

Northwestern | COMMUNICATION

Department of Communication Studies

Communication Studies Honors Thesis Program

The Communication Studies Honors Program provides a special opportunity for advanced students to pursue an intellectual passion, acquire valuable research and writing skills, and complete their undergraduate career with distinction. Through guided development of an independent research project, the student will produce a scholarly paper, laboratory research report, or other dedicated research project. It is generally expected that the scope of the project will be such that it can reasonably be completed in 2 quarters of student effort.

This work provides an opportunity to draw together the student's distinctive set of courses and other academic experiences, and to strengthen applications for graduate school or subsequent vocational preparation or placement. Students in the program will conduct their Honors project with the guidance of a faculty advisor. Final projects will be archived in the digital collection of the Northwestern University Library and students are encouraged to present their research at the annual Undergraduate Research & Arts Expo, sponsored by the NU Office of Undergraduate Research. Those who complete the program successfully will be eligible to graduate with departmental honors.

Applications for the Honors Program are due during the Winter Quarter of the student's junior year (or the year prior to graduation if the student plans to graduate in fewer than 4 years). To be eligible, the student must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.6 at the time of application. The [application is available online](#) and should include a 2- or 3-page description of the project and a brief plan for completing it. The application also requires the name and email of your faculty advisor, who will need to submit a brief email of support.

It is strongly recommended that students begin talking and building relationships with possible faculty advisors no later than the Fall Quarter of junior year, and ideally well before that. This could include, for example, reading work by relevant faculty to determine fit, taking courses with relevant faculty, scheduling informational meetings and/or applying for research assistant positions in faculty labs, where available.

Applications will be reviewed by the undergraduate curriculum committee and students will be notified of acceptance prior to the start of Spring Quarter. Students whose applications are accepted will be required to attend a brief orientation meeting with the Comm Studies Undergraduate Administrator and to submit short quarterly progress reports until the project is complete. Throughout the Honors Program, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to be familiar with the structure of the program, to meet regularly with the faculty advisor, and to plan the project accordingly.

Quick details about the Honors Program:

- The process includes finding a faculty advisor, submitting an online application during Winter Q of the Junior Year, writing a comprehensive project proposal (the prospectus), carrying out the work, and writing the thesis itself.
- The project can begin in the Spring Quarter of junior year or Fall Quarter of senior year and must be completed before or during your final quarter of enrollment.
- The thesis be completed in two or three quarters; during which time, students in the program will conduct their project with the guidance of a faculty advisor.
- Students will receive course credit for completing a thesis in the form of two units of COMM ST 397: Senior Honors Thesis. One will be awarded when the prospectus is complete and the other when the thesis is finished and approved by the faculty advisor.
- Those who complete the program successfully will be eligible to graduate with departmental honors.

Program Requirements & Application Process:

- To apply, students need to have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.6 or better.
- Discuss your project with a Communication Studies faculty member who will be willing to recommend you and to act as your thesis advisor if you are admitted to the program.
- Submit [a completed application](#), along with 2-3 page description of your project, and the name of your secured faculty advisor.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to Jennifer (jennifer.satut@northwestern.edu), contact your academic advisor, and/or discuss your plan with your faculty advisor.