What Can I Do With A Major In…
Communication?

Compiled by the staff at the SUNY Oneonta Career Development Center

Introduction

Communication studies can be broken down into many different areas of work and study. Some of these areas of study include public relations and advertising, business, media, arts and entertainment, social and human services, government, education, and even law. The study of human communication lets undergraduates learn the skills needed to communicate with groups, individuals, and cultures of society. A degree in communication allows you to work in a field that is information based and constantly changing. Communications is one of the largest areas of study that allows you to choose from various types of employment that specializes in your interest.

Functional Skill Set for Communication Majors

- Ability to write clearly
- Present specific viewpoints
- Reporting and editing skills
- Demonstrate creativity and artistic expression
- Evaluate ideas and presentation
- Effective speaking
- Influential/persuasion skills
- Gather information and data
- Interpretation skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Compare and contrast evidence
- Work with deadlines
- Measure media effects
- Evaluate information and sources
- Develop market research
- Planning and managing skills
- Work independently or in teams

“Communications opens more jobs than any other major.” – Blythe Cameson (Great Jobs for Communications Majors)
Related Career Titles for Communication Majors

- Administrator
- Associate Producer
- Audio/Visual Specialist
- Bank Officer
- Broadcast Assistant
- Broadcasting Journalist
- Camp Counselor
- Campaign Manager
- Claims Adjuster/Examiner
- Community Action Director
- Consumer Advocate
- Consumer Affairs Specialist
- Copy Editor
- Corporate Communications Director
- Counselor
- Credit Manager
- Customer Service Representative
- Customer/Consumer Relations
- Development Officer
- Development Officer/Fund Raiser
- Documentarian
- Educational Consultant
- Educational Tester
- Elected Official
- Entertainment Agent
- Events Planner
- Fashion Merchandiser
- Foreign Service Officer
- Fund-raiser
- Government Advisor
- Guidance Counselor
- Health Services Administrator
- Human Resources Manager
- Industrial & Labor Relations Specialist
- Instructional Program Designer
- Insurance Agent/Broker
- Interviewer
- Journalist
- Lawyer
- Legal Assistant
- Legislative Aide
- Lobbyist
- Management Analyst
- Manager/Administrator
- Market Research Analyst
- Media Specialist
- Mediator
- News associate
- Public Relations Assistant
- Public Relations Officer
- Recruiter
- Special Events Coordinator
- Speech Pathologist
- Spokesperson for Education
- Student Services Specialist
- Teacher
- Technical Writer
Some Organizations that Typically Employ Communication Majors:

- Advertising Agencies
- Arts Councils
- Boards of Education
- Community Health Centers
- Consulting Firms
- Corporate Communications Offices
- Corporations
- Health Care Facilities
- Hospitality industry
- Hospitals
- Independent Production Companies
- International Associations
- Legal Firms
- Lobby Organizations
- Local, State, & Federal Government
- Magazines
- Marketing Departments
- News & Information Offices
- Newspapers/Magazines
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Photo Agencies
- Photo Studios
- PR Agencies
- Private Practice Firms
- Public Interest Firms
- Public Relations Firms
- Publishers
- Publishing Companies
- Radio/Television/Cable Companies
- Research Organizations
- Television/Film/Radio Studios
- Theatres
- Trade Associations
- Universities
- Video Production Companies
- Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
Start a Strategic Plan

Develop strong verbal and written communication skills.
Demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills.
Participate in activities to build team-player skills.
Join related professional associations.
Master’s degree in Communications required for some positions.
Develop excellent writing skills.
Complete internship in area(s) of interest.
Serve as public relations officer of organization.
Develop portfolio.
Join related professional association(s).
Secure internships.
Get practical experience.
Develop strong research and writing skills.
Perfect public speaking ability.
Demonstrate enthusiasm, interpersonal skills, persuasion, team work, integrity, good judgment, and intelligence.
Develop creativity and initiative.
Develop planning and strategic thinking skills.
Work in sales at campus newspaper, TV or radio station.
Obtain student-run business experience.
Find internship at market research firm.
Demonstrate talent, persistence, assertiveness, competitive spirit, and enthusiasm.
Compile portfolio of writing, graphics and ideas for creative department.
Get computer knowledge/experience for media.
Need statistics, data interpretation, and writing experience for research.
Learn local, state and federal government job application process.
Take courses in counseling techniques.
Volunteer with community/campus organizations.
Master’s degree in Social Work or Counseling and licensing required for some positions.

Professional Organizations and Associations for Communication Majors

American Society of Journalists & Authors
1501 Broadway   Suite 302
New York NY  10036
www.asja.org

International Association of Business Communicators
One Hallidie Plaza   Suite 600
San Francisco CA  94102
www.iabc.com
Women in Film
6464 6464 Sunset Blvd Suite 530
Hollywood CA  90028
www.wif.org

American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA)
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville MD  20852
www.asha.org

Public Relations Society of America
33 Irving Pl  3rd Floor
New York NY  10003-2376
www.prsa.org

Society for Technical Communication
http://www.stc.org/

Wilmington Film Commission
http://www.wilmington-film.com

Speech Communication Association - Undergraduate Student Organizations
http://www.natcom.org

International Communication Association
http://www.icahdq.org

The Association for Women in Communications
http://www.womcom.org/

Institute for Global Communications
http://www.igc.org/igc/gateway/index.html

Revised 11.30.10
## COMMUNICATION STUDIES/SPEECH COMMUNICATION

What can I do with this major?

### AREAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUSINESS</th>
<th>EMPLOYERS</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>Product and service organizations</td>
<td>Develop strong verbal and written communication skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>Retail stores</td>
<td>Demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>Learn to work well on a team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>Join related professional associations. Get involved in other campus organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td>Manufacturers</td>
<td>Take business courses or earn a business minor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labor Relations</td>
<td>Financial companies</td>
<td>Gain business courses or earn a business minor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing/Editing</td>
<td>Insurance companies</td>
<td>Develop computer skills in areas such as spread sheets, databases, and presentation software.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Management</td>
<td>Hospitals and other healthcare organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Print and electronic media</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other business corporations</td>
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### PUBLIC RELATIONS/ADVERTISING

<p>| Public Relations                 | Private corporations                           | Develop excellent writing skills. |
| Advertising                      | Public service organizations                   | Gain experience through internships, even if unpaid. |
| Marketing                        | Public opinion research firms                  | Serve as public relations officer of an organization. |
| Corporate Public Affairs         | Public relations firms                          | Take additional courses in marketing, advertising, public relations, or other area of interest. |
| Development                      | Advertising agencies                            | Develop a portfolio of writing samples, ad campaigns, and other relevant work. |
| Media Analysis/Planning          | Public opinion organizations                   | Join related professional associations. |
| Creative Directing               | Radio and television companies                 | Be willing to move to locations with greater numbers of job opportunities. |
| Writing/Editing                  | Sports and entertainment organizations         | Be prepared to start at the bottom and work to more desirable positions. |
| Audience Analysis                | Hospitality and tourism industry               |                                                                                                                                   |
| Public Opinion Research          | Nonprofit organizations                         |                                                                                                                                   |
|                                  | Consulting firms                                |                                                                                                                                   |
|                                  | Freelance                                       |                                                                                                                                   |</p>
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<td><strong>MEDIA</strong></td>
<td>Publishing firms including newspaper, magazine and book Internet sites Television and radio stations Film industry</td>
<td>Develop excellent interpersonal and presentation skills. Take elective courses in journalism, broadcasting, public relations, and advertising. Develop research skills. Work for campus or local newspaper, radio station, or television station. Get related experience through internships, even if unpaid. Learn desktop publishing, webpage design, and other computer skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NONPROFIT</strong></td>
<td>Nonprofit organizations Professional associations Chambers of commerce Community centers Philanthropies Hospitals</td>
<td>Take courses in psychology, sociology, or social work to broaden perspective. Volunteer with community and campus organizations. Learn to work well with different types of people. Develop a wide array of skills including writing, speaking, budgeting, grant writing, and leadership.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GOVERNMENT</strong></td>
<td>All branches of local, state and federal government Political parties Political action committees</td>
<td>Learn local, state, and federal government job application process. Take courses in conflict management and develop negotiation skills. Volunteer to work on a local political campaign. Join related student organizations and earn leadership roles. Find an internship with a government organization to get a foot in the door. Maintain a strong grade point average as many government programs are very competitive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
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<td>Program Coordination</td>
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<td>Grant Writing</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td>Volunteer Coordination</td>
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AREAS

LAW
- Law Assistance
- Prosecution
- Defense
- Contractual
- Corporate
- Nonprofit or Public Interest
- Government
- Mediation
- Lobbying

EDUCATION
- Teaching
- Research
- Admissions
- Advising
- Development
- Student Affairs
- Recruitment
- Alumni Affairs
- Colleges and universities

EMPLOYERS

Law firms
- Government agencies
- Corporations
- Public interest organizations
- Private practice
- Colleges and universities

STRATEGIES

Plan on attending a specialized paralegal training school or law school depending upon area of interest.
- Participate in a debate or forensic team to hone communication skills.
- Join pre-law organizations.
- Obtain a part-time or summer job at a law office.
- Take courses in and gain experience with mediation and conflict resolution.

Ph.D. required for teaching and research in colleges and universities. Maintain a high grade point average and secure strong faculty recommendations.
- Earn a master’s degree in college student personnel or a related field for administrative positions.
- Get involved in campus leadership roles in residence halls, student unions/activities, programming boards, etc.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Develop strong written and verbal communication skills and excellent interpersonal skills.
- Get experience with public speaking by joining Toastmasters.
- Learn to work well on a team and develop leadership skills.
- Explore specializations within major and professional field. Select electives to enhance knowledge in area(s) of interest.
- Obtain experience through part-time employment, co-op, internships, or volunteer experience.
- Get involved in campus activities and professional organizations.
- Speech communication is a broad degree that can lead to job opportunities in many different fields. Skills and experiences gained through co-curricular activities, internships, part-time jobs, and volunteering are critical in shaping a career path.
- Speech communication is also good preparation for graduate school in many disciplines.