



MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL JUSTICE



University
of Windsor

GRADUATE STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

Windsor, Ontario, Canada



University
of Windsor

Communication & Social Justice Program Description

Program Description:

The M.A. in Communication & Social Justice offers students a distinctive opportunity to pursue their diverse scholarly interests in a vibrant, supportive atmosphere conducive to addressing issues of social justice in a variety of contexts.

It bridges two main scholarly approaches to the study of communication, media, and culture – political economy and critical cultural studies and is designed to advance original and provocative interpretations of everyday communicative and symbolic environments; facilitate research on the definition, evolution, and transformation of rights and communicative practices, whether through policy, culture, and/or custom; and develop practices and strategies oriented toward social justice initiatives.

Potential Topics of Interest

- Communication networks, new media, alternative media, and social justice movements
 - Cultural production, consumption, identity, politics and practices of “representation” (class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, etc.),
 - Popular culture
 - Commodification of information, culture and communication
 - Ownership and control of media, information technology and globalization
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Contact Information:

Graduate Program Chair:

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The M.A. in Communication & Social Justice in the Department of Communication, Media & Film is designed to be completed in one year (or 3 consecutive semesters). We admit students once per annum, only at the beginning of the Fall Semester (i.e. in September of each year), and only on a full-time basis. There is no part-time option.

Deadline: The deadline for receipt of *all* application materials is *January 15 of each year*. All application materials need to be in .pdf format and should be uploaded to the University's website when prompted.

Application Package: The [application package](#) consists of:

1. [Online Application Form](#)
 2. Statement of Purpose (500 words)
 3. A Curriculum Vitae (CV or Resumé)
 4. Official Transcripts (Not Applicable to UWindsor Students)
 5. Two Letters of Reference (Academic Referees Preferred)
 6. Writing Sample (10-15 pgs of scholarly prose)
 7. IELTS 7.5 or TOEFL 109 (Where Applicable)
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Required & Elective Courses: You need to take a total of 5 courses. 3 of the 5 courses are required, leaving 2 others as electives.

Required Courses:

1. CASJ-8500 Graduate Pro-Seminar
2. CASJ-8501 Critical Theories of Communication
3. CASJ-8502 Graduate Research Methods

Elective Courses: Offered on a rotational basis

1. CASJ-8512 Communication & Social Movements
 2. CASJ-8513 History of Communication Thought & Technology
 3. CASJ-8514 Political Economy of Communication
 4. CASJ-8515 Topics in Cultural Studies
 5. CASJ-8518 The City As Media
 6. CASJ-8520 Directed Reading
 7. CASJ-8543 Advanced Film Theory and Criticism
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MRP & Thesis: In addition to course materials, students are required to produce a [Major Research Paper \(MRP\)](#) under the supervision of a Faculty member. The MRP should be approximately 40 pages long and is a piece of original research that addresses any number of different topics dependent on student interest.

Students may also opt to write a thesis. The thesis is a more involved document with additional procedural requirements. For more information on the thesis, please see the [webpage](#).

Graduate Assistantship: While a [Graduate Assistantship](#) (GA-ship) is not guaranteed, we do our absolute best to support our students in their pursuit of teaching experience. What this means is that you may have the opportunity to assist with the instruction/grading of an undergraduate course and receive a wage for this work. Currently, provincial law mandates that you work no more than 140 hours per semester at a wage of \$41.62 per hour.

Qualifying Students (M1): Applicants who do not have a 4-year Honours Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies, Media Studies, or cognate discipline may be required to complete up to a full year of preparatory study. This 'qualifying year' is designed to harmonize the student's knowledge and intellectual acumen with those who have graduated from an undergraduate Communication/Media Studies program.

English as a Second Language: For applicants whose native language is not English, a satisfactory score (TOEFL 109 (ibt) minimum; IELTS 7.5 Minimum) on an English proficiency test administered by one of the accredited institutions. A list of countries who are exempt from the English proficiency test can be found [here](#).

Tuition: Information regarding current tuition and fees can be found [here](#). Be sure to choose the options that best describe your individual circumstances from the available drop-down menus. Unfortunately, at present the MA in Communication & Social Justice is not listed, select Master of Arts. The Program is only offered as a Full time option.

Other Questions: If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact Graduate Secretary Joyce Nardone (Joyce.Nardone@uwindsor.ca) or Graduate Program Chair Dr. Brian Brown (bbrown@uwindsor.ca).

Thank you for your interest in the M.A. in Communication & Social Justice.



Communication & Social Justice: Course Offerings

Required Courses:

CASJ-8500. Pro-Seminar (Required)

An introduction to research in the field of critical communication/media studies. This seminar explores the intellectual history, central debates, and current research trends of the field and encourages students to develop, and actively reflect upon, their own research interests and goals. The seminar also fosters a variety of intellectual skills and practical considerations relevant to graduate study and intellectual life (e.g., applying for scholarships, sharing research in various venues, writing for different audiences).

CASJ-8501. Critical Theories of Communication and Media (Required)

This course offers an advanced examination of core concepts, perspectives, and areas of research in the field of communication and media studies. Students will explore a range of critical theoretical approaches that are representative of those currently being used or developed by researchers in the field.

CASJ-8502. Research Methods (Required)

This course provides an overview of a range of contemporary research methods in media/communication studies. Students will develop skills to evaluate the appropriateness of methods for different research purposes, critically review extant scholarly literature, and examine the ethics and politics of the research process.

Elective Courses:

CASJ-8512. Communication and Social Movements (Not Offered F2023 or W 2024)

This course draws upon an array of relevant theoretical perspectives to examine how traditional and non-traditional forms of communication/media have been used within, and by, a variety of social movements. Students will explore the contribution of new/emerging communication technologies/platforms to social activism and social movements; representations of social movements in the context of political/economic/social change; the diversity and importance of alternative media as a central component in movements for social justice.

CASJ-8513. History of Communication Thought and Technology (Not Offered F23 or W 2024)

This course examines the historical development of communication technology from a variety of approaches including western philosophy, critical political economy, gender studies, anti-colonialism, science and technology studies (STS), and dependency theory, among others. Communication thought from the Greeks to the present will be analyzed to develop a broader critique of dominant power relations and inequitable access to technological resources.

CASJ-8514. Political Economy of Media and Communication

The course examines the historical and intellectual roots of critical political economy and explores contemporary applications of this theoretical approach. Students will analyze how media are implicated in the power relations and structural inequalities that underpin the capitalist economy as well as how they may function as sites of resistance and activism. Topics may include analyses of media platforms, ownership structures, labour, policy and regulation, privacy and surveillance issues, and media representation.

CASJ-8515 Topics in Cultural Studies

This course surveys the historical and intellectual foundations of cultural studies and explores the contemporary relevance of this approach to understanding media and popular culture. Any range of media genres, texts, practices, institutions, signifying systems, and circuits of production/consumption may be examined in terms of their aesthetics, representational and cultural politics, power dynamics, and ideological underpinnings.

CASJ-8518. City as Media

The seminar will explore theoretical approaches to the ways in which urban spaces, everyday life, and city stories are articulated and imagined through media, arts and technologies. Seminar participants will develop research papers and experience-based creative projects about Windsor and/or Detroit. Students will examine films, stories, sounds and other media objects that reflect the urban, but will also be encouraged to develop research methodologies that use old and new media to question and document the cities' urban and suburban life. In classroom seminars, a range of theoretical writings and media objects all oriented to the urban will be discussed. In research practice, students will work with techniques such as auto-ethnographies to develop creative documents around everyday urban life. (3-hour lecture.)

CASJ-8520. Directed Study

Normally reserved for students not writing a thesis. With approval of the graduate program director, a student may undertake to write an original paper on a specialized topic which will enhance his or her program of study. The course will involve directed supervision of readings and informal discussion with the student's course supervisor.

CASJ-8543. Advanced Film Theory and Criticism (Not Offered F2023 or W 2024)

Films are explored under the broad rubric of cultural studies; specific theoretical approaches employed to analyze cinema are examined. Case studies of genres as the emergent effective mode of understanding films are taken up. Films selected may belong to the silent or classical period to the contemporary. The readings provide tools to analyze formal aspects and critical interpretative frameworks applied to examine films. Writing assignments forge links between the written and the visual and between theory and film texts. (3 hrs/week: once a month, class will be extended due to in-class film screening.)

CASJ-8590. Selected Topics

Selected advanced topics in Communication Studies based on special faculty interests and opportunities afforded by the availability of visiting professors. Special topics courses are subject to Graduate Committee approval. (May be repeated for credit provided that the topics differ.) (3 lecture hours a week.)

CASJ-8960. Major Paper

(Credit Weight: 9.0)

CASJ-8970. Thesis



1. Major Research Paper (MRP):

The Major Research Paper (MRP) is a scholarly research project of approximately 40 pages (double-spaced) in length. It provides a critical analysis of an object/event/case study/text and serves to augment or enhance our knowledge thereof. Normally, MRPs include:

- i) a primary research question that serves to guide the MRP;
- ii) a clearly articulated theoretical framework that provides a review of the pertinent literature;
- iii) a critical analysis of the relationship(s) that obtain between the object/event/case study/text and the chosen theoretical framework; and
- iv) a conclusion.

MRPs need not reference a recognized research methodology to be successful. Rather, emphasis is placed on a critical analysis of the object in its relation to a body of theory.

2. Thesis:

The Thesis is a scholarly research project of approximately 70 pages (double-spaced) in length. It is an original piece of research, employing a recognized research methodology, yielding novel conclusions via exhaustive critical analysis. Normally, theses name an object/event/case study/text as their central focus and include:

- i) a primary research question that serves to guide the thesis;
 - ii) an exhaustive and clearly articulated theoretical framework that provides comprehensive review of all the primary and secondary literature;
 - iii) a recognized methodological framework that enables the student to gather and analyze an original data set;
 - iv) a critical analysis of the relationship(s) that obtain between the object/event/case study/text, data set(s), and theoretical framework(s); and
 - v) a concluding section wherein the thesis' original contribution to the body of scholarly knowledge is fully articulated.
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1. **Major Research Paper (MRP):**

The MRP is the recommended final research project for the majority of Graduate Students completing their M.A. in Communication & Social Justice. Please see the detailed description of the constituent elements of the MRP in the document titled 'Capstone Research Project Descriptions.'

- i. Students opting to write an MRP need to complete 5 courses in total (3 required [CASJ-8500, CASJ-8501 & CASJ-8502] & 2 electives)
- ii. The MRP Committee consists of a Supervisor and a Program Reader
- iii. MRPs do not require the student to draft or defend a Proposal
- iv. Students must deliver a public oral presentation and defense of their MRPs
- v. The potential outcomes of the public oral presentation and defense are:
 - i. Pass with No Revisions
 - ii. Pass with Minor Revisions
 - iii. Pass with Major Revisions
 - iv. Fail

2. **Thesis:**

Based upon the recommendation of your supervisor and a performance evaluation completed by the Graduate Committee, students may be permitted to write a thesis. In order to do so, students are encouraged to (i) successfully complete three courses in the first semester and achieve an 80% overall average; (ii) provide a 250-word rationale explaining the reasons for wishing to undertake a thesis; and (iii) submit a 2-page outline that summarizes the topic (i.e. research question) proposed theoretical/conceptual framework, and methodological approach.

- i. Students opting to write a Thesis need to complete 4 courses in total (3 required [CASJ-8500, CASJ-8501 & CASJ-8502] & 1 elective)
- ii. The Thesis Committee consists of a Supervisor, Program Reader, External Reader, and Defense Chair
- iii. A Thesis Proposal of 18-20 double-spaced pages (including bibliography) must be drafted and defended prior to the commencement of research. The proposal should succinctly articulate the research question, provide a relevant review of literature, and concisely explain the theoretical and methodological approach
- iv. Students must deliver a public oral presentation and defense of their Thesis
- v. The potential outcomes of the public oral presentation and defense are:
 - i. Pass with No Revisions
 - ii. Pass with Minor Revisions
 - iii. Pass with Major Revisions
 - iv. Fail