

Professional Development in the Department of Communication Studies

The Department of Communication Studies is a leader among doctoral programs in its provision of organized professional development support throughout the course of a student's whole program. In addition to three courses—COMM 702, COMM 907 and COMM 909—the Department offers ongoing professional development of various kinds, as described below. Both the [Graduate School](#) and [Center for Faculty Excellence](#) (including the [Future Faculty Fellowship program](#)) provide programs in professional development as well. These are excellent programs, although, by necessity, not adapted to the norms and practices of Communication Studies in particular.

Department Professional Development Courses

COMM 702 Teaching in Communication Studies is a 3-hour required course, offered typically in the fall semester. It is designed to encourage intellectually rigorous and personally meaningful conversations about teaching. Readings and discussions address different approaches to teaching communication, enactment of communication instruction, assessing communication outcomes, and growing as a teacher. Students leave the course with a draft of a statement of teaching philosophy, a course proposal, and a creative lesson plan.

COMM 909 Proseminar in Professional Development is offered as a year-long series of professional development workshops relevant to you during your program of study, and in some cases, well beyond, e.g., preparing curriculum vitae for various purposes, developing research arguments, “nuts and bolts” of publishing in academic journals, applying for internal or external funding, professional networking, etc. The course offers one hour of credit for an academic year and may be repeated once for credit. All department graduate students, regardless of enrollment in 909, are always welcome. Watch the graduate listserv for information about the upcoming year's syllabus.

COMM 907 Research Practicum, popularly known as “Buff and Polish,” is required for students finishing their coursework. This capstone course, usually offered in the spring semester, prepares students for the demands of the academic job market, with sessions on curriculum vitae for job applications, writing application letters, preparing teaching and research portfolios, interviewing, negotiating a job offer, etc. Buff and Polish is a three-hour, required course.

Additional Professional Development Resources and Opportunities

Part II of the Plan of Study form encourages you to start developing a career orientation from the time of admission, in a systematic way.

Graduate teaching assistants assist with and independently teach undergraduate courses, with the guidance of a faculty teaching supervisor.

Graduate students collaborate with faculty to develop the department's research colloquium series, which variously features graduate student and faculty presenters, and provides a forum for collegial discussion.

Graduate students are invited to serve on a number of department committees and informally to collaborate with faculty on department events and initiatives.

Advisers provide direct counsel on many topics, possibly to include publication and presentation opportunities, collaboration on faculty/graduate student research teams or in working groups, service and leadership roles, and job application and postdoctoral fellowship decisions. Students are encouraged to share drafts of possible publication submissions, to carefully consider teaching options, and generally to address all issues of professional concern with their advisers.

All students review their accomplishments each spring with their advisers. This review is intended to enhance planning and to enable the student and adviser alike to "take stock" of the student's scholarly and professional development.