COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES

Our one-year program combines academic inquiry and hands-on experience. You’ll engage with media theory while building your own portfolio and learning from some of the top public broadcasting professionals in the country, including program partners and pioneers in public radio and television, WFUV and WNET. Choose between two tracks:

- Multiplatform Journalism: including audio, video, and interactive web content production and distribution
- Strategic Communication: for nonprofits, the public sector, or social enterprises, including social media marketing, public relations, fundraising, and advocacy

This program is designed as a one-year program for full-time students, but evening courses allow for daytime employment, fieldwork, or internships. The curriculum requires two intensive courses, two core courses, two fundamentals courses, two specialized track courses, two elective courses or internships, and a master’s project for a total of 30 credits. Courses in both tracks are available at both Bronx and Manhattan campuses.

For more information about Communication and Media Studies, visit our page on the Fordham website.

Admissions

For admissions into the MA in Public media, the following is required.

Official GRE Scores

Required for those wanting to be considered for financial aid.

These should be sent directly by the testing service to the Office of Graduate Admissions, Fordham University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences – Code #2259

Official Transcripts

The successful candidate for admission should have a 3.0 GPA or better

Official degree transcripts confirming prior degree conferral should be ordered at least one month prior to the application deadline. Please ensure that they are sent directly to the Office of Admissions via secure electronic delivery. If electronic delivery is not available, please request that your transcripts be submitted directly via post, in a sealed envelope, to: Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Office of Admissions, Fordham University, 441 E. Fordham Rd., Bronx, NY 10458.

Please note: you may upload unofficial copies of your transcripts to your application while the Office of Admissions awaits receipt of your official transcripts.

Statement of Intent

No more than 3 double-spaced pages

Resume/CV & Written Personal Statement

Submit via the online application

Three Letters of Recommendation

Academic and/or professional, submitted directly by referees via the online application

English Proficiency

International applicants whose native language is not English are required to complete and submit to GSAS prior to matriculation their official scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). GSAS will also consider a student’s International English Language Testing System (IELTS)—Cambridge English Proficiency Level language testing results.

Official TOEFL or IELTS scores should be sent directly by the testing service to the Office of Graduate Admissions, Fordham University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences – Code #2259.

A waiver for this requirement can be approved based on your educational history at a U.S.-based institution and if the official language of your country of origin/nationality is English.

If your native language is not English a skype interview may be required for non-native English speaking applicants.

Work Samples

A maximum of three work samples may be submitted electronically. These may take the form of written work (either analytical or journalistic), the articulation of internship experience(s), or some type of digital production (e.g., a website, short film, or video, piece of multimedia journalism, audio piece or podcast, a data visualization or motion graphic)

Merit Funding

Highly qualified applicants may qualify for:

- a graduate assistantship package which provides a stipend, a 50% tuition scholarship and an internship at WFUV
- two partial tuition scholarships of $10,000 each
- paid internship at the Donald McGannon Communication Research Center

For more information about admissions to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, please visit their page on the Fordham website.

Programs

- Public Media (MA)
  - Multiplatform Journalism Track
  - Strategic Communications Track

Courses

Graduate coursework in Communications is offered through the Public Media program.

PMMA 5001. Public Media Theory and Practice. (3 Credits)

This course will trace the evolution of public broadcasting in the United States, with particular emphasis on the ways in which PBS, NPR, Pacifica, community broadcasters and other noncommercial entities have defined the “public” in response to changing social, political, economic and technological factors.
PMMA 5002. Public Journalism. (3 Credits)
This course covers the theories, history, and main conventions of public service and nonprofit journalism. It explores the basic forms that public service journalism takes today in broadcast, print, and on the Internet. It also covers the ethical and legal framework for public journalism in the United States. Students will also have the opportunity to create and workshop journalistic content in the tradition of public journalism. This course is open to senior undergraduates majoring or concentrating in Journalism with the instructor's permission.

Attribute: JOUR.

PMMA 5003. Strategic Communication. (3 Credits)
This course provides an introduction and overview of the field of strategic communication, covering topics such as communication within and between organizations; persuasion, promotion, and public relations; and the planning and development of coordinated communication campaigns utilizing various modes, forms, and technologies of communication.

PMMA 5011. Multimedia Tools. (1.5 Credits)
This intensive graduate course is ideal for beginners with little or no prior experience using Flash software, a web animation authoring tool. The class provides experience developing web-based multimedia materials that contain sound, graphic, animation, and interactive components. Students will be involved in examining and evaluating existing Flash projects, gaining hands-on experience through a series of practical skills-building tasks, and planning and creating a meaningful, authentic final project such as an informational or instructional tutorial, a dynamic simulation, or an engaging multimedia activity.

PMMA 5012. Fundamentals of Web Design. (1.5 Credits)
In this week-long intensive course, students will develop fundamental programming skills that will facilitate the creation of interactive media projects, data visualization, and digital portfolios/websites. It will cover principles and best practices for creating usable websites, HTML and use of HTML-based tools, web page writing and editing, web graphics and interactive elements, website architecture and/or content management.

PMMA 5101. Freedom of Expression. (3 Credits)
This course examines the history and theory of freedom of expression in the United States. We will trace the philosophical and political origins of free speech, examining key assumptions about human nature, individual liberty, and the role of government in a Democracy underlying the First Amendment. The Constitutional Framers gave us an incredible gift of freedom. But with that freedom comes responsibility. This class explores that tension. When, if ever, should expression be regulated in a Democratic society? When should the rights of the individual be curtailed to protect the group? Should all forms of media have the same degree of freedom? What special challenges are posed by the development of new communication technologies? Are there any types of speech that should be restricted? If so, which ones, and who should decide? Are there certain circumstances when free speech should be curtailed in order to support other interests, such as diversity, equality or respect for differences in religious beliefs? Should limits on speech be allowed in the name of national security? Should certain forms of expression be prohibited during wartime? What kind of restrictions can be placed on public protests? Should propaganda be legal? An investigation of our nation’s history – and the major Supreme Court cases dealing with freedom of expression – suggests that despite often lofty rhetoric about liberty. Americans actually have a great deal of ambivalence about free speech. By studying the application of First Amendment theory to various situations, such as flag burning, hate speech, restrictions on public protests, leaks of classified material and dissent during wartime, we will explore just how much freedom we actually have, and how much we really want to have.

Attributes: CEED, CENS, PMTC.

PMMA 5102. Press, Politics, and Public Policy. (3 Credits)
This course covers the interaction between the American mass media, politics, and public policymaking. We examine some of the most important interactions between the press and politicians to answer questions about the role of the media in American society.

Attribute: PMTC.

PMMA 5103. Environment and the Media. (3 Credits)
This course focuses on the intersections between contemporary environmental issues, communication and media systems, culture and social change. It explores the unique contributions that perspectives from communication and media theory can bring can bring to the study of the environment and the natural world. It also considers how these perspectives can inform strategic communication practices that aim to bolster long-term global environmental sustainability.

Attributes: CEED, CENS, PMTC.

PMMA 5104. Theories of Media, Culture, and Society. (3 Credits)
This course uses primary sources to deepen students’ understanding of the inter-relationship between media, culture, and society. One of the main objectives is therefore to build students’ reading and analysis skills by exposing them to difficult theoretical material in an environment designed to help them learn to read this kind of text.

Attribute: PMTC.

PMMA 5105. Media Ethics. (3 Credits)
This course will examine the practices of mass media from the standpoint of producers and the public, with focus on intellectual property, privacy, confidentiality, conflict of interest, censorship, corporate responsibility, and new technologies.

Attribute: PMTC.
PMMA 5106. Race, Gender, & Digital Media. (3 Credits)
This course analyzes representations of social class, racial and ethnic identity, and gender and sexuality in digital media. The class will use a mixture of hands-on activities with contemporary media (such as blogging, journaling, and online discussion) plus more traditional readings about theories of representation and embodiment.
Attributes: CEED, CENS, PMTC, URSG.

PMMA 5140. Themes in Urban Public Policy and Power. (3 Credits)
We see around us a city constantly in a state of change, dynamic change in which multiple actors compete daily. What are they competing for? And why? What does power mean for those actors? How is it to be defined? Who wins, who loses, and why? What are some of the policy issues that confront actors in a city whose only constant is change? We will look at a series of urban issues and ideas, often with a focus on New York City. We will also hear from and be able to talk with guest speakers with unique histories and perspectives. This should help inform our thinking about the issues we discuss, their historical and political context, and their salience.

PMMA 5201. Social Media and Civic Engagement. (3 Credits)
This theoretical course focuses on how social media impacts political participation, crowdsourcing (and the role of mobile), the role of digital networks in contemporary social movements, networked/participatory citizenship.
Attribute: PMTC.

PMMA 5202. Digital Media and Social Responsibility. (3 Credits)
This course examines the choices and responsibilities that shape personal identity and common humanity for those who regularly employ the tools of digital media and computer technology. Regular use of digital media enables individuals to separate from their physical selves and from the community spaces in which they have traditionally lived. This course focuses on the resulting ethical tensions.
Attribute: PMTC.

PMMA 5203. Technology & Public Comm. (3 Credits)
This course focuses on the study of technology in the context of public communication, and is primarily concerned with the role that media, technology, and symbol systems play in shaping communication, consciousness, and culture, from the evolution of our innate capacity for speech and language, to the development of writing systems, to the invention of the printing press with movable type, to our contemporary electronic media environment.
Attribute: PMTC.

PMMA 5204. Civic Media. (3 Credits)
Participating in local life can be difficult. Information is hard to obtain and validate, local meetings are difficult to attend, networks are challenging to build. Increasingly, governments, advocacy groups, community organizers, and individual citizens are looking to digital tools to increase and improve the conditions in which we live and enhance our opportunities to engage. We will look at academic research surrounding citizenship and engagement in a digital era and cover research into many genres of civic media, from citizen journalism to hackathons, tech for development, activist art hacker culture, and games for good. This class will not only explore the various goals campaigns are using digital tools to meet, but will also focus on what type of citizen these tools are enabling and encouraging people to become.
Attributes: CEED, CENS, PMSC, PMTC.

PMMA 5205. Social Entrepreneurship. (3 Credits)
This course provides an overview of the use of business and entrepreneurial skills to drive social change. Students will analyze different definitions of social entrepreneurship, examine the fundamental theories and frameworks of social entrepreneurship, and engage with current debates around social change. Social ventures around the New York City area will be used as case studies of sustainable solutions to social problems.
Attribute: PMTC.

PMMA 5206. Political Campaigning in a Social Media Age. (3 Credits)
Social media has changed political campaigns in ways both incremental and monumental. This class will lead students in analyzing the practices, strategies, and tactics of contemporary campaigning in order to learn best practices across a variety of social media channels, understand how such practices impact traditional theories of political communication, and assess their role in our democracy. This class will be oriented around changes seen in the 2016 and 2018 elections, and will emphasize both how to do the work of social media campaigning as well as how to study it. Over the course of the semester, we will focus on cutting-edge issues like bots and misinformation, meme production, microtargeting in social media ads, gamification, and using Twitter to drive earned media, and more. Students will read both practitioner and academic approaches to each topic, and will develop a final project that can be either applied or research-based.
Attribute: PMTC.

PMMA 5207. Mapping Injustice. (3 Credits)
This course uses "mapping" as an organizing theme for understanding and engaging with issues of social (in)justice. The everyday adoption of new spatial media—such as web-based mapping platforms, geosocial apps, and locative data—increasingly orients how society understands the past, experiences the present, and plans for the future. To map social justice and injustice is to consider how spatial media can help draw together dichotomies such as medium/method, art/science, and ontology/epistemology so as to trace, represent, and rework matters of inequity. This course will coincide and collaborate with the Mapping (In)Justice Symposium that will take place at Fordham in Fall 2019.

PMMA 6101. Audio Narrative (Reporting and Production). (3 Credits)
This COURSE TAKES PLACE OFF CAMPUS AT WNYC STUDIOS (Varick St in Hudson Square)** From newscasts to feature reporting, serial programming to podcasting, students in this course will learn how to produce journalism for a variety of audio platforms. Class will focus on how to report on and craft a compelling, attention-holding narrative no matter the form. The course will touch on all of the fundamentals – from how to gather quality audio, to strong interview techniques, to writing for the ear to vocal performance.
Attribute: PMMJ.

PMMA 6102. Video Narrative (Reporting and Production). (3 Credits)
This course teaches the basics of storytelling in video form. Students will learn to research, report, shoot, and edit video stories appropriate for use in a public media setting.
Attribute: PMMJ.
PMMA 6103. Data Journalism and Interactive Graphics. (3 Credits)
This class will blend theories of digital media and journalism with journalistic practice and the development of skills related to both understanding and translating big data. This emerging discipline touches on information and interactivity design, mapping, graphing, animation tools, and data analysis. In this class, we will apply these interdisciplinary areas of study to the practices of reporting and editing as they relate to gathering, analyzing, and visualizing interactive data-driven stories. We will focuses not only on official journalism, but also include awareness-raising efforts by advocacy/civic groups.
Attributes: DATA, PMMJ.

PMMA 6104. Alternative and Advocacy Journalism. (3 Credits)
Students will learn how to produce, aggregate and disseminate journalistic content with the explicit goal of making disadvantaged communities better informed, connected to one another, and able to influence policy decisions. We will focus the voice-giving role played by citizen journalism, giving special attention to the content, economics, and community-building role played by ethnic, youth, homeless, incarcerated media sectors, and the role played by digital media.
Attributes: HUHR, PMMJ, PMSC.

PMMA 6105. Cross-Platform Journalism. (3 Credits)
*THIS COURSE TAKES PLACE OFF CAMPUS AT WNET STUDIOS—(8th Ave & 50th St)* This course is offered in collaboration with WNED, New York’s public television station. The course will focus on teaching students to craft video pieces for public television, including story generation, interviewing, reporting, writing, shooting video and editing. The course will also cover how to create content for digital media including websites and social media platforms. Students will learn best practices in broadcasting and discuss ethical issues facing multimedia journalists, particularly those in public media.
Attributes: PMMJ.

PMMA 6106. Online Journalism. (3 Credits)
This course centers on the most current trend facing journalism today: the Internet’s effect on the content of news media and the work of reporters. The course begins with a survey of open source journalism and convergence culture, examining the collision between old and new media, and the mass amateurization of professional communication. We will consider the transformation of journalism in the digital age in light of the apparent shrinking size of articles, the reduction in readers’ attention span, and the decline of deep reading.
Attributes: PMMJ.

PMMA 6107. Opinion Writing. (3 Credits)
This course explores the great American tradition of opinion writing and commentary in traditional print and evolving online formats in order to gain an understanding of contemporary social, professional and intellectual concerns in the practice of journalism. This is as much an exploration of critical thinking as it is of writing, so there will also be emphasis on aspects of philosophy, logic and argumentation. The course will attempt to cover print, broadcast and all forms of new media.
Attributes: PMMJ.

PMMA 6108. Advanced Interviews and Profiles. (3 Credits)
This course will teach students advanced reporting and profile writing for different multimedia journalism platforms. Heavy emphasis will be placed on the art of interviewing. Students will learn how to compose interviews, invite subjects to interact with them on the meaningful level, and engage with public issues.
Attributes: PMMJ.

PMMA 6109. First Person Journalism. (3 Credits)
First person journalism is nothing new. As part of the New Journalism movement, reporters like Tom Wolfe and Joan Didion have been infusing their storytelling with subjectivity for decades. Still, the digital shift in journalism and explosion of social media has brought a new wave of first person journalism to the web. This course will explore the history of first person journalism and help students use first person perspective to bring reported pieces to life. Students will look critically at the form to consider the limitations of personal narrative in journalism. On that note, this course will not be limited to personal narratives. Students will also work on reported stories in which their experiences as journalists and citizens impacts their storytelling structure.
Attributes: PMMJ.

PMMA 6110. Digital Storytelling. (3 Credits)
This class explores storytelling in emerging platforms. From the still image and the soundscape, we will evolve to discuss the tools and narrative forms across digital film-making, game design and interactive web narratives. Exposure to and workshops in integrated storytelling technologies will enable students to create story projects of their own.
Attributes: PMMJ.

PMMA 6201. PR for the Public Interest. (3 Credits)
This course is designed to simulate the real-world public relations needs of an organization in the non-profit, advocacy or public interest sectors. It covers the wide range of PR needs and functions such organizations have, preparing students to succeed in organizational environments from large, established charities or NGOs to start-ups, from grassroots advocacy groups to blended businesses involving social entrepreneurship.
Attributes: PMSC.

PMMA 6203. Marketing and Branding in the Public Interest. (3 Credits)
Social marketing seeks to integrate research, best practice, theory, audience, and partnership insight to inform the delivery of social change programs that are effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable. This course offers a strategic framework for developing a social media advocacy campaign, using social and digital media to help shape public debate, mobilize public action and to speak directly to those with influence to help bring about social change.
Attributes: CEED, CENS, PMSC.

PMMA 6204. Cross-Platform Comm Strategies. (3 Credits)
This course will use theory and practice to learn the skills needed to produce cross-platform campaigns that successfully target and reach key populations. Additionally, we will focus on the socio-technical conditions that make this approach necessary and practical in today’s media environment. We will highlight areas of viral content, the politics of platforms, translating messages across channels, and creating shareable media within the context of advocacy, electoral and nonprofit sectors.
Attributes: PMSC.

PMMA 6205. Online Analytics and Metrics. (3 Credits)
In this course, you will learn how to use data to construct, analyze, and circulate stories that are important to you. Analytics from email CMS systems, websites, and social media can tell you about who’s reading your content, what messages are working (and which aren’t), and help you increase or refine their reach. This course will focus on theories behind using data to assess refine, and target messages, and cover best practices for doing so through hands-on work with a variety of commonly-used platforms.
Attributes: DATA, PMSC.
PMMA 6206. Persuasion and Public Opinion. (3 Credits)
This course blends theory and practice to explore how we convince others to change their attitudes or behavior in order to accomplish specified goals. Working in multiple contexts, the course is designed to help students become better analysts and evaluators of persuasive messages in several social and political arenas; better persuaders—better at recognizing opportunities for influence, and at employing effective strategies for convincing others and building support; and more versatile at persuasion across a variety of communication channels and media platforms.
Attributes: HUCB, PMSC.

PMMA 6207. International Communication. (3 Credits)
The course will take at least two issues that involve many countries and determine how communication theories could effectively address them. Examples of issues include hunger, drinking water, internet governance, trade policy, or health care could be one type of issue, while the other could be an issue such as terrorism. Topics include how experts communicate their knowledge effectively, how cultural traditions affect perception, how changes of the medium affect the communication process, the role of nation-states, transnational corporations and non-government institutions, and the consequences of the current trends in globalization.
Attributes: HUCB, PMSC.

PMMA 6208. Data and Communication. (3 Credits)
Obtaining, interpreting, visualizing and displaying data are essential skills for communication professionals in the 21st Century. Featuring hands-on practice and examples, this course explores a wide range of data based communications, ranging from campaign strategy to data journalism and advertising tactics. Students will work on in-depth projects that require a demonstrable understanding of data, visualization, strategy, testing and evaluation.
Attribute: PMSC.

PMMA 6209. Storytelling for Public Good. (3 Credits)
In this class, students will focus on how to craft stories that inform, mobilize, or persuade, and ultimately serve the public interest. Special attention will be paid to the role of narrative in both journalism and advocacy and changing channels of storytelling, including film and television, long form and citizen journalism, interactive documentaries, and games for social change.
Attribute: PMSC.

PMMA 6210. Cross Platform Production. (3 Credits)
This course will provide students with a variety of production skills for media-oriented professions, including shooting and editing for sound, still image, and video, with an eye toward editing for a variety of digital platforms. Students will be expected to produce professional quality content over the course of the semester. This will build upon the Public Media program’s summer workshop course.
Attribute: PMSC.

PMMA 6398. Internship. (3 Credits)
The internship will be chosen by the student, working in conjunction with the graduate director. This internship is to be supervised by an appropriate faculty member, and will involve regular meetings, bi-monthly reports, and a final written summary of the internship experience.

PMMA 6399. Internship II. (3 Credits)
Students have the possibility to do an internship for three credits per semester, for a total of up to six credits for the program. The internship will be chosen by the student, working in conjunction with the graduate director and Fordham University’s career center. This internship is to be supervised by an appropriate faculty member, and will involve regular meetings, bi-monthly reports, and a final written summary of the internship experience.

PMMA 6619. Special Master’s Project. (3 Credits)
This course represents the culmination of the student’s course of study. He/She will create a final project based on projected future plans and career path.

PMMA 8999. Independent Study. (1 to 4 Credits)