



Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee

PROPOSAL TITLE: Revision of Required Course Hours for the PhD in Communications and Media, Institute of Communications Research, College of Media

SPONSOR: Professor James Hay, Interim Director, Institute of Communications Research (College of Media), 333-1549, jameshay@illinois.edu

COLLEGE CONTACT: (Primary contact) Katie Clark, Senior Assistant Dean for Student Services, keclark@illinois.edu

Theresa Harris, Administrative Assistant for ICR, tharris@illinois.edu

Dave Irwin, Associate Dean, College of Media, irwin@illinois.edu

Tracy Sulkin, Dean, College of Media, tsulkin@illinois.edu

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Reduce the required course hours from 96 to 64 for the PhD in Communications and Media for those students who enter the curriculum with an approved Masters degree. This proposal also differentiates the curriculum pathways for students entering with a Masters degree and those entering without a Masters degree.

JUSTIFICATION: The Institute of Communications Research (ICR) has administered a PhD for the College of Media (formerly the College of Communication) since 1948. The College is comprised of three academic departments (Advertising, Journalism, and Media & Cinema Studies), two of which administer Masters programs, but none of which administers its own doctoral program. Throughout its history, the ICR has accepted students with and without Masters degrees. The ICR's decades-old policy of requiring its doctoral students to complete 64 hours of coursework, and 32 hours of Thesis credit provided a framework for accommodating students with and without Masters degrees. The ICR has allowed students entering the program with a Masters degree to *convert* (though technically not to transfer) up to 16 hours of Masters credit toward their PhD in the ICR. Each ICR student's request to convert up to 16 hours of Masters credit was overseen and vetted by an ICR faculty committee. Under this past system, the ICR's 96-hour requirement exceeded the minimum course-hour requirement by the Graduate College and university.

The proposed reduction of required course-hours in the ICR, from 96 to 64 hours, would be for students entering the program with a Masters degree. Students entering the program without a Masters degree would be required to complete 32 hours of additional coursework (i.e., following the current 96-hour requirement in the ICR).

The ICR administration, in consultation with the ICR Executive Committee and faculty have decided to reduce the number of required course hours for several reasons:

- To eliminate confusion (among some ICR students and faculty, as well as among some staff in the Graduate College) about the practice of "converting" 16-hours of Masters coursework. The new requirement would be simpler and clearer to all stakeholders.

- To move doctoral students with a Masters degree more efficiently through our program. There is a growing concern, by ICR administration and faculty, that requiring students to complete at least an additional 16 hours unduly slows their progress toward completing their dissertation.
- To allow ICR students flexibility, so that under the proposed reduction in required course hours, ICR students would still be able to take more than 64 hours of course credit should they choose that path.

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS:

1) Resources

- a. How does the unit intend to financially support this proposal?

No changes.

- b. How will the unit create capacity or surplus to appropriately resource this program? If applicable, what functions or programs will the unit no longer support to create capacity?

No substantive changes.

- c. Will the unit need to seek campus or other external resources? If so, please provide a summary of the sources and an indication of the approved support.

No changes.

- d. Please provide a letter of acknowledgment from the college that outlines the financial arrangements for the proposed program.

Not applicable.

2) Resource Implications

- a. Please address the impact on faculty resources including the changes in numbers of faculty, class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratios, etc.

No changes.

- b. Please address the impact on course enrollment in other units and provide an explanation of discussions with representatives of those units.

No changes predicted.

- c. Please address the impact on the University Library

None.

- d. Please address the impact on technology and space (e.g. computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.)

None.

For new degree programs only:

- 3) Briefly describe how this program will support the University's mission, focus, and/or current priorities. Include specific objectives and measurable outcomes that demonstrate the program's consistency with and centrality to that mission.
- 4) Please provide an analysis of the market demand for this degree program. What market indicators are driving this proposal? What type of employment outlook should these graduates expect? What resources will be provided to assist students with job placement?
- 5) If this is a proposed graduate program, please discuss the programs intended use of waivers. If the program is dependent on waivers, how will the unit compensate for lost tuition revenue?

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE:

The ICR would like to implement this course-requirement change in the Fall of 2019, at the latest. Students already in the program will be allowed to choose between being grandfathered into the new requirement or completing their degree under the old policy and protocols. As noted above, the proposed reduction of required courses for a PhD in our program will not prohibit students from taking more course hours than the required minimum.

STATEMENT FOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY CATALOG:

The catalog description of the ICR's PhD program will remain the same except that the second paragraph will now read as follows:

“Coursework: ICR requires 64 credit-hours of coursework for students entering with a Masters degree. The ICR requires 96 credit-hours of coursework for students entering without a Masters degree. Students are responsible for designing their own programs of coursework, which are submitted for approval by the Institute's Program Evaluation Committee.”

Also, the new course-hour requirement would be represented in the table under that paragraph, so that the “Total Hours” would read “64 hours.”

Attached you will find a newly revised version of how these two changes will affect the ICR's representation in the UIUC Course Catalog. We have identified the changes with red font.

Institute of Communications Research

- [Overview](#)
- [Doctoral](#)
- [Joint Program](#)

Doctor of Philosophy in Communications and Media

Since its inception, the ICR's doctoral program has encouraged interdisciplinary studies of communications and media. Students are encouraged to design and interdisciplinary course of study.

Coursework: The ICR requires 64 credit-hours of coursework for students entering with a Masters degree. The ICR requires 96 credit-hours of coursework for students entering without a Masters degree. Students are responsible for designing their own programs of coursework, which are submitted for approval by the Institute's Program Evaluation Committee.

Although students are given the broadest latitude in designing interdisciplinary programs, they must include courses that fill certain requirements.

Because students are admitted from diverse backgrounds, the Proseminar first introduces them to the history of communication research. The second semester revolves around the current debates in the field of communications research. While gaining an overview of the central issues and learning a common language, students in the Proseminar are also able to locate their own interests more precisely within the field of communications and media research in their historical and contemporary forms.

Entering with a Bachelors Degree

Code	Title	Hours
Proseminar		
MDIA 571	Proseminar I	4
MDIA 572	Proseminar II	4
Two research methods courses, 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative		8
Elective Hours		64
MDIA 599	Thesis Research (min applied toward degree)	16
Total Hours		96

[Course List](#)

Entering with an approved Masters Degree

Code	Title	Hours
Proseminar		
MDIA 571	Proseminar I	4
MDIA 572	Proseminar II	4
Two research methods courses, 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative		8
Elective Hours		32

Code	Title	Hours
MDIA 599	Thesis Research (min/max applied toward degree)	16
Total Hours		64

Other Requirements¹

Requirement	Description
Qualifying Exam Required	No
Preliminary Exam Required	Yes
Final Exam/Dissertation Defense Required	Yes
Dissertation Deposit Required	Yes
Minimum GPA:	3.0
Grad Other Degree Requirements	
Course List	

Research Methods

Students must complete at least 8 hours in research methods. In order to provide a competent background for constructively understanding the field's wide-ranging literature, students are required to take one quantitative and one qualitative course.

In addition to methodology courses taught by the College of Media faculty, students are encouraged to consider relevant courses in quantitative or non-quantitative methods elsewhere on campus. Listings of such courses are available in the ICR office.

Preliminary Exams

Students, in consultation with their chosen advisors, select a committee of four faculty members for their preliminary exams. Upon completion of coursework, students undertake preparing written examinations. Upon completing written answers for each examiner, along with a dissertation proposal, students undergo a 2-hour oral examination. Upon passing the preliminary examination, students proceed with work on their dissertations.

Dissertation

Because the Doctor of Philosophy degree is primarily a research degree, candidates are required to demonstrate a capacity for independent research by producing an original dissertation on a topic within the general area of communications and media research.

Final Examination

After students distribute polished drafts of their dissertations, they take final oral examinations administered by their chosen committees. The student is required to support and interpret the dissertation to the committee's satisfaction, as well as to show an adequate grasp of the selected area of concentration that it represents.

¹ For additional details and requirements students should request an e-mail copy of ICR Abbreviated Graduate Handbook for further, detailed information on program requirements, and refer to the [Graduate College Handbook](#).

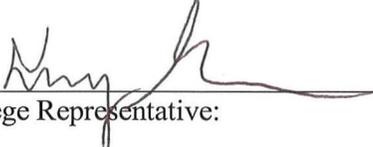
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CLEARANCES: (Clearances should include signatures and dates of approval. **These signatures must appear on a separate sheet.** If multiple departments or colleges are sponsoring the proposal, please add the appropriate signature lines below.)

Signatures:


Unit Representative: _____

12 - 10 - 18
Date: _____


College Representative: _____

12/10/18
Date: _____


Graduate College Representative: _____

3/21/19
Date: _____

Council on Teacher Education Representative:

Date:

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic
Affairs

Swanlund Administration Building
601 East John Street
Champaign, IL 61820



March 26, 2019

Gay Miller, Chair
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Office of the Senate
228 English Building, MC-461

Dear Professor Miller:

Enclosed is a proposal from the College of Media to revise the requirements for the Ph.D. in the Institute of Communications Research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathryn A. Martensen'.

Kathryn A. Martensen
Assistant Provost

Enclosures

c: J. Hart
A. McKinney
J. Hay
K. Clark

Graduate College

110 Coble Hall
801 South Wright Street
Champaign, IL 61820-6210



Executive Committee

2018-2019 Members

Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko
Dean & Chair
Graduate College

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Art & Design

Zachary Berent
Graduate Student, Mechanical
Science & Engineering

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Becky Fuller
Animal Biology

Justine Murison
English

Denice Hood
Education

Tania Ionin
Linguistics

Brian Bailey
Computer Science

Lori Raetzman
Molecular & Integrative
Physiology

Katie Ranard
Graduate Student, Nutritional
Sciences

Sandra Rodriguez-Zas
Animal Sciences

Sela Sar
Advertising

Mark Steinberg
History

Terri Weissman
Art & Design

March 21, 2019

Kathy Martensen
Office of the Provost

Dear Kathy,

Included is a proposal from the College of Media for a **“Reduction of Course-hour Requirements for the PhD in the Institute of Communications Research”**.

The proposal was received on December 18, 2018 and reviewed at the Graduate College Executive Committee meeting on February 19, 2019. The committee approved the proposal pending receipt of revisions to the program of study statement. Those revisions were received on March 15, 2019.

We find that this proposal meets the standards of Graduate Education at Illinois and we now forward for your review.

Sincerely,

John C. Hart
Executive Associate Dean
Graduate College

c: J. Hay
K. Clark