1. Introduction

Welcome to our department! The 21st century is the Communication and Information Age. With more than half of America’s gross national product now being spent on information products and services, getting that information to the people who need it requires precision, creativity, and clarity. The world needs people who can write and speak clearly. The world needs people with interpersonal skills to manage relationships and work effectively together.

Whitworth College’s Communication Studies Department provides students with the theories and skills necessary for effective communication in diverse contexts. Working within the tradition of the liberal arts, the department introduces students to theoretical, historical and philosophical assumptions fundamental to communication scholarship and practice.

Students select from three distinct programs of study that combine theory and practice. The journalism and mass communication major focuses on print media and public relations. Courses in this major emphasize extensive writing and editing to sharpen written communication skills for a mass audience. The speech communication major emphasizes understanding of relationships and development of skills in delivering formal oral presentations. These courses require demonstration of oral communication skills in a variety of settings. The communication major allows students to select from both journalism and mass communication, and speech courses. This major provides choice and flexibility to meet student needs and preferences.

Departmental graduates are prepared to work in diverse fields. Career paths include community relations, community development, editing, graphic design, law, marketing, ministry, public relations, software development, teaching, web management and jobs in other emerging communication technologies.

The department regards two elements as particularly distinctive of a Whitworth degree in Communication Studies. First, each major is required to complete an internship. Students must grasp the intersection of scholarly studies with life applications. During their junior or senior year, students work in a professional communication setting, which allows students to blend the theoretical with practical application.

The second distinctive element is the required communication ethics course (JMC 493W or SP 493W) taken during the senior year. Students must comprehend the moral choices and responsibilities inherent in all communication interactions. Seniors review skills they have learned in the department and analyze the ethical dimensions of using those skills in the world. Graduates leave the program displaying competent ethical decision-making skills.
Recurring questions about the department:

How do I become a major or minor?
Contact the department office at 777-4739 or Kathy Fechter (Program Assistant), kfechter@whitworth.edu, to arrange an advising appointment with a faculty member. To prepare for that appointment complete a “Declaration of Major/Minor” form. That form is available from the Office of the Registrar in McEachran Hall or from the program assistant. During the advising appointment the student and faculty member will explore educational and career goals, and how the department curriculum helps students achieve those goals. Students declare a major or minor by returning the form, signed by both the student and the faculty member, to the Office of the Registrar or the program assistant.

What courses should I take first?
Students should take these courses during their freshman or sophomore year:

- **JMC 125 Writing for Mass Media** is the introductory journalism course. It is a pre-requisite for most journalism classes, and fulfills the general education written communication requirement. This course teaches students how to write in specialized mass media formats.

- **JMC/SP 209 Introduction to Communication Research** helps students develop and strengthen skills in research design. It teaches students how to use specific research tools.

- **JMC/SP 212 Theories of Human Communication** introduces students to the foundational theories in the discipline. It is a pre-requisite for most upper-division classes in the department. This course introduces students to the nature of theory and to assumptions in the broad scope of the discipline.

- **SP 113 Interpersonal Communication** introduces students to the communication principles involved in developing and sustaining productive relationships. The course fulfills the general education oral communication requirement.

- **SP 210 Introduction to Public Speaking** teaches students how to construct and deliver formal oral presentations. This course also meets the general education oral communication requirement.

What will my senior year look like?
Every senior takes the capstone course JMC/SP 493 Communication Ethics in the spring. Otherwise, the shape of your schedule depends entirely on your choices in scheduling the 14 courses required of each major. Students take internships in their junior or senior year, after completing 15 credits in the major.

Will I find a job when I graduate?
Studies indicate that workers in today’s job market typically change careers multiple times during their working years. This reality makes flexibility and applicability of skills extremely important, along with the liberal arts emphasis on teaching people how to learn. Graduates leave Whitworth’s Communication Studies program with the relational, writing, and speaking skills necessary for a lifetime of successful employment.