COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES

Courses

Graduate coursework in communications is offered through the M.A. in public media program.

Our Courses

PMMA 5001. Public Interest Media Theory and Practice. (3 Credits)
Serving as a core introductory course for the Public Media MA program, this class examines central topics in the study and practice of media in the public interest. Students consider what is the role of media and communication in promoting (or constraining) positive social change, and what unique roles do journalists and strategic communication professionals play throughout this process? What do we mean, exactly, by concepts such as public media, the public interest, social justice, and civic engagement? How do historical and contemporary power dynamics, information technologies, and economic structures shape the types of stories that dominate the public sphere, and how do resistant voices find ways to disrupt those narratives over time? Course readings and multimedia materials are drawn from a wide variety of academic disciplines and professional sectors, while course assignments ask students to grapple with real-world topics, aiming to not only analyze social problems but also identify potential solutions.

PMMA 5002. Public Journalism. (3 Credits)
This course will teach students how to operate effectively as a multimedia reporter for public or nonprofit media in a converged world. It also covers the basic tenets, conventions, and traditions of journalism in the public interest. This will largely be a hand-on journalism course. The course will mostly cover print, audio, and video. It will also cover data journalism, watchdog journalism, augmented journalism, social media, ethics, law, diversity, and other issues essential to the profession today. 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)
Scholars and practitioners alike have devoted decades to the study of how organizations communicate to achieve their goals. They have analyzed advertising and public relations since the inception of these professions; they have also sought to investigate the protests of activists and the tactics of NGOs. This class will follow this intellectual tradition, weaving together insights from sociology, psychology, business, media studies, and a number of other disciplines to explore strategic communication in the contemporary world. To help direct this course, in keeping with the mission of the Public Media MA program, the focus will be on how strategic communication can be used to advance social justice and the public interest. This entails not simply studying the campaigns of organizations doing good but also confronting tough questions about how these well-intentioned groups can communicate in ways that are ethical, effective, and equitable.

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, PSIC.

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. 

Attributes: PMTC, PSIC.

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. This class will explore the unique contributions that perspectives from communication and media theory can bring to the study of “the environment” and “the natural world.” The course will also consider how these perspectives can inform strategic communication practices that aim to bolster long-term global environmental sustainability. Case studies will cover a diverse set of environmental topics, including climate change, environmental justice, the global industrial food system, public understandings of scientific risk, human-animal relations, and environmental media and journalism. 

Attributes: CEED, CENS, PMTC, PSIC.

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. 

Attributes: PMTC, PSIC.

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. 

Attributes: PMTC, PSIC.
PMMA 5106. Race, Gender, and Digital Media. (3 Credits)
This course examines the theory, history, politics, and aesthetics of digital media. We will utilize an intersectional feminist approach to explore race, gender, and broader questions of identity and difference from early computing to social networking. Topics include diversity in the tech industry, virtual communities, and online activism. Ultimately, the class will discuss the role that digital media plays in promoting—or preventing—civic engagement and social change.
Attributes: CEED, CENS, PMTC, PSIC, URSG.

PMMA 5107. Media and Sexuality. (3 Credits)
By all accounts, we have witnessed an explosion of sexuality and LGBTQ representation in the media over the last decade. This course critically examines the terms of this new visibility, and inquires into the exclusions that accompany the recognition of certain queer and trans subjects. Topics covered will include the minority model versus queer theory, queering the text, queer of color critique, and LGBTQ media activism. Ultimately, the class will discuss the role of popular media texts and industries in constructing our understanding of sexuality and its intersections with other identity formations, and the potential for popular and social media to facilitate and/or foreclose opportunities for civic engagement and social change.

PMMA 5140. Themes in Urban Public Policy and Power. (3 Credits)
This course surveys a series of issues and ideas in urban public policy in order to understand why urban actors compete, what power means to them, and what sorts of dynamic policy issues they confront.
Attribute: PSIC.

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.
Attributes: PMTC, PSIC.

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.
Attributes: PMTC, PSIC.

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, PSIC.

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.
Attributes: PMTC, PSIC.

PMMA 5206. Social Media and Political Campaigns. (3 Credits)
Social media has changed political campaigns in ways both incremental and monumental. This course 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, 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.
Attributes: PMSC, PMTC.

PMMA 5207. Mapping Injustice. (3 Credits)
This course centers “mapping” as an organizing theme for understanding and engaging social justice and injustice because of its expanding role in literally and metaphorically arranging contemporary life. The everyday adoption of new spatial media—as such as web-based mapping platforms, geosocial apps, and locative data—increasingly orient how society understands the past, experiences the present, and plans for the future. To map social (in)justice 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.
Attributes: HUHR, PSIC.
PMMA 5208. Digital Media and Migrant Justice. (3 Credits)
This course offers an introduction to the border technologies and biometric data entailed in the U.S. immigration ecosystem while also exploring how digital media could instead help address the injustices faced by immigrants through critical advocacy for their rights, well-being, and dignity. Guest speakers from community-based organizations working for migrant justice will visit the class to share their professional experience. We will engage in dialogue about the kinds of digital "accompaniment" that different migrant communities need in the 21st century. While legal or spiritual accompaniment refers to the provision of legal or spiritual support to immigrants on their journey through a complex immigration ecosystem, students will consider what it means to digitally accompany immigrants as they navigate surveillance networks, online portals, and mobile applications.

PMMA 6101. Audio Narrative (Reporting and Production). (3 Credits)
From spot news to feature reporting, students in this course will learn how to produce audio narrative with public media values. The class will focus on how to craft and report compelling, attention-holding narratives. The course will cover the fundamentals of strong audio narrative, including quality sound gathering, strong interview techniques, writing for the ear, and authentic vocal delivery. Open to students in both tracks of the Public Media M.A. program.
Attributes: PMMJ, PMTC.

PMMA 6102. Video Narrative (Reporting and Production). (3 Credits)
This course is a workshop for students who want to elevate their skills in creating videos that have strong story lines and exhibit best practices in reporting and production. Students will learn the elements that go into making compelling videos, including story selection, casting and interviewing your characters, shooting strong visuals, and writing and editing for clarity and impact. You'll also learn to weave facts and issues into the narrative and make sure your stories are journalistically sound. Students who have not taken the necessary prior courses (PMMA 5002 or PMMA 6210) may request permission from the instructor to take this course.
Attributes: PMMJ, PMTC.
Prerequisites: PMMA 5002 or PMMA 6210.

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 WNET, 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.
Attribute: 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.
Attribute: 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.
Attribute: 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.
Attribute: 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.
Attribute: 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.
Attribute: PMMJ.
PMMA 6111. Advanced Writing and Enterprise Reporting. (3 Credits)
PMMA 6111: Advanced Writing and Enterprise Reporting This advanced course builds upon PMMA 5002, Public Journalism, to continue students' development as writers and reporters. While this is a multimedia journalism course, the focus is on the written word. The course will focus on driving students towards a professional level in their writing, interviewing, and narrative choices. Students will write and report a wide range of stories, focusing on enterprise and in-depth reporting. Must have previously taken PMMA 5002 Public Journalism. Students who have not taken the necessary prior courses may request permission from the instructor to take this course. TRACK: PMMA Journalism.
Attributes: PMMJ, PMTC.
Prerequisite: PMMA 5002.

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.
Attribute: PMSC.

PMMA 6203. Marketing, Branding, & Fundraising 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 speak directly to those with influence to help bring about social change.
Attributes: CEEED, CENS, PMSC, PMTC.

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 spreadable media within the context of advocacy, electoral and nonprofit sectors.
Attribute: 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. Global Media and Communication. (3 Credits)
This course aims to provide students with an international perspective to better understand communication theories and practices in different parts of the world. This global vision is especially important for communication scholar-practitioners, who will need to examine different actors, relationships, and trends in the global communication landscape as they get ready for their own role in their future career. This course will combine conceptual learning and class projects to help students gain both a theoretical foundation and firsthand research experience about international communication. Topics such as globalization, media and technology, audience, advocacy, and much more will be discussed in this course.
Attributes: HUCB, PSIC.

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.
Attributes: PMSC, PMTC.

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.
Attributes: PMSC, PSIC.

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: PMTC.
PMMA 6211. Public Relations and Strategic Communication for Nonprofits. (3 Credits)
This advanced course builds upon the topics covered in PMMA 5003, Strategic Communication, to deepen students’ understanding of how nonprofit organizations undertake internal and external communication. Through lectures, writing assignments, projects, and in-class workshops, students will learn how public relations is practiced in the nonprofit world and how nongovernmental organizations use internal and external communications strategically. The course will cover creating advocacy content including press releases, op-ed pieces, and newsletters. The course will also cover channel planning and the execution of social media campaigns in ways that are appropriate for nonprofit organizations. The class will also give students experience in crisis communication and reputation management. TRACK: PMMA Strategic Communication.
Attributes: PMSC, PMTC.

PMMA 6212. Digital Media and Advocacy. (3 Credits)
This course will focus on how two broad types of advocacy—social movements and campaigns—work in a digital age, and will help students develop skills that will apply to nonprofit advocacy, community organizing, electoral campaigning, and activism broadly speaking. Students will also develop a critical perspective on how activists, nonprofit organizations, and political strategists develop strategies to inform, persuade, and mobilize groups of people around an issue or cause. This course will cover a range of practical tactics and strategies for using particular digital media platforms—from mundane tools like email and SMS to emerging social media—to impact political participation.
Attributes: PMSC, URST.

PMMA 6213. Advanced Branding Practices to Drive the Public Interest. (3 Credits)
The central role branding plays in unifying organizations, galvanizing causes, and inspiring campaigns is often underestimated and underleveraged. At a time when clarity and consistency of purpose is increasingly critical to the success of any venture, branding expertise has never been more essential. Balancing theory and practice, the course will cover how to articulate a brand, how to center a brand for an organization, and how to use a brand to build effective, long-lasting outreach marketing campaigns in the public interest. Using a strategic framework, the course will cover a range of marketing practices from target audience assessment, creative development and evaluation, testing, and tracking. Advanced applications of branding in areas such as organizational structure and portfolio management, and its unique potential for social entrepreneurship will be explored as pivotal to creating value for institutions, individuals, and causes.
Attributes: PMSC, PMTC.
Prerequisite: PMMA 6203.

PMMA 6214. Codes and Modes of Communication. (3 Credits)
In this course, students will explore the different ways in which human beings send messages and make meaning, with an emphasis on pragmatic approaches to the process of communication, clarity and effective communication, leadership, and critical thinking. Understanding how differences in the ways that we communicate are differences that make a difference is essential for anyone concerned with communication in the public interest. Topics include language and symbolic communication; general semantics; analogical and digital communication; information, cybernetics, and systems; and relational communication and situational analysis. This course is open to students in both the Strategic Communication and Journalism tracks.
Attribute: PMTC.

PMMA 6215. Interactive Digital Storytelling. (3 Credits)
This course introduces students to the tools and techniques of interactive storytelling in the public interest. In this research-creation course, students will combine research, media production, and computer programming to present findings as web-based interactive audiovisual media content. Students will learn the theory and practice of interactive multimedia and explore the latest developments and opportunities in this growing field. No prior experience in computer programming is required. Appropriate for students in both the strategic communication and multiphase journalism concentrations of the public media M.A. program.
Attributes: PMMA, PMTC.
Mutually Exclusive: NMDD 3020.

PMMA 6216. Communicating Criminal Justice. (3 Credits)
This course helps students prepare for work involving advocacy or journalism by exploring the criminal justice system, with a focus on the role of communication. The course will present an overview of policing, justice, and incarceration and the information streams each part of the criminal justice system creates. Students will leave the course able to find and use the data created by police, courts, prisons, jails, government agencies, and other organizations involved in criminal justice. Students will also explore issues of ethics and equity in the criminal justice system, and will learn to be discerning consumers of criminal justice journalism, research, and data. Open to students in both the strategic communication and multiphase journalism tracks of the public media M.A. program, as well as to other graduate students with interest in communicating about criminal justice.
Attributes: CENS, PMTC.

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)

Courses in Other Areas
Courses in this group have the PMMA attribute and count as electives towards the M.A. in public media.

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