

Master of Science in Science Communication

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**Website**

[www.stonybrook.edu/journalism](http://www.stonybrook.edu/journalism)

This unique program prepares trained scientists, technology specialists, engineers, and mathematicians for dynamic careers as professional science communicators. Because science reaches across a wide range of institutions and working environments, the need for individuals who have expertise both in STEM and communication has emerged as an important new workforce trend. From engaging in media industries to public affairs and public relations to project management, science communication professionals must be able to provide strategically designed, engaging, scientifically accurate written, oral, visual, and digital engagement across a wide range of platforms.

The School of Communication and Journalism also offers an Advanced Certificate in Communicating Science.

Link: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/graduatebulletin/current/academicprograms/commsci/>

**Program Description of Science Communication**

The M.S. in Science Communication equips individuals trained in STEM fields with the tools and competencies they need to pursue careers as professional communicators. Beginning with an immersive experience into the Alda Method<sup>®</sup> of science communication, students learn to share scientific discoveries and innovations with diverse audiences. Subsequently, they learn to create and assess audience-specific, research-based communication strategies; design effective messages tailored to specific platforms; provide strategic project management; support diversity and inclusivity in their communication efforts; and apply their own scientific expertise to support accurate, ethical science communication. Working with some of the nation's leading science communication scholars, students will enter the workforce prepared to lead in establishing a new career path in the field of science communication.

The 33-credit program blends online and on-campus courses, with flexibility to accommodate working professionals. In a culminating experience, students will develop and implement a practical, research-based communication product such as a communication or media plan for an organization, a social science research study, or other creative work. The program is housed in the ACEJMC-accredited School of Communication and Journalism and offered in collaboration with the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

- # Deploy contemporary communication tools to communicate science clearly, accurately, and vividly;
- # Create and assess communication strategies that incorporate audience needs and, when appropriate, stakeholder input;
- # Manage projects with high degrees of professionalism;
- # Share discoveries and innovations with diverse audiences through written, verbal, audio, audio/visual, and/or visual communication;
- # Design effective platform-specific messages based on clear communication goals;
- # Apply scientific expertise to support accurate, ethical science communication;
- # Ground the production of different communications in critical thinking skills and research competencies;
- # Create communication approaches, tools, and platforms that support diversity and inclusivity;
- # Present a portfolio that synthesizes the program experience through the production of a practical, research-based communication product such as a communications or media plan for an organization, a social science research study, or other creative work.

Our program has been designed to meet programmatic outcomes that are outlined in the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC)'s professional values and competencies (listed below). ACEJMC Professional Values & Competencies require that, "irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:"

1. Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;

4. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
5. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
7. Think critically, creatively and independently;
8. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
9. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
10. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
11. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
12. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work; and
13. Contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

(See: <http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/nine-standards/>) All syllabi have been designed to ensure that students develop these competencies and have opportunities to refine them over the course of their program.

Stony Brook University has implemented a comprehensive “Plan for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity,” and is committed to broadening participation of students from historically underrepresented groups in careers in journalism and mass communication. Particularly noteworthy is the SBU Graduate School’s Center for Inclusive Education, which is home to funded projects designed to grow the pool of diverse scholars pursuing full-time graduate studies, advancing into postdoctoral positions and successfully transitioning to competitive careers in research and the Academy.

For information on the 12-credit Advanced Graduate Certificate in Communicating Science, [click here](#).

#### Admission Requirements

##### **Applicants must submit the following:**

1. **A personal statement** - In a polished short essay of no longer than 750 words, applicants should describe why science communication is important to them, their reasons for applying to the MS in Science Communication at SBU, and why they chose the communication samples in requirement #7.
2. **Three letters of recommendation.** We are interested in hearing from three different recommenders who can comment on the applicant’s academic strengths, communication skills (including oral, written, and multimedia if applicable), and their potential for success in this graduate program.
3. **CV/Resume.**
4. **Transcripts.** Applicants must have a 3.0 cumulative grade point average in a science, social science, technology, engineering, math, or health-related degree, or a 3.0 cumulative grade point average in another field and relevant experience.
5. **GRE scores are optional**
6. **Language proficiency scores** (international applicants). Please refer to the most up to date requirements found on the Graduate Bulletin.
7. In addition to the above, applicants are required to **submit two samples of communication.** Applicants may choose to submit 2 forms of professional/academic writing OR 1 example of professional/academic writing and one creative work.
  - Examples of professional/academic writing include (but are not limited to): class paper; publication, or news piece.
  - Examples of creative work include (but are not limited to): professional blog posts, video recordings, and social media posts.

Science communication is preferred, but not required. If the applicant would also like to submit a professional interview where the applicant is the subject, please add this as an additional sample.

For all samples, please select excerpts if the length of writing is in excess of 4000 words or in the case of media longer than three minutes playing time.

Applicants should briefly explain why they chose the samples they have added to their personal statement.

*NOTE: All requirements must be completed by the end of the term preceding admission to the program (i.e. by end of spring term for a fall admission; end of fall term for a spring admission). Students may be offered conditional admission if there are any outstanding admissions requirements.*

A committee consisting of the Graduate Program Director and three program faculty will evaluate all applications, including exceptions to the requirements.

Applicants may be invited to interview via video conference.

The Graduate Program Director will meet with new students upon enrollment to help them chart a path for the successful completion of their degree during the duration of their graduate studies.

#### Facilities

School of Communication and Journalism students have access to classrooms, libraries and broadcasting studios at Stony Brook University that will be used for instructional purposes.

#### Degree Requirements

##### **REQUIRED COURSES (18 Credits)**

COM 516: Communication Research Methods (3 credits)

COM 526: Building and Assessing Communication Strategies (3 credits)

COM 565: Communicating Your Science (3 credits)

COM 577: Communication Law and Ethics (3 credits)

COM 588: Graduate Internship (3 credits)

COM 699: Master's Project in Science Communication (3 credits)

**CHOOSE 5 ELECTIVES (15 credits)**

JRN 500: Introduction to News Media Concepts and Institutions (3 credits)

JRN 510: Basic Reporting and Writing for Journalism (3 credits)

COM 518: History of Science Communication (3 credits)

COM 522: Communicating Science to Decision-Makers (3 credits)

JRN 525: Health, Environment, Science and Technology Reporting (3 credits)

JRN 528: Engaging with Journalists (3 credits)

JRN 530: The Big Story: Science Issues Seminar (3 credits)

COM 534: Communicating Your Science Using Digital Media (3 credits)

COM 575: Special Topics in Science Communication (3 credits)

JRN 581: Advanced Digital Media (3 credits)

COM 585: Communicating Science and Health Risks to the Public (3 credits)

COM 587: Independent Study (3 credits)

COM 603: Storytelling and Narrative Design (3 credits)

COM 605: Environmental Communication (3 credits)

COM 609: Studies in Visual Culture (3 credits)

COM 618: STEM Playwriting and Screenwriting (3 credits)

The Graduate Committee, which consists of the Graduate Program Director and three other faculty, will identify other relevant courses and formally review them to determine if they are appropriate for the MS in Science Communication.

#### Faculty

Graduate courses offered by the School of Communication and Journalism and the Alda Center are taught by faculty with diverse expertise including: science, technology, engineering, math, medicine, journalism, communications, public policy, and theater. This

Program faculty and the Graduate Program Director will have regular contact with students. Faculty affiliated with the graduate program will provide ongoing, additional mentorship. Our website provides a comprehensive overview of our faculty expertise and contact information.

For an up to date list, see our faculty page.

*NOTE: The course descriptions for this program can be found in the corresponding program PDF or at COURSE SEARCH.*