

**The Non-Thesis Option for the M.A. in Communication Studies (formerly Speech Communication)
Approved by UGA University Council, 2009**

The non-thesis M.A. option is consistent with the Department's goal to provide rigorous and high-quality training in the communication discipline. As displayed in Table 1, the program of study for students selecting the non-thesis option includes the same core courses required of M.A. students who choose the thesis option. All core courses are content-based classes taught by graduate faculty in the department. The core courses focus on pedagogy (8010, 8011); Introduction to Graduate Studies (8020); theory, criticism, and analysis of communication practices (8200, 8500, 8300 or 8700), and research practicums (8050). Students are required to take an additional 9 hours of electives related to a student's program of study within or outside of the department. The non-thesis option requires all of the above courses (core and elective), plus 2 additional content-based in-department seminars (8000-level and above). Further, non-thesis option students will enroll in 7200 (Examination Preparation) in lieu of 7300 (Master's Thesis). 7200 is a directed readings course supervised by the student's major professor, and it involves intense preparation for the comprehensive examinations. All courses have been approved by the University Curriculum Committee.

Table 1. *M.A. in Communication'Uwf lgu Options: Thesis versus Non-Thesis*

M.A. in Communication'Uwf lgu with Thesis Option	M.A. in Communication'Uwf lgu with Non-Thesis Option
<i>Core Classes</i>	<i>Core Classes</i>
CQOM 8010: Seminar in Teaching Public Communication (3 credits) or CQOM 8011: Seminar in Teaching Interpersonal Communication (3 credits)	CQOM 8010: Seminar in Teaching Public Communication (3 credits) or CQOM 8011: Seminar in Teaching Interpersonal Communication (3 credits)
CQOM 8020: Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)	CQOM 8020: Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)
CQOM 8050: Research Practicum (1 credit x 2)	COMM 8050: Research Practicum (1 credit x 2)
CQOM 8200: Rhetorical Theory (3 credits)	COMM 8200: Rhetorical Theory (3 credits)
CQOM 8500: Interpersonal Communication Theory (3 credits)	COMM 8500: Interpersonal Communication Theory (3 credits)
CQOM 8300: Rhetorical Criticism (3 credits) or CQOM 8700: Empirical Research Methods (3 credits)	COMM 8300: Rhetorical Criticism (3 credits) or COMM 8700: Empirical Research Methods (3 credits)
<i>Elective Coursework</i>	<i>Elective Coursework</i>
3 courses in or outside of Department (9 credits)	3 courses in or outside of Department (9 credits)
<i>Master's Research</i>	<i>Elective Coursework</i>
CQOM 7000: Master's Research (6 credits)	2 In- Department Seminars (6 credits)
<i>Master's Thesis</i>	<i>Master's Examination Preparation</i>
CQOM 7300: Master's Thesis (3 credits)	COMM 7200: Examination Preparation (3 credits)
Minimum Total Credit Hours = 33	Minimum Total Credit Hours = 33

Comprehensive Examinations

The non-thesis option replaces the thesis requirement with a rigorous and comprehensive written and oral examination. The Written Comprehensive Exam will consist of two parts. Part I will be a 6-hour closed book exam in which the candidate will answer questions in two areas (3 hours in each area). For Rhetorical Studies students these two areas are: (1) rhetorical theory and (2) rhetorical criticism. For Interpersonal & Health Communication Studies students these two areas are: (1) communication theory and (2) empirical research methods. Within one or two of these areas (at the discretion of the major professor), students will also be asked questions applicable to a particular content area of focus. The exact nature of the content area of focus will be negotiated between the student and the committee members. Students should anticipate between 2-3 questions within each area.

The major professor will negotiate which committee members provide questions and in which particular areas. It is up to the student to meet with individual committee members and to consult with the major professor to discuss the parameters of particular questions. Committee members may require additional readings in the two main areas as well as the content area in preparation for the examination.

Students will complete the written portion of the exam in the Department, using Department-furnished computers. The two areas of the written exam can be completed on the same day (3 hours for area 1, followed by a 1-2 hour break, and 3 hours for area 2), or on consecutive days (3 hours for area 1, followed by 3 hours for area 2 on the next day). Students pursuing the two-day option cannot complete the exam over a Friday-Monday period.

Committee members shall have two weeks to grade the exam. Committee members will inform the major professor if the student's answers are a "pass" or "fail" in each area. A two-thirds majority will determine if a student passes or fails each area of the written examination. If a student fails an area of the exam, the student will have one opportunity to retake the exam within a time frame and following conditions agreed upon by a majority of the committee. After a certified "pass" has been achieved in both areas covered by the written examination, a two-hour oral examination will be held. The oral examination is intended to be an inclusive examination within the student's field of study. Therefore, a portion of the oral examination may not solely focus on a student's exam questions. The oral preliminary exam is graded on a pass/fail basis, with 2/3 of committee members required for an overall pass. A student who fails an oral preliminary exam will have one opportunity to retake the exam within a time frame and following conditions agreed upon by a majority of the committee.

Timeline

In consultation with the major professor, students will declare whether they will pursue the thesis or non-thesis option. The graduate coordinator must be informed of this decision no later than the last day of classes of the spring semester of the first year of M.A. study. Should a student decide to shift options, he or she should inform the graduate coordinator immediately. Students will not be able to switch from the thesis track to the non-thesis track or vice versa after the first day of classes of the fall semester of their second year of M.A. study.