them of the time and place of the meeting, and perhaps to re-confirm with Bessie that the room is properly reserved.
- It is a good idea to make sure your committee members have both a hard copy and an e-copy of your thesis.
- You must bring a perfectly printed and proportioned, mistake-free, title/signature page to the defense.
- It is fairly common for students to bring some snacks/drinks.
- You may invite friends or family, but if they attend, they will be asked to leave with you both times you are asked out of the room.
- You may bring whatever materials you might need as support.
- The Chair may ask that you provide a 5 to 10 minute formal presentation. This should be a planned and practiced presentation. Remember, the committee has just read your thesis—the purpose of this presentation is to coherently summarize the project, from its inception to its findings and implications—succinct, persuasive, and polished. Many students even prepare a Powerpoint for the presentation. If you do, make sure you get to the room ahead of time to make sure the projector is working.
- Some questions are fairly common, including: (a) What would you do differently, in retrospect? (b) What do you intend to do next (in regard to this topic, and/or in regard to your career)? (c) What did you learn (about yourself, about science, etc.) from doing this study?
- You or your Chair may take notes of what specifically will need to be addressed.
- You will be invited back into the room and given the decision of the committee, which typically takes one of the following forms:
 - (a) Passed/Approved as is (rare)
 - (b) Passed by the outside/second members, conditional upon the Chair's approval of recommended revisions, which may be (i) major, or (ii) minor (common)
 - (c) Conditional pass/approval, in which revisions must be reviewed by one or more committee members prior to signature (rare), or
 - (d) Fail (extremely rare).
- The Chair will typically spend some time after the rest of the committee departs to review the changes needed, and to schedule appointments should new analyses need to be run. The Chair will typically only sign after reviewing the subsequent revisions to assure they

- have been carried out satisfactorily.
- The week following defense should be devoted to finishing up the thesis.

Thirty-Day-to-Completion Deadline

After initial review by the thesis reviewer, students have 30 days in which to complete the process, i.e., make any necessary revisions, obtain final approval from the thesis reviewer, submit the thesis to Montezuma Publishing, and pay the fees for the required library material. Failure to do so will result in loss of priority status for review of revisions (revisions are usually reviewed immediately or within 2 working days). Loss of this priority status could result in a delay of 60 days or more. If the delay means that the review process is not completed until the following semester, graduation will be delayed and the student will have to reapply for graduation. In extreme cases, where a student repeatedly fails to complete the process, the Graduate Dean may request that the original faculty thesis committee review the thesis for currency. In such cases, the student will be required to re-enroll in Thesis 799B as well as to reapply for graduation. For serious and compelling reasons, an extension of the 30-day deadline may be requested by petition to the Graduate Dean.

Final Review and Duplication

- Once your thesis has been revised and all committee members have signed the signature page, submit your thesis to the Graduate Division and Research office.
- With the approval of the Graduate Division, you submit the thesis to the Thesis Review Service, which examines the final thesis for form and style. The deadline for avoiding "At Risk" status is specified in the *Graduate Bulletin* each year. After the "At Risk" deadline, there is no guarantee that the Thesis Review Service will be able to process your thesis in time for official degree conferral during that semester.
- Based on feedback from Thesis Review, make any necessary changes and resubmit to thesis review.
- Once Thesis Review has approved your thesis, submit your thesis to Aztec Shops for duplication. Copies of the thesis are made for you, the University library, your thesis chair, thesis committee members, and the School of Communication. Check with Aztec Shops Copy Center for delivery of the thesis to you. You can expect duplicating and binding to take a minimum of several months.

Guidelines for Review and Duplication of the Thesis

Once your thesis has been revised and all committee members have signed the signature page, submit your thesis to Montezuma Publishing. They examine the final thesis for form and style. Based on feedback from Thesis Review, you must make any necessary changes, and then submit your thesis to Aztec Shops for duplication within 30 days of receipt of feedback.

See Montezuma Publishing for the most current thesis format information:
<http://www.montezumapublishing.com/thesis1/ThesisandDissertation.aspx>

Potential Intellectual Property Rights Criteria

There are many functions served by a thesis, including instruction of a student and his/her mentors, enhancement of one's expertise in a given area of knowledge, improving one's chances of being accepted into a Ph.D. program or hired, and of course, advancement of knowledge. This latter function is best served when the thesis is shared with larger audiences, which in turn involves presentation and publication. Students who subsequently present, publish or distribute their works bring prestige to their university, their instructors, and themselves. All students are urged to consider submitting their work to conference and publication. In anticipation of this possibility:

1. A form you must complete prior to conducting your thesis, to be turned into the Graduate Division and signed by your Thesis Committee Chair, requires you to discuss ownership and plans for the use of your data/thesis after its completion. The intent of this form is for you and your Chair to discuss all of the reasonable plans, responsibilities, and attribution issues that may arise concerning your thesis. This might include copyrights, publication, and distribution plans, and even profit ventures developing out of your thesis work. Understandings arising from such discussions should be noted explicitly in writing on the form, which can subsequently be interpreted as a contract.
2. There are many levels of attributions for intellectual credit. A faculty member can be listed as lead author, co-author, noted or acknowledged as an important contributor, consultant, or instructor. The level at which an author or co-author is credited may have consequences for that person's prestige, promotion, tenure, and share in profits, awards, rewards, and/or recognition. However, no person should receive credit for work she or he did not earn.
3. In general, all things being equal, committee members and at least the thesis Chair should expect involvement in and attribution as co-author of subsequent versions of the thesis under any of the following conditions. Issues such as the order of authorship can be determined by the following conditions. These issues are illustrative rather than definitive or comprehensive. The basic rationale is that the more criteria a professor meets, the more likely it is she or he should be attributed with co-authorship, co-ownership, and/or co-credit for the products of the thesis.
 - a. When the faculty member is involved in at least major rewrites or reorganizations of the project ("major" suggests substantive and substantial amounts of re-writing, redirection of the basic arguments, rationale, or structure of the project);
 - b. When the faculty member actively negotiates and/or provides the sample, location, and/or agreements permitting the project to proceed;
 - c. When the faculty member conducts the data analyses;
 - d. When the faculty member develops the measures, methods, or techniques uniquely for this project;
 - e. When the faculty member is requested by the student to take primary responsibility for editing the project for purposes of conference, publication, or show submission.
4. Of course, exceptions and extensions can be negotiated with the Committee members. However, resulting understandings or conditions should be noted in the space provided on

the form. Remember that authorship order should also be negotiated, or at least the criteria for determining authorship order.

5. When the Committee member(s), and/or Chair, involve themselves in less than the ways above, or when their role is primarily advisory and consultative (e.g., providing marginalia, oral discussions in office, suggestions for re-thinking the thesis, etc.), then co-authorship is not recommended. However, it is considered good form to note on any subsequent versions of the thesis that a previous version of it was completed as a thesis in the School of Communication at San Diego State University, and to express appreciation to the Chair and thesis committee members for their efforts in facilitating the completion of the project.



File an Application for Graduation

File an Application for Graduation

The university begins accepting applications for graduation in the term prior to anticipated graduation. Application deadlines are early in the semester and require a \$55.00 fee.

Applications can be obtained and submitted to the Graduate Research Division. In order for the application to be approved, the student's Program of Study must be complete and **match exactly** the coursework that the student has completed or is in the process of completing.

See the Calendar for dates on application for graduation deadlines.

If you do not graduate as expected, you must re-apply for graduation for a subsequent term and pay the application fee again. Contact the Graduate Division for questions involving the application for graduation.

Appendices

Faculty

The communication faculty members at San Diego State University are award-winning teacher-scholars. They are engaged in the community, collaborating with local non-profit and for profit organizations in ways that help students learn to be effective professionals in different settings

Director

Canary, Heather Ph.D. Arizona State University

Professional Expertise: Managerial communication, leadership, family communication, disability and communication, organizational communication.

Office: COMM 238, 619-594-0895, [wsnavely@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:wsnavelly@mail.sdsu.edu)

Faculty

Beach, Wayne Ph.D. University of Utah

Professional Expertise: Language & social interaction, law interaction, interaction and gender, conversation analysis.

wbeach@mail.sdsu.edu

Chen, Yea-Wen Ph.D. Univeristy of New Mexico

Professional Expertise: Intercultural communication, qualitative research methods, organizational communication.

yea-wen.chen@sdsu.edu

Dionisopoulos, George Ph.D. Purdue University

Professional Expertise: Rhetorical theory and criticism, argumentation, persuasion, public argument.

dionisop@mail.sdsu.edu

Geist-Martin, Patricia Ph.D. Purdue University

Professional Expertise: Organizational and health communication, gender, ethnography.

pgeist@mail.sdsu.edu

Goehring, Charles Ph.D. University of Iowa

Professional Expertise: Rhetorical movements, rhetorical theory, interaction and gender
cgoehrin@mail.sdsu.edu

Lindemann, Kurt Ph.D. Arizona State University, Director of Oral Communication Program
Professional expertise: Performance studies, Organizational communication, ethnography, gender and masculinity, and disability
klindema@mail.sdsu.edu

Martinez, Lourdes Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University
Professional expertise: Health Communication, Big Data research
lsmartinez@mail.sdsu.edu

Record, Rachael Ph.D. University of Kentucky
Professional expertise: Health Communication, health campaigns
rrecord@mail.sdsu.edu

Savage, Matthew Ph.D. Arizona State University
Professional expertise: Health Communication, Interpersonal violence and risk communication

Spitzberg, Brian Ph.D. University of Southern California
Professional Expertise: Interpersonal communication, conflict, coercion, violence, stalking, risk and crisis communication, relational communication, assessment.
spitz@mail.sdsu.edu

Winslow, Luke Ph.D. University of Texas
Professional Expertise: Rhetoric, political rhetoric and social movements.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION M.A. DEGREE PROGRAM (30 units)

Part I:	Core Theory & Methods	Three (3) Units
COMM 601	Seminar: Theory and Research Methods in Communication	
Part II:	Tools	Six (6) Units
COMM 610	Seminar: Advanced Communication Theory	
COMM 620	Seminar: Quantitative Methods in Communication Research	
COMM 640	Seminar: Critical and Rhetorical Methods in Communication	
COMM 660	Seminar: Ethnographic Methods in Communication Research	
COMM 665	Seminar: Conversation Analysis in Communication Research	
Part III:	Specialization Courses	Fifteen (15) Units
COMM 610	Seminar: Advanced Communication Theory	
COMM 620	Seminar: Quantitative Methods in Communication Research	
COMM 640	Seminar: Critical and Rhetorical Methods in Communication	
COMM 660	Seminar: Ethnographic Methods in Communication Research	
COMM 665	Seminar: Conversation Analysis in Communication Research	
COMM 696	Special Topics (may be repeated with new content)	
COMM 705	Seminar: Performance Studies	
COMM 706	Seminar: Organizational Communication	
COMM 707	Seminar: Instructional Communication	
COMM 715	Seminar: Nonverbal Communication	
COMM 721	Seminar: Health Communication	
COMM 735	Seminar: Relational Communication	
COMM 740	Seminar: Rhetorical Theory	
COMM 745	Seminar: The Rhetoric of Women's Rights	
COMM 750	Seminar: Com Contexts (may be repeated if new content)	
COMM 751	Seminar: Gender & Comm. (may be repeated if new content)	
COMM 752	Seminar: The Dark Side of Relational Communication	
COMM 755	Seminar: Public Address	
COMM 771	Seminar: Intercultural Communication	
COMM 783	Seminar: Medical Interaction	
COMM 786	Seminar: Communication and Leadership	
COMM 792	Seminar: Persuasion	

Part IV: Electives Three (3) Units

Inside or outside the School of Communication, with adviser's approval, including COMM 798. Students may petition to take a second elective outside the department or a second special study.

Part V: Program Completion Three (3) Units

COMM 799a Thesis OR 3 units of COM 600-700 _____

NOTE:

- No more than 3 units can be taken outside the School of Communication OR as a special study (COMM798).
- Electives must be 600 level or above (or approval from Grad Adviser)
- No more than 9 units on the Program of Study can be Comm 750

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is one of the highest forms of academic offense. It represents several ethics violations. It is **theft** of intellectual property. In academe, a scholar's words, ideas, and creative products represent essential intellectual property, which are the primary measures of scholarly identity, status and achievement. It is **fraud**. Students should be assessed on their own ideas and abilities; not the ideas and abilities of others. It is **unfair**. It introduces bias and inequity in the assessment process, producing grades for fellow students based on disadvantaged standards and expectations. It is **corruption**. It undermines the credibility of higher education by misrepresenting the meaning of university grades and degrees to the rest of the public. Whether by ignorance, accident, or intent, theft is still theft, fraud is still fraud, inequity is still inequity, and corruption is still corruption. Therefore, the offense, no matter how minor in quantity, is still serious, and is treated as such.

The most recent SDSU Graduate Bulletin policy states:

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting same to the university as one's own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. Plagiarism shall include but not be limited to

- (a) submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another;
- (b) omitting footnotes for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that belong to another;
- (c) omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or part thereof;
- (d) close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another;
- (e) submitting another person's artistic works, such as musical compositions, photographs, paintings, drawings, or sculptures; and
- (f) submitting as one's own work papers purchased from research companies.

Disciplinary Action

Cheating and plagiarism in connection with an academic program at the university may warrant two separate and distinct courses of disciplinary action that may be applied concurrently in response to a violation of this policy: (a) academic sanctions, such as grade modifications; and (b) punitive sanctions, such as probation, suspension, or expulsion. Academic sanctions are concerned with the student's grades and are the responsibility of the instructor involved. Punitive sanctions are concerned with the student's records and status on campus and shall be the responsibility of the university president or designated representative. The Coordinator of Judiciary Procedures shall be the president's representative in matters of student discipline.

THE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY OF THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

In any case in which an instructor identifies evidence for charging a student with violation of academic conduct standards or plagiarism, the presumption will be with that instructor's determination. The instructor(s) will confer with the School Director to confirm the evidence. Once confirmed, the student will be informed and presented with the evidence. Some conditions and terms below clarify the School policy and procedure.

Proper source attribution: Proper attribution occurs by specifying the source of content or ideas. This is done by (a) providing quotation marks around text, when directly quoted, and (b) clearly designating the source of the text or information relied upon in an assignment.

Intellectual contents: Intellectual contents include all forms of 'text' produced by another person or persons. It includes: writings, course syllabi, course lectures and recordings of lectures, visual information such as models, videos, lyrics, software, etc.

Secondary citations: Secondary citation is not strictly a form of plagiarism, but in blatant forms, it can present similar ethical challenges. A secondary citation is citing source A, which in turn cites source B, but it is source B's ideas or content that provide the basis for the claims the student intends to make in the assignment. For example, assume that there is an article by Jones (2006) in the student's hands, in which there is a discussion or quotation of an article by Smith (1998). Assume further that what Smith seems to be saying is very important to the student's analysis. In such a situation, the student should always try to locate the original Smith source. *In general, if an idea is important enough to discuss in an assignment, it is important enough to locate and cite the original source for that idea.* There are several reasons for these policies: (a) Authors sometimes commit citation errors, which might be replicated without knowing it; (b) Authors sometimes make interpretation errors, which might be ignorantly reinforced (c) Therefore, reliability of scholarly activity is made more difficult to assure and enforce; (d) By relying on only a few sources of review, the learning process is short-circuited, and the student's own research competencies are diminished, which are integral to any liberal education; (e) By masking the actual sources of ideas, readers must second guess which sources come from which citations, making the readers' own research more difficult; (f) By masking the origin of the information, the actual source of ideas is misrepresented. Some suggestions that assist with this principle:

- When the ideas Jones discusses are clearly attributed to, or unique to, Smith, then find the Smith source and citation.
- When the ideas Jones is discussing are historically associated more with Smith than with Jones, then find the Smith source and citation.
- In contrast, Jones is sometimes merely using Smith to back up what Jones is saying and believes, and is independently qualified to claim, whether or not Smith would have also said it; in such a case, citing Jones is sufficient.
- Never simply copy a series of citations at the end of a statement by Jones, and reproduce the reference list without actually going to look up what those references report—the only guarantee that claims are valid is for a student to read the original sources of those claims.

Self-plagiarism: Students often practice some form of 'double-dipping,' in which they write on a given topic across more than one course assignment. In general, there is nothing wrong with

double-dipping *topics or sources*, but there is a problem with double-dipping *exact and redundant text*. It is common for scholars to write on the same topic across many publication outlets; this is part of developing expertise and the reputation of being a scholar on a topic. Scholars, however, are not permitted to *repeat exact text* across papers or publications except when noted and attributed, as this wastes precious intellectual space with repetition and does a disservice to the particular source of original presentation by ‘diluting’ the value of the original presentation. Any time that a writer simply ‘cuts-and-pastes’ exact text from former papers into a new paper without proper attribution, it is a form of *self-plagiarism*. Consequently, a given paper should never be turned in to multiple classes. Entire paragraphs, or even sentences, should not be repeated word-for-word across course assignments. Each new writing assignment is precisely that, a new writing assignment, requiring new composition on the student’s part.

Specific exemplary infractions and consequences:

- **Course failure:** Reproducing a whole paper, paragraph, or large portions of unattributed materials without proper attribution, whether represented by: (a) multiple sentences, images, or portions of images; or (b) by percentage of assignment length, will result in assignment of an “F” in the course in which the infraction occurred, and a report to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (CSRR²).
- **Assignment failure:** Reproducing a sentence or sentence fragment with no quotation marks, but with source citation, or subsets of visual images without source attribution, will *minimally* result in an “F” on the assignment, and may result in greater penalty, including a report to the CSRR, depending factors noted below.
- **Exacerbating conditions--Amount:** Evidence of infraction, even if fragmentary, is increased with a greater: (a) number of infractions; (b) distribution of infractions across an assignment; or (c) proportion of the assignment consisting of infractions.
- **Exacerbating conditions--Intent:** Evidence of foreknowledge and intent to deceive magnifies the seriousness of the offense and the grounds for official response. Plagiarism, whether ‘by accident’ or ‘by ignorance,’ still qualifies as plagiarism—it is all students’ responsibility to make sure their assignments are not committing the offense.
- **Solicitation of materials to help you gain an unfair advantage:** Asking someone to do part or all of your fieldwork, to write parts of any assignment (unless you are writing with an assigned partner), to provide you with quiz or exam answers. These all qualify as academic dishonesty and may result in a student receiving a zero for the assignment, an F in the class, and/or the case forwarded to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- **Falsifying Data:** Falsifying (i.e., “making up”) in part or whole fieldwork or interview notes and transcriptions. These all qualify as academic dishonesty and may result in a student receiving a zero for the assignment, an F in the class, and/or the case forwarded to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- **Exceptions:** Any exceptions to these policies will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and only under exceptional circumstances.

Additional Stipulations for Graduate Students & GTAs: If, following a review with a Communication graduate student, a faculty member and School Director determine academic dishonesty has occurred, the evidence will be submitted to the Center of Student Rights and Responsibilities (CSRR). The report “identifies the student who was found responsible, the

general nature of the offense, the action taken, and a recommendation as to whether or not additional action should be considered by the campus judicial affairs office” (CSRR Website1). The student will be permitted to continue as a student in the Communication graduate program and as a Teaching Associate (if so assigned), until such time as CSRR due process has taken its course. If CSRR rules in favor of the student, the student’s status in the program will continue. If due process rules against the student, then the student will immediately be dropped from all classes in the Communication graduate program and any Teaching Associate position in the School will be terminated. Graduate students may voluntarily withdraw from classes and Teaching Associate duties when charges are brought forward. The School’s Director must be notified in writing. Students who voluntarily withdraw, notify the director in a timely manner, and who are subsequently found not guilty of plagiarism may be reinstated without prejudice at the start of the next semester.

Turnitin.com: In most classes, major writing assignments will be turned in to *Turnitin.com* via Blackboard. Faculty may use additional methods to detect plagiarism.

GPA Standards

You are required to maintain an overall 3.0 grade point average (GPA) in

- (a) all courses listed on the official degree program required to complete undergraduate deficiencies
- (b) all courses listed on the official degree program (see appendix)
- (c) all courses, 300-level and above, taken at SDSU concurrently with or subsequently to the earliest course listed on the official degree program, including courses accepted for transfer credit.

If your GPA falls below 3.0, you cannot be advanced to candidacy, complete a Master's Thesis, take the Comprehensive Exam, or graduate. Further, you may become ineligible from graduate teaching and research assistantships.

If your cumulative GPA falls below 2.85, the University will place you on scholastic probation. While on scholastic probation, a student is expected to improve his or her GPA to 3.0. Failure to do so may result in scholastic disqualification (the student is removed from classified status and designated as post-baccalaureate unclassified, or disqualified from the university. Unclassified status permits the student to take undergraduate and 500-level graduate coursework. However, such coursework does not count toward the MA. To pursue the master's degree, such a student would have to reapply to the graduate program. See the *Graduate Bulletin* for more details on grade point averages, scholastic probation, and scholastic disqualification.

Grading and Advanced Scholarship

Students in courses in the School of Communication have a right to an objective description of how grades are assigned in a course. This information should be provided to students in the course syllabus or as a supplement to the syllabus. All faculty in the School of Communication have the right and obligation to make a determination of the quality of the student's scholarship and assign appropriate grades. Grades of "C," "D," and "F" are appropriate grades for faculty to

1 <http://csrr.sdsu.edu/academics1.html>

assign to student work that does not meet the criterion of advanced scholarship or creative works in communication. If you are assigned grades that you do not understand or that you think do not reflect the true quality of your work, you may appeal to the faculty member who assigned the grade to you. Further appeal may be made according to the *Graduate Bulletin* ("Assignment of Grades and Grade Appeals").

General Policy Appeals

Students may appeal virtually any decision, date, or policy elaborated herein or in the SDSU Bulletin of the Graduate Division. In most instances, appeals must be initiated by the student by first seeking a faculty advocate. This advocate should, in writing, bring the appeal to the Director of Graduate Studies. If the case warrants, it will be circulated among and/or brought before the Graduate Committee for consultation. The Director of Graduate Studies will make decisions based on

- (a) the merits of the case
- (b) precedent and/or existing policy statements
- (c) advice of the Graduate Committee and, in matters of University Policy, with approval of the Graduate Division.

It is important to understand that appeals are considered for extreme and unusual cases, and that given the issues of fairness and the amount of administrative effort involved, appeals should be pursued only in cases of extraordinary circumstance or merit.

Communication Graduate Student Organization (COMGSO)

The Communication Graduate Student Organization (ComGSO) is committed to creating community in the School of Communication. We seek to coordinate the needs and desires of students with the faculty, the university, and the communities outside of the classroom. We attempt to bridge gaps among members of the School of Communication by encouraging social interaction and networking throughout the student's time at San Diego State. We represent what is best in the School of Communication to the community through fundraisers and community service. We also address those areas that need development in the School of Communication and the larger community. We believe that graduate students are in a unique position to creatively construct and ComGSO leads in that endeavor.

Petition For Adjustment of Academic Requirements

This petition is used to request an exception of specific requirements stated in the Graduate Bulletin. These may include substitution of core (required) courses, extension of incompletes, excess units taken through Extended Studies' Open University, using prior year's Graduate Bulletin requirements and transfer courses from another university replacing core (required) courses. The petition must be signed and supported by the graduate adviser. A letter of support may accompany the petition if extensive explanation is required, but the letter is not necessary for most requests.

The form can be found at <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~gra/grad/adjacadreqs.html>

Most often, students in the School of Communication use this form to change their program of study. Simply filling out the form and stating “Drop COMM (number and name of course) and Add COMM (number and name of course)” is sufficient. Sign and place in the mail box of the Director of Graduate study along with a Xerox copy of your Program of study. The director will review, sign, and submit to the graduate division. After the petition is submitted to the Graduate Division, the Associate Graduate Dean will make the final decision. Both the student and Graduate Adviser will receive notification of the Dean's decision.

At times, it is necessary for the Dean to take these petitions to the Graduate Council for final review prior to determination. Expected processing time: 2 weeks

You can also find a copy of this form on blackboard under the “Documents” tab.

Instructions to Petitioners to Retake Core (COMM 601)

Students who obtain less than a B in COMM 601 may only continue their studies in the Communication graduate program upon approval of a petition. The petition will be evaluated by the graduate faculty and will be approved only under exceptional circumstances and for compelling reasons.

Students submitting the petition should inform the Director of Graduate Studies of their intent to submit a petition as soon as they learn of their grade (which often happens before the end of the semester). Petitions should be sent in electronic form to the Director of Graduate Studies no later than one week after the end of the semester. Petitioners will be notified of the faculty's response to the petition within two weeks of the end of the semester.

PETITION TO RETAKE COMM 601

1. Student Name: _____
2. Red ID: _____
3. Phone _____ e-mail _____
4. Provide a description of what you see as the deficiencies in your work in COM 601.
5. Provide a detailed explanation of the extraordinary, special, and compelling circumstances that prevented you from successfully completing the course you seek to retake (500 word limit; APA style).
6. Provide a cogent, realistic, and detailed plan of action to convince the Graduate Committee that you will be able to earn a "B" or higher, should you be granted the opportunity to retake the course(s) (500 word limit; APA style).
7. Provide a description of why you would like to continue in the program, if provided the opportunity.
8. Attach any documentation you deem relevant to substantiate the claims you make in 5 and 6 above.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM REQUEST FORM

Revised 7/20/13

Name: _____

RED ID#:

Email: _____

Comprehensive Exam Chair

The undersigned faculty has agreed to serve as my comprehensive exam chair.

Faculty Member Name

Signature

List all courses completed, or in progress, in the MA program at San Diego State University, and the professor with whom the course was completed.

Course Abbreviation/Number/Name	Name of Faculty Instructor
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

NOW is the time to check your submitted program of study and verify the courses you have/are TAKING are the same as listed in the Program of Study. If changes have occurred, fill out the

form located here:

http://newscenter.sdsu.edu/gra/images/petition_for_adjust_of_acad_require.pdf

Preparation for the In-class Portion of the Comprehensive Exam

In preparing your answers for the in-class portion of the comprehensive exams, you are free to talk with other students. However, you CANNOT consult with any faculty member to clarify, elaborate, or interpret the exam questions.

After the in-class portion of the exam, type up a reference list in 6th edition APA of any sources cited and distribute to the graduate director and all committee members within TWO days of the in-class exam.

Preparing the Take-Home Portion of the Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam is a measure of your academic progress. You are to write the take-home essay portion of the comprehensive exam WITHOUT assistance from anyone in developing content, editing, or feedback from anyone else, including peers and faculty. I have read and understand the Comprehensive Exam Policy and Procedures and agree to abide by them.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

This form is due to the Graduate Director no later than **Tuesday, September 3, 2013**

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION M.A. DEFENSE EVALUATION FORM			
Student Name:		Vetted by TurnItIn.com?	No: <input type="radio"/> Yes: <input type="radio"/>
WRITTENS:	UNACCEPTABLE	ACCEPTABLE	SUPERIOR
Theory:	Theoretical claims omit important principles, evidence ignorance of core information, or commit errors	Theoretical claims evidence sound basic knowledge and understanding of theories and their principles and terms	Theoretical claims evidence sophisticated, multi-layered comprehension of theory(ies) and their implications
Method:	Methodological claims omit important principles, evidence ignorance of core information, or commit errors	Methodological claims evidence sound basic knowledge and understanding of methods and their principles and terms	Methodological claims evidence sophisticated, multi-layered comprehension of methods and their implications
Relations & Implications for Theory, Method & Applications	Claims are largely rote, and lack originality in applying relevant research, identifying heuristic implications, applications &/or conclusions	Claims extend beyond rote, integrating relevant research, providing several original implications, applications, &/or conclusions	Claims extend consistently beyond rote, providing numerous original uses of relevant research, implications, applications, &/or conclusions
ORALS COMPETENCE	UNACCEPTABLE	ACCEPTABLE	SUPERIOR
Cogent & Effective Arguments:	Assertions unclear, lack coherence or interconnection, & reflect sparse or disconnected warrants and citation(s)	Claims are fundamentally and soundly connected to warrants and citation(s) (i.e., evidence)	Claims are sophisticated, carefully qualified, and soundly connected to warrants and citation(s) in multi-level ways
Synthesizing/Analyzing Research:	Claims lack breadth of familiarity with diverse but relevant topical terms, concepts, and relevant research	Claims reveal fundamentally and soundly developed connections across diverse arenas of relevant research	Claims reveal breadth & depth of claims that identify relevant connections and deeper structures & implications
Generating Independent Ideas:	Claims are largely rote, and lack originality in identifying heuristic implications, applications &/or conclusions	Claims extend beyond rote, providing several original implications, applications, &/or conclusions	Claims extend consistently beyond rote, providing numerous original implications, applications, &/or conclusions
Thesis Defense Outcome:¹	Fail	Comprehensive Exam Defense Outcome:¹	
Major revisions necessary	Pass	Unconditional (no retake allowed)	Fail
Moderate revisions necessary	Pass	Conditional (retake with conditions) ²	Fail
Minor revisions necessary	Pass	Conditional (additional requirements) ³	Pass
No revisions necessary	Pass	Unconditional	Pass
Committee Comments or Instructions:			
Chair Signature:		Date: / /	
¹ Evidence of plagiarism, unethical conduct, and/or reliance on the material assistance of other(s) disqualifies the candidate on all other competency standards, and moves proceedings to a decision regarding standing in the program and qualification for the degree. ² Indicates serious deficiency in competencies and/or standards, requiring substantial redress, typically in the form of successful re-take of course and/or exam and defense ³ Indicates one or more significant issues or topic areas is seriously deficient in competencies or standards, requiring redress, typically in the form of rewrite(s), research paper(s), and/or additional oral defense			

COMPREHENSIVE/THESIS EVALUATION FORM					
STUDENT NAME:			FACULTY:		DATE: / /
WRITTENS	UNACCEPTABLE	REVIS- ABLE	ACCEPTABLE	GOOD	SUPERIOR
Theory	Theoretical claims omit important principles, evidence ignorance of core information, or commit errors		Theoretical claims evidence sound basic knowledge and understanding of theories and their principles and terms		Theoretical claims evidence sophisticated, multi-layered comprehension of theory(ies) and their implications
Question 1	1	2	3	4	5
Question 2	1	2	3	4	5
Question 3	1	2	3	4	5
Take Home	1	2	3	4	5
Methods	Methodological claims omit important principles, evidence ignorance of core information, or commit errors		Methodological claims evidence sound basic knowledge and understanding of methods and their principles and terms		Methodological claims evidence sophisticated, multi-layered comprehension of methods and their implications
Question 1	1	2	3	4	5
Question 2	1	2	3	4	5
Question 3	1	2	3	4	5
Take Home	1	2	3	4	5
Relations, Implications, Applications	Claims are largely rote, and lack originality in applying relevant research, identifying heuristic implications, applications &/or conclusions		Claims extend beyond rote, integrating relevant research, providing several original implications, applications, &/or conclusions		Claims extend consistently beyond rote, providing numerous original uses of relevant research, implications, applications, &/or conclusions
Question 1	1	2	3	4	5
Question 2	1	2	3	4	5
Question 3	1	2	3	4	5
Take Home	1	2	3	4	5
ORALS	UNACCEPTABLE		ACCEPTABLE		SUPERIOR
Arguments	Assertions unclear, lack coherence or interconnection, & reflect sparse or disconnected warrants and citation(s)		Claims are fundamentally and soundly connected to warrants and citation(s) (i.e., evidence)		Claims are sophisticated, carefully qualified, and soundly connected to warrants and citation(s) in multi-level ways
EVALUATION	1	2	3	4	5
Synthesis	Claims lack breadth of familiarity with diverse but relevant topical terms, concepts, and relevant research		Claims reveal fundamentally and soundly developed connections across diverse arenas of relevant research		Claims reveal breadth & depth of claims that identify relevant connections and deeper structures & implications
EVALUATION	1	2	3	4	5
Ideation	Claims are largely rote, and lack originality in identifying heuristic implications, applications &/or conclusions		Claims extend beyond rote, providing several original implications, applications, &/or conclusions		Claims extend consistently beyond rote, providing numerous original implications, applications, &/or conclusions
EVALUATION	1	2	3	4	5
Committee Comments or Instructions:					

RE-TAKE OR REVISION	UNACCEPTABLE (1)	REVIS-ABLE (2)	ACCEPTABLE (3)	GOOD (4)	SUPERIOR (5)
	Claims are largely rote, and lack originality in identifying heuristic implications, applications &/or conclusions		Claims extend beyond rote, providing several original implications, applications, &/or conclusions		Claims extend consistently beyond rote, providing numerous original implications, applications, &/or conclusions
EVALUATION	1	2	3	4	5
Thesis Defense Outcome:¹	Fail	Comprehensive Exam Defense Outcome:¹			
Major revisions necessary	Pass	Unconditional (no retake allowed)			Fail
Moderate revisions necessary	Pass	Conditional (retake with conditions) ²			Fail
Minor revisions necessary	Pass	Conditional (additional requirements) ³			Pass
No revisions necessary	Pass	Unconditional			Pass
Committee Comments or Instructions:					
Chair Signature:				Date: / /	
¹ Evidence of plagiarism, unethical conduct, and/or reliance on the material assistance of other(s) disqualifies the candidate on all other competency standards, and moves proceedings to a decision regarding standing in the program and qualification for the degree. ² Indicates serious deficiency in competencies and/or standards, requiring substantial redress, typically in the form of successful re-take of course and/or exam and defense ³ Indicates one or more significant issues or topic areas is seriously deficient in competencies or standards, requiring redress, typically in the form of rewrite(s), research paper(s), and/or additional oral defense					

Comprehensive Exam Study Tips

Standard Terms

Preparation for the examination should include review of standard terms that we expect MA candidates to know after completing their degree. While it is important for candidates to review and be prepared to define the terms and concepts in this list, by no means is it a complete list of what a candidate should study and be prepared to write or speak about.

Terms:

Epistemology	Reliability (and types)
Axiology	Statistical power
Ontology	Random assignment vs. random selection
Paradigm	Levels of measurement
Social science	Types of variables (independent, dependent, moderating, mediating)
Humanities	Types of scales (Likert, semantic differential, etc.)
Post-modernism	Measures of central tendency and dispersion
Rhetoric	Error types and hypothesis testing
Theory	Meaning
Theory falsification	Symbol
Hypothesis	Experiment (and types)
Grounded theory	Ethnography
Criteria for evaluating theory	Conversation Analysis
Empiricism	Content Analysis
Validity (and types)	Rhetorical criticism

Continua

The process of conducting research is a cycle where the research moves back and forth between two positions on a set of Continua. In the process of narrowing the research focus, reviewing relevant literature, collecting data, analyzing data, writing up research, the researcher works at both ends of the Continua, often simultaneously. BOTH ends can be a benefit or a liability.

1. induction	-	deduction
2. authoritative	-	interpretive
3. objectivity	-	subjectivity
4. reflexive	-	unquestioning
5. atemporal	-	temporal
6. omniscient narrator	-	situated narrator
7. intimacy	-	distance
8. self	-	other
9. monologic	-	dialogic
10. creative	-	analytic
11. observer	-	participant
12. historical	-	ahistorical

13. crystallize	-	triangulate
14. theory	-	data
15. disembodied	-	embodied
16. disengaged	-	engaged
17. nonfiction	-	fiction
18. postmodern	-	modern
19. process	-	product
20. universal discourse	-	competing discourse
21. stable	-	shifting
22. risky	-	safe
23. generalizable knowledge	-	contextual knowledge
24. author validates	-	participants validate
25. questioning self	-	questioning others

Some comparisons between traditional ideal(ized) science and textual-rhetorical approaches:

1. Science makes arguments of probability; rhetoric makes arguments of plausibility
2. Science looks to “control” context and history (i.e., hold them “constant”); rhetoric looks to make these central to understanding
3. Science tends to view language as “mere” medium; rhetoric makes language the *sine qua non* of explanation
4. Science views argument as secondary, and in the service of, method; rhetoric views argument as method
5. Science tends to examine multiple cases; rhetoric tends to focus on specific cases
6. Science attempts to factor the observer out of the method; rhetoric views the observer as method
7. Science is relatively codified and regimented; rhetoric is eclectic and open to *bricolage*
8. Science tests theory; rhetoric illustrates theory
9. Science seeks to describe, explain, predict and control; rhetoric seeks to understand, illumine, and evaluate
10. Scientific theory is representative; rhetorical theory is heuristic

THESIS CONTRACT BETWEEN THESIS CHAIR AND THESIS CANDIDATE

Thesis Chairs and candidates share a common goal of conducting a research project and writing a Master's Thesis that represents a contribution to the body of knowledge in the discipline. However, chairs and candidates often encounter differences with regard to issues of quality and timing of completion. In order to clarify those differences, the chair and candidate should agree to the following regarding protocol.

1. Candidates can only register for thesis units in the semester after the candidate has submitted a full thesis proposal to the School of Communication in the previous semester by the appropriate deadline. This deadline is typically the Friday, two weeks prior to the end of the semester. This requirement assures (a) that the proposed thesis project is ready for thesis work, (b) that it meets the intellectual standards of the entire School of Communication, and (c) that all faculty and candidates are apprised of the status of graduate work in the program.
2. The thesis is a collaboration between the candidate and the Committee members, but the ultimate authority for the progress of your thesis project lies with the Committee, which represents the “instructor of record” for the academic course of your thesis. They are expected to enact this role with fair consideration of candidate interests and incorporation of candidate input, but are not obligated to approve candidate actions taken in the pursuit of the thesis.
3. The exclusive role of the Thesis Chair is to guide the thesis project—in consultation with the thesis candidate and committee—to ensure that the completed thesis meets the standards of academic excellence. The timing of the thesis completion is based on the thesis quality as determined by the Thesis Chair and committee members.
4. A proposal meeting is required. At this meeting, the entire Thesis Committee is convened at the **outset** of the process to plan and approve the proposal prior to its submission to the faculty.
5. The Master's Thesis is generally a multi-semester project. The Thesis Chair assumes no obligation to accelerate this process with regard to completion date, especially when such acceleration impairs the quality of the Thesis.
6. The Thesis Committee has the option to meet over the summer months, but is not obligated to do so. Any expectation you may have for a summer defense is at the discretion of your Committee members, and should be explicitly pre-negotiated.
7. Candidates may obligate themselves to other, post-graduation activities (e.g., further graduate study, employment, etc.) assuming that the thesis will be completed by a certain deadline. The candidate does so at his or her own risk. SDSU, the School of

Communication, and the Thesis Chair are under no obligation to meet such deadlines imposed by the candidate.

8. Thesis Committee members can remove themselves from the Thesis Committee for cause at any point of the thesis process, and candidates may request the change of Committee composition at any point in the process for cause. Cause must be demonstrated as a reason related to the academic merits of the project and the member's role in facilitating these merits. In any case that a Committee member believes him/herself to be a hindrance to the candidate's academic progress, or a candidate believes a change in membership will facilitate the academic merits of the project, a change in membership may be requested of the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Division. Such requests must be made in writing, and the revision in Thesis Committee form must be submitted.
9. The candidate will make **5 hardbound copies** of the completed thesis (one for each committee member, one for the library, and one for the School of Communication. Alternative bindings for the committee members may be negotiated individually). The thesis is intended to be a lasting legacy of learning for the School of Communication, its candidates, and faculty, and is therefore expected to be produced with due regard for its merit and status.
10. By signing this contract, the candidate claims to have explicitly discussed and negotiated any relevant potential intellectual property and publication issues regarding the thesis project.
11. By signing this contract, the candidate claims to have (1) read and understood the *Graduate Handbook* policies and procedures regarding the Thesis process, and sections 41301 to 41304 of the *Graduate Bulletin* regarding candidate conduct, ethics, and grievances. Having done so, the candidate promises not to plagiarize or engage in any other ethically proscribed practices identified therein.

We, the undersigned have read the three points above and agree to those points as a protocol for completion of the master's Thesis.

Thesis Chair Signature

Thesis Chair Name (print)

Date

Thesis Candidate Signature

Thesis Candidate Name (print)

Date

SAMPLE THESIS PROPOSAL COVERPAGE FORMAT

Running Head: LOOKOUT POINT

Lookout Point:
Parent and Teen Perceptions of Sexual Communication in the Family

A Thesis Proposal
Presented to the Faculty of
San Diego State University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Communication

Laura Blank
September 18, 2000

These faculty members hereby approve this proposal:

<hr/> Dr. Patricia Geist-Martin, Thesis Chair School of Communication	<hr/> Date
<hr/> Dr. Brian H. Spitzberg School of Communication	<hr/> Date
<hr/> Dr. Shulamit Ritblatt Department of Child and Family Studies	<hr/> Date

SAMPLE INVITATION TO THESIS DEFENSE

You are cordially invited to the Master's Thesis defense of

Laura Blank
School of Communication

"Lookout Point: Parent and Teen Perceptions of Sexual Communication in the Family "

Friday, April 6, 2001
8:30 -10:30 AM
Comm 209

Committee:

Dr. Patricia Geist-Martin, Thesis Chair
School of Communication

Dr. Brian H. Spitzberg
School of Communication

Dr. Shulamit Ritblatt
Department of Child and Family Studies

Get Involved with Professional Communication Organizations

Getting involved with professional organizations while you are still a graduate student is an excellent way to both gain valuable experience in your chosen field and to prepare yourself for your future as a communication scholar. Many of these organizations hold annual conferences that offer great networking and learning opportunities. Additionally, SDSU's Communication Graduate Student Organization offers the opportunity to connect with your peers at SDSU and to offer support and comradery right here at home.

Professional Organizations and Conferences

Central States Communication Association (CSCA)

<http://www.csc-net.org/>

Congress of Qualitative Inquiry

<http://www.qi2013.org/>

Eastern Communication Association (ECA)

<http://www.ecasite.org/>

International Association for Relationship Research (IARR)

<http://www.iarr.org/>

International Communication Association (ICA)

<http://www.icahdq.org/>

National Communication Association (NCA)

<http://www.natcom.org/>

Organization for the Study of Communication Language and Gender (OSCLG)

<http://www.osclg.org/>

Rhetoric Society of America

<http://www.rhetoricsociety.org/>

Southern States Communication Association (SSCA)

<http://ssca.net/>

Western States Communication Association (WSCA)

<http://www.westcomm.org/>

Resources for Career Search

One resource for learning about careers in communication is *Great Jobs for Communication Majors* by Blythe Camenson (VGM Career Horizons, 1995). Although many of the careers covered tend to be closely allied with the communication majors in media, public relations, and advertising, the book also mentions careers in sales, fundraising, intercultural communication, and so forth.

For more information about careers in general, consult the SDSU Career Services office (Student Services East 1200), which offers excellent services (e.g., job listings, a resource library, resume examples, resume-building software, instruction on how to research prospective companies, etc.). Or you might check out some websites. For example, a general resource that claims to offer students and recent graduates resources to identify their personal strengths, define their career goals and learn about those companies that best match their interests is www.college.monster.com. It also allows them to compare how far a dollar will stretch in different cities in terms of comparative housing, transportation, utility and health costs and salary. The site, www.interbiznet.com/hunt, examines the latest interview trends. And www.monster.com offers articles about resume development and a career in human resources. You may want to check on-line sites such as *The Wall Street Journal* Interactive Edition (www.careers.wsj.com), the job guides [careermosaic.com](http://www.careermosaic.com), [careerpath.com](http://www.careerpath.com), or the Riley guide (<http://www.rileyguide.com>).

Other sources for career pursuit are professional associations, which typically have student membership rates and administrative structures oriented toward career search, interviewing, and networking. There are guides to various professional and scholarly associations in communication (commfaculty.fullerton.edu/jreinard/internet.htm). There are professional organizations that can assist your career development, including: the International Communication Association (www.icahdq.org), the National Communication Association (www.natcom.org), and the Western States Communication Association (<http://www.westcomm.org>). For careers in human relations and related areas, the American Society for Training and Development ([astd.org/virtual_community/find/](http://www.astd.org/virtual_community/find/)) and the Professionals in Human Resources Associations (www.pihra.org) provide excellent sites. Associations such as these may be able to assist you in various ways (contact information changes, so ask a professor for the most recent information if you can't find it through the web or phonebook). Attending association meetings and conferences, volunteering to serve select administrative roles, or merely obtaining Association literature (e.g., newsletters, job listings) can all facilitate job search.

Some of you may begin to consider academe as a possible profession. If so, or if you are considering a field for which a Ph.D. is important (e.g., research consultant for a think tank, organizational change consultant, etc.), then you may want to research graduate programs in communication. Several net sites can assist you in this type of research (e.g., [gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com), or [studyabroad.com](http://www.studyabroad.com)).

Finally, don't forget to do the obvious—talk to professors, students, friends, and family about jobs or contacts they may know of, go on some informational interviews, intern if you possibly

can, and adapt your resume and letters to the jobs to which you are applying. And when you ask a professor to write letters of recommendation for you, it is tactful to offer to provide a brief 'bio' or resume, including a listing of courses you have taken from that professor, what grades you earned, a description of the positions you are applying for and the due-dates for letters, and peel-and-stick labels with the addresses already printed on them. Such courtesies greatly increase the likelihood that your letters get in on time.

Process for Requesting Letters Of Recommendation

In the final year of your M.A. program you will need letters of recommendation, either for Ph.D. applications or for positions for which you are applying. The steps below will help your professors create a strong letter of recommendation.

1. Contact your professors and ask if they would be willing to write you a letter of recommendation. If they say "yes" then indicate that:
 - you will provide them with a file folder of materials to assist them in the process
 - you will pick up the letter from them once it is ready
 - they need to be sure to sign the back seal of the envelope

2. Create a file folder for each professor with your name written clearly on the tab. Inside the file folder include the following:
 - A cover letter indicating what courses you took from the professor, when you took the courses, the grade you earned, and the name of the project you wrote for the class, Also indicate in this cover letter anything else about your time at SDSU that might be worth mentioning in the letter of recommendation.
 - A page listing the program(s) you are applying to (description), the deadline for applying (and sending letters), and the name of the person and address to whom the letter should be directed. It is best to sequence this list based on the first deadline a letter is due. It is important also to track down the name of the graduate director because often faculty know these individuals and can write a personal note with the letter.
 - A copy of your transcripts
 - A copy of the personal statement you will submit with your application.
 - A vita
 - Anything else you can include that might assist the professor in writing the letter (e.g., sample of your writing).
 - Provide the addresses for the letters on self-adhesive labels, so the writers can peel and stick onto their own letterhead envelope (unless letters are submitted electronically)