



**Grady College of Journalism  
and Mass Communication**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

## **Ph.D. Program in Mass Communication**

The Grady College's Ph.D. program in mass communication is designed to prepare scholars for academic careers in teaching and research or for professional careers in industry or government. The program draws mainly on the resources and facilities of the College's three departments: The Department of Advertising and Public Relations, the Department of Journalism, and the Department of Entertainment & Media Studies (formerly Telecommunications).

The primary objective of the Ph.D. program is to develop mass communication scholars who are capable of critical thinking and independent scholarship. The degree granted is in recognition of research proficiency, breadth and soundness of scholarship, and thorough knowledge of selected aspects of mass communication and related fields. Degree requirements are fulfilled in three stages:

- (1) Successful completion of an approved program of study;
- (2) The passing of written and oral comprehensive examinations; and
- (3) The execution and presentation of an acceptable dissertation based on independent research.

Students are encouraged to develop their own theoretical and methodological approaches to mass communication research. Some Grady Ph.D. students work within and from traditional social science models of inquiry; others adopt historical, critical theory, naturalistic, or cultural studies perspectives on mass communication phenomena.

### **Faculty**

Qualified faculty from the advertising/public relations, journalism, and entertainment and media studies departments comprise the faculty of the Ph.D. program. Qualified faculty hold UGA Graduate Faculty appointments.

### **Grady Graduate Committee**

Administration of the Ph.D. program is the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and the Grady Graduate Committee. The Associate Dean is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program; the Graduate Committee is involved in matters of policy, admissions, procedures, and requirements. The Graduate Committee is comprised of nine members of the Grady College's Graduate Faculty: the Associate Dean and two other elected faculty from the Associate Dean's home department, and three elected faculty members from each of the other two departments.

### **Procedures for Admission and Selection of Doctoral Students**

The Associate Dean, taking into account available faculty and funding resources each academic year, establishes the number of students admitted. Typically, the program admits 5-8 applicants per year on paid graduate assistantships, which normally require some level of teaching responsibility.

The program also admits some students without funding support. Admission is restricted to ensure quality education and individualized attention. Announcement of the program, response to inquiries, and collection of application materials are the responsibility of the Associate Dean's Office. The Associate Dean and the Grady Graduate Committee make selection of Ph.D. program applicants.

## **Admission Requirements and Application Procedure**

Applicants for admission to the Grady College Ph.D. Program must have a master's degree from recognized institution of higher education in a relevant course of study. Before registration as a Ph.D. student, the master's degree must be complete. Failure to complete all master's degree requirements before enrollment will invalidate admission to the Grady Ph.D. program. Admission is based on (1) grade point average, (2) a statement of purpose, and (3) three or more letters of recommendation. Students may submit examples of professional and scholarly works. International students are required to submit official TOEFL or IELTS scores.

The statement of purpose should describe the applicant's goals and motivations for pursuing the Ph.D. in mass communication. Relevant information about interests and experiences should be included, as well as biographical information. Academics and/or professionals may submit letters of recommendation. However, two of the letters of recommendation must come from former or current professors.

The graduate application form, TOEFL scores (if required), and two official copies of all transcripts, letters of recommendation, and the student's statement of purpose should be uploaded to the Graduate School application website.

Applicants should meet the following admission standards: a 3.0 undergraduate GPA, a 3.5 graduate GPA, a well-reasoned and crafted statement of purpose, and strong letters of recommendation. If an applicant presents outstanding professional qualifications and/or other evidence of potential to succeed in the program, the GPA standards may be adjusted.

All Ph.D. students enter the program in the fall term. The application deadline is January 1. Notification of acceptance is complete by March 1. Candidates with academic deficiencies may enroll in the summer session preceding their fall entry date.

Applications from international students should be submitted as early as possible since several months may be required for processing. Academic success in the Ph.D. program is strongly dependent upon the ability to communicate in English; listening, reading, and writing proficiency must be well-developed.

Please see this page for the University of Georgia's English Language Proficiency Requirement:

<http://grad.uga.edu/admissions/requirements/international-applications/english-language-proficiency-requirement/>

## **Degree Requirements, Policies, and Procedures**

The Ph.D. degree in mass communication typically takes three years to complete. All requirements, except the dissertation, must be completed within six years, dating from the first registration for graduate courses to fulfill the degree requirements. At least two consecutive semesters of full-time work must be spent in resident study on the UGA campus.

## **Curriculum**

Doctoral studies in the Grady College are designed to integrate theory and research methodology with the study of mass communication institutions, processes and effects. The curriculum is comprised of five interlocking requirement blocks: (1) mass communication core courses, (2) major interest area courses, Cognate courses from outside the Grady College, (4) comprehensive written and oral examinations covering the program of study, and (5) dissertation research.

The Ph.D. in mass communication is a 3-year program, designed for applicants with graduate degrees from relevant disciplines. Admitted students are required to complete a minimum of 60 semester hours, 39 of which must be graduate level seminars (i.e., thirteen courses). Following are the requirements for the degree. Core Courses (12 semester hours). All entering Ph.D. students must take:

- Mass Communication Theory (JRMC 9010),
- Mass Communication Theory II (JRMC 9011),
- Research Methodology in Mass Communication (JRMC 8010) if an equivalent course was not taken in the master's program,
- Quantitative Research in Mass Communication (JRMC 9020), and one of the following two courses: --- Critical, Cultural and Naturalistic Approaches to Mass Communication Research (JRMC 9030), or Historical Research in Mass Communication (JRMC 8350).

If a doctoral student lacks an adequate background in statistics, appropriate remedial courses are required.

Major Interest Area Courses (15 semester hours). Each student must select a major area of study from 90008000 level graduate courses offered by the Grady College. The courses will define an area of specialty and will be decided upon by the doctoral student in conjunction with his/her advisory committee.

Cognate Area Courses (12 semester hours). Each doctoral student must select a minor area of concentration from courses offered outside the Grady College. The minor area must complement the major interest concentration, must consist of graduate courses, and must include at least one graduate-level research course. Cognate courses should be 8000 level or above unless prior approval is given by your advisor and the Grady Graduate Office.

Dissertation Research Requirements (21 semester hours). Each student must register for a minimum of 18 hours of dissertation research (JRMC 9000) and for a minimum of 3 hours of dissertation credit (JRMC 9300). These hours are to be completed after Core Course, Major Interest Area, and Cognate Area requirements have been successfully completed.

### **JRMC 8050 – Independent Study**

No more than 12 hours of JRMC 8050 may be used to fulfill the degree requirements of the Ph.D. program. No more than 3 hours of independent study from courses outside the Grady College may be used to fulfill the cognate course requirements.

### **Grade Point Average**

To be eligible for graduation, a student must have a 3.0 average (B) in all graduate courses taken and in all courses on the Program of Study.

### **Major Professor and Advisory Committee**

The Associate Dean of the Grady College will assign a faculty advisor to first-year Ph.D. students. Each student can select a new major professor at any point during the program. Before the end of the second year of residence, each student must form an Advisory Committee. The Dean of the Graduate School must approve the student's Advisory Committee.

A doctoral Advisory Committee has four members: a major professor, and either three additional Grady faculty members, or two Grady faculty members and a cognate area faculty representative from outside the Grady College. Two Grady departments must be represented if the committee is exclusively comprised of Grady College faculty members.

The Advisory Committee, under the direction of the “major professor” and in consultation with the student, is charged with planning and approving the student’s program of study, arranging comprehensive written and oral examinations, approving a dissertation subject and research approach, and approving the submission and defense of the completed dissertation.

During the student’s matriculation, the members of an Advisory Committee can be changed. Each Ph.D. student must complete a Program of Study. The Program of Study must be submitted to the Graduate School two weeks prior to the oral defense and application for admission to candidacy.

The Program of Study must be submitted on the proper form for approval by the Advisory Committee, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies of the Grady College, and Dean of the Graduate College.

The Program of Study presents all graduate courses relevant to the student’s doctoral program (including courses from other graduate degrees and courses transferred from other universities), not just courses satisfying the minimum degree requirements. Prior to the comprehensive written and oral examinations, the Program of Study must be approved. Do not put JRMC 9005 on the Program of Study.

### **Comprehensive Examinations**

Ph.D. students must pass formal comprehensive written and oral examinations before being admitted to candidacy for the degree. The Advisory Committee administers the examinations. It is the student’s task to initiate this process by consulting with his/her major professor. The major professor will then notify the Grady College Graduate Office who will in turn notify the Dean of the Graduate School in writing two weeks before the oral examination. The time, date, and place are necessary in this notification.

The oral examination is open to all members of the faculty and shall be announced by the Graduate School. This must be announced at least two weeks before the exam occurs. The oral examination will normally follow within two weeks of the written examination. An examination of the student’s dissertation prospectus may precede or follow the oral examination, but may not take the place of the oral examination. Following each examination, written and oral, each member of the Advisory Committee will cast a written vote of “pass” or “fail” on that part of the examination. At least three of the four members must vote positively in order for the student to pass each part of the examination. The results of both examination parts will be reported to the Graduate School.

The major professor in conjunction with the student and the Advisory Committee will determine the dates of the written and oral examinations. These must be in accordance with the deadlines specified by the Graduate College.

Members of the Advisory Committee will meet with the student to determine the nature of the written exam prior to the examination date. All committee members’ written questions will be taken within a two-week period.

The major professor must bring the written and oral examination forms to the oral exams. All members of the Advisory Committee must be present for the oral part of the examination and must sign the required forms following the oral exam.

A student failing all or part of the comprehensive examinations may be examined one more time. This will not be in the same term as the original examinations.

### **Admissions to Candidacy**

It is the responsibility of the Ph.D. student to initiate an application for Admission to Candidacy. This application form is a certification that the student has demonstrated ability to do acceptable graduate work in the chosen field of study and that: All prerequisites set as a condition to admission have been satisfactorily completed.

- The Advisory Committee, the Grady College Associate Dean, and the Dean of the Graduate School have approved the Program of Study.
- An average of 3.0 (B) has been maintained in all graduate courses taken and in all completed graduate courses on the Program of Study (no course with a grade below “C” may be placed on the Program of Study).
- Written and oral comprehensive examinations have been passed and reported to the Graduate School.
- A dissertation prospectus has been approved.
- The Advisory Committee, including any necessary changes in the membership, is confirmed, and all its members have been notified of their appointment.
- The residency requirement has been met.
- The major professor has the primary responsibility for guiding research, but the student should consult all members of the Advisory Committee to draw upon their expertise in relevant areas.
- After admission to candidacy, students must register for a minimum of three hours of dissertation each semester (21 hours are required; 18 hours of 9000, 3 hours of JRM 9300). The Program of Study form,

Admission to Candidacy form, and Advisory Committee form can be found at:

<https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/forms/>. These forms are done online and emails sent to the committee to approve them.

### **Dissertation Approval and Defense**

When the major professor is satisfied with the completed dissertation, he/she will certify that the work has his/her approval and is ready to be defended. The student will then distribute copies of the dissertation to the remaining members of the Advisory Committee, and will schedule a final oral defense and notify the Graduate School. Subsequently, the Graduate School will announce the time and place of the defense of the dissertation to the University Community. The committee members must be given three weeks to read and evaluate the completed dissertation.

Written assent of three of the four committee members will be required before a dissertation will be approved as ready for a final defense. If the Advisory Committee declines to approve the dissertation as ready for the final defense, the major professor will notify the student and the Graduate School.

The student’s major professor will chair the defense of the dissertation. Three of the four members of the Advisory Committee must approve the student’s dissertation and defense and must certify their approval in writing. The results of the defense of the dissertation must be reported to the Graduate School and to the Grady Graduate Studies Office at least one week prior to graduation.

All members of the Advisory Committee must be present for the defense to take place. A committee member can participate via video conference if they are out of town.

### **Student Evaluation Procedures**

## **Annual Evaluation**

The Associate Dean and the student's advisor will evaluate carefully and fully each doctoral student's academic progress and qualifications at the end of each year of study in order to advise the student whether or not to continue in the program. The Associate Dean and the student's department head will review each student's performance as a teacher or research assistant. Members of the faculty outside the committee may be consulted.

Students will receive a brief written evaluation from their advisor and sometimes from the Associate Dean.

Students not receiving a cumulative 3.0 average may be dismissed from the program.

## **Student Appeal/Petition Procedures**

Ph.D. student appeals are handled in the following manner:

The Ph.D. student writes a letter to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies of the Grady College and to the Dean of the Graduate School and takes the letter to the major professor.

The major professor writes a letter either supporting or not supporting the appeal. The major professor submits both letters to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies of the Grady College. If the matter involves Graduate School policy, the Associate Dean writes a letter either supporting or not supporting the request, and sends all three letters to the Grady Graduate Committee for a final decision. If the matter involves Grady College policy, the Associate Dean takes the two letters to the Grady Graduate Committee for a final decision.

## **Course evaluations**

Course evaluations must be administered for every class, every semester for which a Ph.D. student is the instructor of record. This requirement applies throughout the student's matriculation on campus.

## **Deadlines, Forms, and Other Necessary But Bothersome Irritations**

Each student is responsible for meeting Grady College and Graduate School deadlines and program requirements. All required forms are located on the web at: <https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/forms/>. They must be submitted on time and properly completed; plan and keep written records of your program of study. The Grady Graduate Studies Office will attempt to notify students of deadlines, requirements, etc. (will post on bulletin board and listserv notices), but individual students are responsible staying informed and taking appropriate action.

- Be informed
- Read and comprehend Graduate School requirements.
- Plan ahead
- Develop a time line with a preliminary program of study and paperwork dates.
- Be attentive
- Read posted notices, • Check your UGA email.

**NOT KNOWING IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE.**

**PLEASE READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ENROLLMENT INFORMATION CAREFULLY IN ORDER TO:**

- Finish your degree on time
- Learn how to save money by complying with this policy

GRADUATE STUDENT ENROLLMENT POLICY: Degree-seeking graduate students at the University of Georgia are required to register for a minimum of 3 hours for at least two semesters in each academic year (fall, spring, summer – YES, summers count). Please note that the graduate enrollment policy does not replace any more stringent policy affecting your enrollment. If you are on a graduate assistantship, you must register for the minimum hours required by that policy (9 for summer, 12 for fall and spring for one-third to one-half service assistantships). International students and person's receiving financial aid must register for the number of hours required by those categories. You must register for a minimum of 3 hours during the semester you complete degree requirements even if you were registered for the two previous semesters. You must register for a minimum of three hours in any semester in which you use university resources, including faculty time.

APPLICATION FOR WAIVER OF OUT-OF-STATE TUITION: Some doctoral students and some thesis-writing master's students will be gifted out-of-state tuition waivers as part of the enrollment policy. All master's students meeting the criteria must submit a form requesting the waiver. Doctoral students classified as out-of-state for tuition and who are admitted to candidacy after summer 2007 will automatically receive the waiver. You cannot receive this waiver if you have an assistantship that waives tuition. Please see this link for more information: [http://grad.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/oos\\_waiver.pdf](http://grad.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/oos_waiver.pdf) This policy took effect fall 2007 for all graduate students except the following:

University employees on the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and Students in non-degree status TAP and non-degree students will remain under the former enrollment policy and will lose registration eligibility if not enrolled for three consecutive terms. Persons in TAP and non-degree categories who have lost the ability to register must apply for readmission to the Graduate School if they wish to continue taking

courses, but will not be assessed a penalty fee. Remember that only nine hours taken during non-degree status can go toward a degree program later.

Please contact your academic department or [gradinfo@uga.edu](mailto:gradinfo@uga.edu) if you have other questions.

Deadlines and other pertinent information are provided by the Graduate School. Forms (available to students from Graduate School website) and the Graduate Bulletin.

Students are responsible for being informed, for completing and submitting required forms in an accurate and timely manner, and for meeting all deadlines.

## **Ph.D. Dissertation**

### **Dissertation Proposal**

A written dissertation proposal is required of all Grady Ph.D. candidates. The proposal is to be presented and successfully defended in either of the following ways:

- A meeting of the Advisory Committee, or
- Separate consultations with each member of the Advisory Committee.

Before a student completes more than 3 hours of dissertation credit, the proposal must be approved by the Advisory Committee and filed with the Grady Graduate Studies Office. If the membership of the advisory

committee changes after the prospectus has been approved, a new approval must be obtained. Dissertation proposal guidelines are available from the Grady Graduate Studies Office.

### **Dissertation and Defense**

The Ph.D. dissertation requires original research suitable for scholarly publication. A minimum of 21 hours of dissertation credit is required for the degree (18 hrs. of JRMC 9000, 3 hrs. of JRMC 9300).

Ph.D. students must be enrolled every semester in which they are using UGA facilities (including library and/or faculty consultation). Students must be registered for a minimum of 3 hours of JRMC 9300 the semester in which they complete the requirements of the degree.

Final oral defense of the dissertation must be scheduled by the student in consultation with the Advisory Committee no later than three weeks prior to the end of the semester. The completed thesis must be submitted to the Advisory Committee no later than three weeks prior to the scheduled date of the final defense.

No defense will be scheduled during semester breaks or summer breaks, except by mutual agreement (written and filed) of every member of the Advisory Committee and the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.

The complete dissertation, signed by the major professor, must be submitted to the Graduate School two weeks prior to graduation and all requirements must be met one week prior to graduation.

### **Format and Filing Requirements**

Ph.D. students must check with the Graduate School to receive proper dissertation format and filing instructions.

## **Ph.D. Degree Program Checklist**

### **End of First Year**

- Determine if the student wants the assigned professor to continue as major advisor and file appropriate form if there is a change.

### **End of Second Year/Beginning of Third Year**

- Choose Advisory Committee and file appropriate form
- Complete Program of Study form
- Write comprehensive exam
- Complete oral comprehensive exam (Graduate School must be given two weeks' notice of date).
- Have dissertation prospectus approved by Advisory Committee
- Complete and submit Admission to Candidacy form
- Submit copy of approved proposal to Grady Graduate Studies Office
- Pick up the dissertation typing and format instructions from Graduate School
- Apply to graduate (two terms before expected graduation)

(The Graduate School has a six-year deadline for completing the above. Students should complete these requirements well in advance of this deadline.)



## **End of the Third Year**

- Enroll for dissertation credit for each semester after admission to candidacy
- Write dissertation
- Defend dissertation (Graduate School must be given two weeks' notice of date).
- Submit results of dissertation defense and approved copy of dissertation to Graduate School for style and format check
- Submit abstract, bind dissertation and provide copies to the Library

(A candidate for the doctoral degree who does not complete all degree requirements within five years after passing the comprehensive exams and being admitted to candidacy will be required to retake the exams and be readmitted to candidacy a second time. We would prefer our students complete their dissertations well in advance of this deadline.)

- All requirements must be completed and reported to the Graduate School at least one week before graduation