

Self-reflection - Comm & Media

To me being a communication and media studies student means freedom. I had a difficult time deciding on a major my freshman year because I had no clue what I wanted to study and pursue as a career. Eventually, I ended up choosing communication and media as a major because it's a broad field. Communication is a skill that is required in any area of profession, and media is quickly developing and changing. As I look back now, I made the right decision because this major has challenged me and changed me for the better, and it has given me options in many different career paths.

What did I learn?

As a Communication and Media Studies student, I have enhanced the most important skill (communication) required for advancement and development in society. As well as learning about and staying up to date and being aware of the effect of the media world, which also plays a significant role in shaping the future.

I have learned...

- The difference between interpersonal communication and mass communication, as well as, the techniques and skills required to engage in these types of communication effectively
- The strategies for investigating the structure, politics, economics, uses, and effects of mass media
- How to identify and understand communication research terms, concepts, and theories
- How to identify the difference between quantitative and qualitative data collection
- How to identify and assess ethical standards of communication research

- How to identify and apply fundamental research design using social scientific and interpretivist methods
- How to approach job applications and job interviews
- The communication techniques that will help you develop and maintain productive, professional relationships with other organizational members
- Presentation skills that will aid me in business and professional context

I have the ability to...

- Analyze a person or company's communication/brand voice
- Demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of communication in a crowded media environment
- Create a news release, social media posts, feature stories, and speeches for a client in their brand voice
- Produce content within a short time frame.
- Apply ethical communication principles and practices
- Understand and explain how identity is shaped by social group memberships.
- Understand, interpret, evaluate, and apply empirical research on intergroup communication and social identity.
- Understand, interpret, evaluate, and apply two important theories of intergroup communication and social identity.
- Recognize how privilege impacts social identity and intergroup communication.
- Identify how intergroup theory and research relate to real-world events and relationships.

- Describe the facilitating conditions for positive intergroup contact and construct real-world recommendations for communicating across differences guided by these conditions.
- Understand how researchers try to answer questions about media psychology.
- Recognize theories and key research within media psychology
- Read and evaluate social scientific research
- Communicate coherently and effectively about media psychology research findings
- Critically analyze messages

How has my learning impacted me personally / professionally?

Personally, the education I have received has impacted my ability to communicate effectively both verbally and written. Professionally, my learning has already provided me with opportunities and has taken me to different parts of the world. I was able to do two internships, one in business management and the other in strategic communication for one of the best and well known international non-profit organizations in the world (IREX). Overall, my education has had a positive impact in my personal and professional life, and I'm eager to see where it all leads me.

What do I specialize in / my concentration?

My concentration is media studies, but I'm fascinated by both communication and media, because there is a great deal of knowledge to be found within the two areas of studies.

The topics I've studied include, but are not limited to...

- Principles Mass Communication (COME124)

- Communication Research Methods (COME180)
- Writing for Media (COME252)
- Social Identity and Intergrp Comm (COME305)
- Comm Technology Social Change (COME384)
- Media Psychology (COME389)
- Television Criticism (COME467)
- Political Communication (COME329)
- Business & Professional Speaking (COME322)
- Washington Media Institute course (WMI)

What am I interested in pursuing after graduation?

After graduation, I am interested in pursuing a career in business management, or possibly follow my dream of working for international agencies to help shape/change international policy. The two career paths are very much available to me, and it will ultimately depend on where I choose to reside after graduation. I am currently interning with the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), which is headquartered in our nation's capital, and I have a job offered to me if I choose to stick around in the big city. This could be the first step in pursuing my goal of working in international policy. However, the business management route is also available. I have management and leadership experience through my internship and work experience at Kroger as a management intern and a product lead. I have yet to decide precisely what I will be doing after graduation, but the choices are certainly narrowed down to these two.

Experiences that helped me learn outside of the classroom?

My work and internship experiences have helped me learn outside of the classroom. I am currently interning with IREX on their strategic communication unit (SCU) team, and in this role, I was able to take the skills and knowledge my education has given me and use it in the real world. This internship has allowed me to see what goes into designing and developing a website to one of the biggest international organizations in the world. They have also given me administrative access to their content, which has allowed me to assist others through email and on the website. I have been able to get my content design certification, I have published three tweets on their Twitter handle, and assisted in publishing success stories and feature stories.