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Master of Arts in Communication Comprehensive Examination Guidelines

The comprehensive examination allows the student to demonstrate the knowledge acquired from the courses taken during the degree program. The comprehensive examination must be taken as soon as possible after the completion of 24 graduate hours in the program and must be taken prior to the completion of 30 graduate hours in the program. The written and oral components of the comprehensive examination must be completed over a period of time not to exceed three weeks, or a new examination must be scheduled.

Through consultation(s) with the students and their respective graduate advisors, the Graduate Program Director will appoint a three-member faculty examination committee for each student taking the examination. The committee will include the student's graduate advisor and two graduate faculty members in the program, to be selected in consultation with the graduate advisor and the Program Director. It is expected that all three committee members be instructors of record for the student in an actual graduate class (versus offerings such as 699/795 and thesis). At least one of those committee members must have taught that student in a core/required course (501, 502, 510, or 681/682).

The comprehensive examination has a written component and an oral component. A Satisfactory rating must be earned (by at least two of the three committee members) on both the written and oral components of the examination in order to pass the comprehensive examination. Please note that the exams are the culmination of intensive scholarly and applied coursework. Therefore, to pass the examinations, students are expected to clearly and thoroughly answer each question at a level expected in a challenging and comprehensive master's degree program.

Comprehensive examinations must be completed by the twelfth week of the academic semester. Comprehensive examinations ordinarily are not scheduled during the Maymester or summer terms. Students should try to complete all three examinations within a 7-10 day period, and are discouraged to take exams on consecutive days. The defense should be scheduled no later than one week after the final question is answered.

Written Component

The written component of the comprehensive examination consists of three questions. Students will not be given any advance warning or notice about the contents of these questions.

Each examination question will be individually released (by the Graduate Director through the student's campus email account) to the student for completion during a specific 24-hour period (at 9 a.m. unless extreme circumstances dictate otherwise). Each question will be "take home" in format. Answers to all questions must be prepared with a 12-point, Times-Roman font in a double-spaced, typed manuscript using one-inch margins. Each answer (which should include a separate cover page with the committee member's question) must be returned via email to each member of the examination committee along with the Graduate Director by the end of the 24-hour period. Each individual answer shall be at least five typewritten pages in length and shall not exceed eight typewritten pages, for a total of 15-24 manuscript pages for the written portion of the comprehensive examination. Cover pages and bibliographies are not included in the 15-24 page limit. Lengthy bibliographies usually are not required in answering questions for the comprehensive examination; however, students are expected, in each answer, to cite key scholars and relevant issues to support their arguments (endnotes in APA style are sufficient). Students are strongly advised to save classroom notes, texts and materials to review for, and utilize in, the examination.

Oral Component

The oral defense will be cancelled if a Satisfactory rating is not earned on at least two of the three written portions of the comprehensive examination, and the student will have failed the exam.

The oral component of the comprehensive examination requires an oral defense of the answers provided for the written portion of the examination, as well as answers to other questions asked by the comprehensive examination committee. Students should clearly articulate their answers and provide examples where appropriate. Students should bring copies of their answers to the defense, and are expected to have reviewed their answers beforehand and only sparingly refer to their notes when being asked questions.

The time of the oral defense (to be held in the 7 College Way conference room unless otherwise noted) is determined by the Graduate Advisor in consultation with the student and the other two examination committee members. The student will be asked questions regarding the written answers to examination questions and may be asked any question germane to her or his graduate program.

The oral defense will not exceed 60 minutes in length. Refreshments of any sort should not be provided by the student to the examination committee. The student and the examination committee members must be physically present for the entire oral defense. Guests are permitted at the oral defense with the permission of the examination committee. Guests are not permitted to speak or to participate in any way in the oral defense.

The student (and guests, if applicable) will be asked to leave the examination room at the conclusion of the oral defense to allow for faculty discussion of the oral defense. The

student will be notified via the student's campus email address of the results of the oral defense within 24 hours of the completion of that defense.

Oral Examination Waiver

Students who indicate their intent to complete a master's thesis on their Program of Study may petition the Graduate Director for a waiver of the oral defense of the comprehensive examination. For these students, the comprehensive examination rating is based solely on the written portion of the comprehensive examination. The student must have passed all three questions with a Satisfactory rating to receive the waiver. Students who complete the comprehensive examination under the terms of this waiver and who later move from the thesis option to the non-thesis option are required to repeat both the written and oral portions of the comprehensive examination and to earn an overall Satisfactory rating in order to meet degree requirements.

Examination Outcomes and Policies

The Graduate Advisor will notify the Graduate Director in writing concerning the results of the comprehensive examination within 24 hours of the conclusion of the examination.

Students must earn ratings of Satisfactory for both the written and oral components for all three questions to pass the exam..

Students who earn one Unsatisfactory rating (from one of the three committee members) for the comprehensive examination may retake the comprehensive examination question for a second and final time, but only if the other two members give a Satisfactory rating. The committee, in that case, would decide if a "re-taken" oral component would be required as well.

A student who receives two (or three) overall Unsatisfactory ratings on the comprehensive examination will fail the exam and therefore be dismissed from the program.

Exceptions to these guidelines are possible only with the approval of the Graduate Committee, the Graduate Program Director, and the Department Chair.

Appeals

Disputes about the comprehensive examination process shall be resolved by the Graduate Director. The decision of the Graduate Director may be appealed to the Department Chair. The decision of the Department Chair is final.

Comprehensive Examination Summary

Exam Preparation	Exam Expectations	Exam Performance
<p><u>Exam Committee Selection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes three faculty members, comprised of graduate advisor, graduate faculty of at least one core course, and graduate faculty of one additional course <p><u>Exam Date Selection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exam must be completed by the twelfth week of the academic semester Defense must be scheduled no later than one week after the final written question is answered Must complete entire examination in a three-week period 	<p><u>Written Component</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each question must be completed in a 24-hour period Required format includes 12-point, Times-Roman font in a double-spaced, typed manuscript using one-inch margins Must include cover page with the committee member's question Minimum of five typewritten pages in length and maximum of eight typewritten pages for each answer Return via email to the Graduate Director and copy each member of the examination committee <p><u>Oral Component</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located at 7 College Way conference room Bring copies of answers to the defense, and review answers beforehand Approximately 60 minutes in length 	<p><u>Notification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student will be notified of exam outcome by graduate advisor via email within 24 hours of the completion of the defense <p><u>Possible Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass: Must earn ratings of Satisfactory for both the written and oral components for all three questions Incomplete: Earning one Unsatisfactory rating for the comprehensive examination results in the retake of the comprehensive examination question for a second and final time Fail: Receiving two (or three) Unsatisfactory ratings <i>*Please note, failing the exam results in dismissal from the program.</i>