

Career-Related Services

Career Counseling
Graduate School Planning
Career Resource Library
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School of UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

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Communication Studies



Center for STRATEGIC ADVISING
& CAREER COUNSELING

Career Options for Communication Studies Majors

This booklet contains specific information about majoring in communication studies at The University of Texas at Austin, as well as career opportunities related to this major. The careers listed typically require a bachelor's degree, and special certification or training requirements are noted. Please use this booklet as an idea generator, rather than as a comprehensive list of all career options for communication studies majors. The career descriptions were obtained from Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling (CSA&CC) library resources and career websites (see listing of sources on last page).

The first section, "Direct Career Opportunities," includes careers that use the interpersonal and leadership skills acquired by communication studies majors. The second section, "More Career Opportunities," lists careers that are potentially available to all communication majors who have related experience or coursework.

For communication studies majors, there are many career options that require a master's or doctoral degree but do not require any particular undergraduate degree. Examples of these include law, international affairs, museum administration, library and information studies, hospital administration, and many more. For careers requiring graduate education, please visit our library or speak to a career counselor.

The CSA&CC offers many other services and resources to help you with your career planning. These include:

- Career Counseling
- Career Assessment
- Career Information Library
- Internship Information
- Graduate School Planning Assistance

Visit our website at utexas.edu/ugs/csacc or call 232-8400 for more information.

MAJORING IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Departmental Website: commstudies.utexas.edu

Campus Location: CMA 7.114

Phone Number: 471-5251

DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR

Communication Studies seeks to understand communication and to improve its practice in a variety of relationships. The focus is on two-person and family communication, communication in small groups and in large organizations, communication across communities, the nature of language and symbols, and the nature of argument and persuasion in political settings and in social movements.

AREAS OF STUDY

Corporate Communication

Human Relations

Political Communication

EXAMPLES OF COURSES

CMS 306M Professional Communication Skills

Designed to help students develop skills in one-on-one interactions, small group communication, and presentation skills. Basic communication theories as they relate to skill development are explored.

CMS 344K Lying and Deception

Examines lying and deception as civil, strategic, and manipulative behavior. Secrets, privacy, disclosures, and confidentiality are examined in a variety of familiar contexts.

CMS 347K Rhetoric of Popular Culture

The ways that film, television, music, fashion, the Internet, and other discourses of popular culture influence public attitudes, perceptions, and social relations.

CMS 357 Family Communication

Some of the common issues that face those who live in, counsel, and conduct research with families. The development of traditional families in the United States, different family structures that make up modern society, current issues that affect families, and the impact of communication on family experiences

Skills gained by Communication Studies majors

Communicating with diverse individuals and groups

Leading, managing and persuading

Conducting research

Writing

DIRECT JOB OPPORTUNITIES

This sampling includes careers that use the communication and leadership skills typically acquired by communication studies majors.

Alumni Relations and Development Specialist

Locate and maintain contact with alumni, coordinating regional alumni chapters, and help organize alumni events through communications, such as personal letters, newsletters, magazines, and occasionally, telephone calls, all appealing to the alumni's sense of school spirit and loyalty to the alma mater.

Campaign Manager, Fundraising

Manage face-to-face street fundraising campaigns. Administrate regular training sessions. Direct, motivate and supervise fundraisers and their team managers. Develop fundraising targets and oversight of field staff (fundraisers) in order to guarantee targets are met and exceeded.

Corporate Communications Manager

Create, implement and oversee communications programs that effectively describe and promote the organization and its products. Assist in the preparation of presentations and/or speeches geared toward employees and consumers. May provide supervision and direction to staff.

Corporate Recruiter

Maintain contacts in the community and travel, often to college campuses, to seek qualified job applicants. Screen and interview applicants and make job offers. Stay up-to-date on organizational hiring policies, equal employment opportunity, and affirmative action guidelines. Work for companies, government agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Employee Benefits Specialist

Design and administer the company's employee benefits program, which may include health insurance and pension plans, life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance, disability insurance, parental leave, child and elder care, long-term nursing home care insurance, employee assistance and wellness programs, and flexible benefits plans. Keep abreast of changing Federal and State regulations and legislation that may affect employee benefits.

Hospitality Manager, Regional

Oversee operations for a number of hospitality establishments in a given area to ensure organization profitability. Travel to each facility, run reports, hold meetings, and ensure performance meets expectations.

Investor Relations Specialist

Ensure an open flow of information from corporation to shareholders, prospective investors, financial analysts who make stock recommendations, lending institutions that issue lines of credit, and business and financial writers associated with the media. Will also need solid financial and investment expertise.

Labor and Industrial Relations Specialist

Implement industrial labor relations programs. Prepare information for management to use during collective bargaining agreement negotiations (a process that requires the specialist to be familiar with economic and wage data and to have extensive knowledge of labor law and collective bargaining trends). Interpret and administer the contract with respect to grievances, wages and salaries, employee welfare, health care, pensions, union and management practices, and other contractual stipulations.

Lobbying Organizer

Distribute information about a particular issue or organization, recruit volunteers, solicit funds, and organize such efforts as rallies, letter-writing campaigns, and voter registration drives. Work for special and public interest groups as well as professional lobbyists.

Management Analyst

Analyze and propose ways to improve an organization's structure, efficiency, or profits. Collect, review, and analyze information in order to make recommendations to managers. Specialize in a specific industry, such as health care or telecommunications, or specialize by type of business function, such as human resources, marketing, logistics, or information systems. In government, management analysts tend to specialize by type of agency. Work as part of a team of consultants, each specializing in one area, or independently with the organization's managers.

Media Relations Specialist (Communications Consultant)

Serve as the liaison between the company, person, or organization and newspaper, magazine and broadcast news editors and reporters. Work with other company specialists in public relations to develop corporate or product positioning strategies for specific media outlets. Plan photo, editorial, news and feature ideas to fit a publication's or broadcast medium's special promotions. Develop news and feature releases, and position the organization represented as an expert source. Organize media events and address information requests from the press. Collect and analyze media coverage of the company, person, or organization.

Mediator

Facilitate decisions between parties to help reach a fair and equitable settlement acceptable to both sides of an issue as an economical and efficient means to settle disputes outside of the courts. Assist in discussions and help elicit as much information as possible, given that mediation is a voluntary procedure that requires full disclosure of all facts related to the dispute at hand. Requires specific training in mediation procedures and practices, through a trained and qualified organization.

Meeting and Convention Planner

Coordinate all aspects of group meetings and conventions, including speakers, location, audio-visual equipment, and publicity. Work for nonprofit organizations, professional associations, hotels, corporations, and government agencies.

Patient Advocate

Work to represent the interests of patients/consumers in healthcare settings. Explain medical procedures, services, and policies. Help troubleshoot patients' concerns and problems. Act as advocate for patient with health care staff. Provide resources, information, and referrals to patients and their families. Conduct training programs for medical employees.

Sales Representative

Interest wholesale and retail buyers and purchasing agents in merchandise and address clients' questions and concerns. Represent one or several manufacturers or wholesale distributors by selling one product or a complementary line of products. Demonstrate products and advise clients on how using these products can reduce costs and increase sales. Market the company's products to manufacturers, wholesale and retail establishments, construction contractors, government agencies, and other institutions.

Special Event Planner

Plan, organize, and implement special events for corporations, non-profit agencies, or individuals. Consult with client, manage budget, supervise vendors, and perform follow-up assessment. Examples of special events include corporate open houses, anniversaries or weddings, charity fundraisers, political rallies, concerts, and festivals.

Sports Marketing Director

Develop ways to market a sports team, its name, and its players' personalities. Decide what kinds of advertising, promotions, and public relations will be most effective and coordinate with those departments. Negotiate and sell logo licenses to companies for licensed team products. Write marketing proposals for the team manager to review.

Strategic Planner

Explore, design, analyze, or evaluate specific business plans. Identify and evaluate merger or acquisition proposals, analyze the feasibility of a new product or service, design or evaluate new service-delivery processes, new distribution processes, new vendor relationships, or new business alliances.

Training Specialist

Plan, organize, and direct a wide range of training activities. Conduct orientation sessions and arrange on-the-job training for new employees. Help all employees maintain and improve their job skills and prepare for jobs requiring greater skill by setting up leadership development programs or individualized training plans. Help supervisors improve their interpersonal skills to deal effectively with employees. Lead programs to assist employees with job transitions as a result of mergers and acquisitions, as well as technological changes.

MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

This section lists other opportunities that may be available to all communication majors. Entry into these careers usually requires internship or volunteer experience or relevant coursework in addition to a communication studies degree. This is a sampling of job opportunities; for more options and ideas, please visit the CSA&CC career information library.

ADVERTISING/MARKETING/SALES

Advertising and Promotions Manager

Plan and direct advertising policies and programs or produce collateral materials, such as posters, contests, coupons, or give-aways, to create extra interest in the purchase of a product or service for a department, an entire organization, or on an account basis.

Buyer

Purchase merchandise directly from manufacturers and resell it to retailers (wholesale buyer) or purchase goods from wholesalers for resale (retail buyer). Become expert in particular kind of merchandise (such as clothing or electronics), stay informed about new trends, analyze customers' buying preferences, and decide what merchandise employer will sell.

Customer Service Representative

Interact with customers to provide information in response to inquiries about products and services and to handle and resolve complaints.

Real Estate Agent

Operate real estate office, or work for commercial real estate firm, overseeing real estate transactions. Other duties usually include selling real estate or renting properties and arranging loans. Requires a state license.

Sales/Service Manager

Direct the actual distribution or movement of a product or service to the customer. Coordinate sales distribution by establishing sales territories, quotas, and goals and establish training programs for sales representatives. Analyze sales statistics gathered by staff to determine sales potential and inventory requirements and monitor the preferences of customers.

BUSINESS

Corporate Foundation Worker

Help corporations support projects and social service agencies in the community by screening proposals, giving presentations, and advising company boards which projects to fund.

Insurance Agent

Assist companies and individuals in selecting the most appropriate insurance policies. Consult with clients, write reports, maintain records, and help process insurance claims. A professional license is required, and business courses can be helpful.

Loan Officer

Provide guidance and information for prospective loan applicants. Analyze and verify clients' creditworthiness. May negotiate repayment plans with delinquent borrowers. Work for commercial banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions.

Management Consultant Analyst

Analyze business problems by collecting information from both internal and external sources, developing possible solutions, and then making recommendations to management team. Usually work for consulting firms, who hire recent college graduates for 2-3 year analyst positions.

Retail Manager

Oversee profitable operation of retail stores, including hiring and supervising employees, managing inventory, and managing the budget. May be responsible for merchandise promotions and advertising.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Corporate Recruiter

Maintain contacts in the community and travel, often to college campuses, to seek qualified job applicants. Screen and interview applicants and make job offers. Stay up-to-date on organizational hiring policies, equal employment opportunity, and affirmative action guidelines. Work for companies, government agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Diversity Officer

Research, analyze, and monitor staffing policies to achieve diversity goals. Conduct outreach activities to identify and attract qualified women and minority applicants for company openings.

Human Resources Specialist

Create and carry out human resource programs and policies including staffing, compensation, benefits, immigration, employee relations, training and health and safety programs. Assess employees for promotion.

Meeting & Convention Planner

Coordinate all aspects of group meetings and conventions, including speakers, location, audio-visual equipment, and publicity. Work for nonprofit organizations, professional associations, hotels, corporations, and government agencies.

Public Relations Specialist

Write articles for internal publications, write press releases, assemble press kits, arrange speaking engagements, assist in fundraising activities. Work in a variety of settings: business, government, non-profit, and education.

EDUCATION

College Academic Advisor

Advise communication majors at all levels about selection of courses, schedule planning, and other academic issues. May present seminars and workshops and develop and implement academic programs and refer students to other campus resources.

College Admissions Officer

Evaluate freshman and transfer applicants; counsel and advise the general public including, but not limited to, prospective applicants, parents, faculty, and administration on admission-related issues; and participate in various recruitment and yield activities.

Corporate Trainer

Develop and conduct individual, group, and classroom training for employees on a wide variety of subjects. Develop training manuals, handouts, procedures, and supplemental training materials. Other duties involve test creation and administration for the advancement of employees.

Disability Services Coordinator

Serve as an advocate for students with disabilities. Work with faculty to understand and provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Promote disability awareness on college campuses.

Residence Life Coordinator

Supervise undergraduate and/or graduate staff, develop living learning and residence hall community, respond to student concerns, manage administration and facilities, and participate in department initiatives and campus life.

ENVIRONMENT AND OUTDOOR

Environmental Education Specialist

Plan, develop, and conduct programs to inform public of historical, natural, and scientific features of national, state, or local parks.

Environmental Science and Protection Technician

Perform laboratory and field tests to monitor the environment and investigate sources of pollution, including those that affect health. May collect samples of gases, soil, water, and other materials for testing and take corrective actions as assigned.

Green Marketing Analyst

Create innovative ways to introduce environmentally conscious products into the marketplace. Analyze sales data and consumer spending habits and consult with other marketing team members and graphic designers.

Outdoor Guide

Lead groups on trips involving outdoor recreational activities such as fishing, hiking, nature photography, wildlife observation, or canoeing. Provide educational information about physical environment, wildlife, climate, and ecology. Work for tour companies, ranches, parks, or on freelance basis.

Recycling Coordinator

Design and implement curbside and drop-off recycling and hazardous waste programs through city governments or private firms. Conduct public outreach campaigns to educate people about the advantages of recycling. May ensure compliance with ordinances or apply for grants.

Tour Guide

Escort individuals or groups on sightseeing tours or through places of interest, such as national parks, industrial establishments, public buildings, and art galleries.

GOVERNMENT

Legal Assistant

Assist lawyers by researching legal precedent, investigating facts, or preparing legal documents. Conduct research to support a legal proceeding, to formulate a defense, or to initiate legal action.

Legislative Analyst

Perform quantitative and qualitative analysis of information needed by legislators and other government officials. Evaluate policy issues and options, write reports, conduct briefing meetings, and respond to inquiries.

Legislative Assistant

Meet with lobbyists, arrange committee and subcommittee hearings, assist in developing legislation and amendments. Respond to requests for information, prepare memos and reports based on completed research for legislators.

Lobbying Organizer

Distribute information about a particular issue or organization, recruit volunteers, solicit funds, and organize such efforts as rallies, letter-writing campaigns, and voter registrations drives. Work for special and public interest groups as well as professional lobbyists.

Political Party Staffer

Work to advance a political party's agenda by recruiting and training candidates, preparing for conventions, planning fundraisers and publicity events, and supporting elected officials. Internship experience is especially helpful.

HUMAN SERVICES

Americorps Volunteer

Serve full-time for a year in organizations and agencies throughout the country, work to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses, increase housing opportunities, or bridge the digital divide. Benefits include an Education Award or an end-of-service stipend.

Community Organizer

Establish and organize community groups to solve social problems in the community. Assess strengths and weaknesses of existing resources and propose changes. Promote cooperation and coordination among government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other community groups. Conduct research, prepare budgets, and assist in fundraising.

Social Service Caseworker

Help families and individuals secure assistance from social service agencies. Interview clients to understand degree and nature of problems and refer to appropriate community resources. May determine eligibility for financial assistance and/or advocate on clients' behalf to government or nonprofit agencies.

Volunteer Coordinator

Recruit, train, schedule and provide supervision to volunteers at non-profit organizations. Arrange for on-the-job and other required training, supervision and evaluation of volunteers. Serve as liaison between administration, staff, and volunteers.

Youth Organizer

Manage and administer youth and community projects and resources; assess the needs of the young people in question and plans and deliver relevant programs of personal and social education via discussions, arts-based activities, community/environmental projects, residential activities, and outdoor/sports activities.

INTERNATIONAL

ESL/ESOL Teacher

Provide rigorous and appropriate instruction to international students that supports the acceleration of English and appropriate academic content. Serve as a liaison between the student, his/her family and the school, by providing cross-cultural information to all parties that foster positive relationships.

Foreign Service Officer

Analyze and report on political and economic developments, including agricultural trends, humanitarian and social conditions. Identify export markets, negotiate international agreements, and interpret US policies and interests for foreign governments, opinion leaders and publics. Issue visas to foreign nationals, provide development assistance, and arrange cultural exchanges.

Intelligence Officer

A member of the armed forces, police officer or civilian intelligence agency who specializes in the gathering, fusion and analysis of information and intelligence in order to provide advice to their government or another organization.

Interpreter/Translator

Enable the cross-cultural communication necessary in today's society by converting one language into another. Must remain sensitive to the cultures associated with their languages of expertise.

Peace Corps Volunteer

Peace Corps Volunteers work internationally in the following areas: education, youth outreach, and community development; health and HIV/AIDS; agriculture and environment; business development; and information technology. Within these areas, the specific duties and responsibilities of each Volunteer can vary widely.

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

Copy Editor

Act as liaison between author, editor, and proofreader. Review manuscripts for grammar and style usage. May develop in-house style guide, supervise freelance staff, and handle author queries.

Copywriter

Write articles, bulletins, sales letters, speeches, and other related informative, marketing and promotional material for use by publication or broadcast media to promote sale of goods and services.

Grant Writer

Write and develop grant proposals, which includes conducting needs assessments and matching product needs with available funding. Work for government or non-profit agencies.

Staff Writer

Research and write articles for magazine. May write article promos, short features, author bios, or photo captions. May work on freelance basis or for one particular magazine.

Travel Writer

Write features with detailed, accurate, timely and up-to-date information regarding destinations, hotels, restaurants, tours, activities, etc, using a variety of sources of information. Involves thorough research and travel.

RESEARCH

Information Broker

Perform research for clients in business, healthcare, government, law, and science. Uses Internet, database, and library resources to find specific information. May also analyze information, write reports, and train clients in information retrieval. Often work for consulting communication firms or on freelance basis.

Institutional Researcher

Write institutional and policy histories; research and report on current issues, long-range trends; edit records; manage archives. Work for government agencies, private corporations, public archives and libraries.

Market Research Analyst

Research market conditions in local, regional, or national areas to determine potential sales of a product or service. May gather information on competitors, prices, sales, and methods of marketing and distribution. May use survey results to create a marketing campaign based on regional preferences and buying habits.

Publications Researcher

Research story and script ideas; maintain research files on topics and people; verify stories for accuracy. Work for newspaper, magazine, or book publishers.

Survey Researcher

Design or conduct surveys. May supervise interviewers who conduct the survey in person or over the telephone. May present survey results to client.

SOURCES

Top Careers for Communications Graduates by Facts on File.
Checkmark Books, 2004.

“Career Opportunities in Communication Studies” by UT
Communication Career Services, 2002.

Dana College: www.dana.edu/communication/corporate.html

iHireHospitality.com: ihirehospitality.com

Illinois State Bar Association: www.isba.org/sections/legalcareers.html

Yale School of Management: www.som.yale.edu

Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/oco