



COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Overview

- Professional and research-oriented courses with an emphasis on public relations and strategic communication.
- Hybrid program with up to 50% (18 credits) of the 36 required degree credits offered online.



ACCELERATED PROGRAM

Did you know?

The Communication Management Program offers an accelerated program which allows students to earn both their bachelor's and master's degrees in less time through an individualized plan.

Accelerated Students...

- Earn a Bachelor's Degree & a Master's Degree faster.
- Apply up to nine credits of graduate courses towards both undergraduate and graduate degrees.
- Save money due to time efficiency.
- Increase your earning potential in the job market.

"It allowed me to challenge myself academically while still reaching my goals of completing my Master's at a faster pace. Overall, the class discussions and support from everyone around really helped solidify my choice to continue my education with the program!"

– Julia Mongan





Student Achievements

Students have presented original research at conferences



Framing climate change in children's picture books: A qualitative study of authors and illustrators

Tameka Shelford

Presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication



The Generative AI dilemma: How media professionals work with new technologies and cope with job insecurity

Zachary Levine, Tavon McLaughlin-Steele, Abdullah Al Mahfuth, Dr. Rauf Arif, and Dr. Elia Powers

Presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication



Workplace flexibility for whom? How communications job advertisements signal commitments, perks, and values

Rebecca Kirkman, Lindsey Culli, and Dr. Elia Powers

Presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication



A rhetoric of revulsion: Evaluating the efficiency of disgust appeals and the role of mediating emotions in animal rights campaigns

Kayla Kozak

Presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

MEET STUDENTS IN OUR PROGRAM WHO ARE FUNDED BY GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS. THESE ASSISTANTSHIPS ARE DESIGNED FOR STUDENTS TO:

- Gain further expertise in their field
- Develop research and pedagogical skills
- Gain academic administrative and leadership experience
- Develop collegial collaborations with advisors
- Gain skills in interpersonal effectiveness and performance evaluation



Sami Kohout
COMM Management



Kaitlyn Tilley
COMM Management



Julia Mongan
Accelerated Programs



Bernette Kassa
Student Health & Wellbeing



Xamara Coleman
GSA Representative- COFAC



Egan Eteffa
COMM Management



Abbey Frock
Campus Recreation



Erin Conahan
Office of Research



Natahlia-Naomi Carr
COMM & Advocacy



Mekila Ha
Housing & Residence Life

Graduate assistants receive tuition remission and a stipend to offset living expenses.

Program Milestones

Thesis



About the Thesis

Students conduct sustained research to investigate the factors that influence the effectiveness of professional communication or campaigns.

The thesis prepares a student for future academic research or doctoral programs and may involve any appropriate forms of scholarly communication research.

Gender and race in presidential politics: How *The New York Times* covered Shirley Chisholm and Kamala Harris' presidential campaigns

by Shawna Prince

Thesis Advisor: Dr. John Kirch

This study examines the intersection of race, gender, and media representation through a comparative analysis of Shirley Chisholm's 1972 and Kamala Harris's 2020 presidential campaigns.



A rhetoric of revulsion: Evaluating the efficiency of disgust appeals and the role of mediating emotions in animal rights campaigns

by Kayla Kozak

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kyongseok Kim

This study explores the efficiency of disgust appeals in animal rights campaigns, focusing on how varying levels of disgust from graphic imagery affect emotional responses and behavioral intentions.

Program Milestones

Graduate Project



About the Project

Students showcase their acquisition of communication management knowledge and skills under the guidance of a faculty advisor from the department.

Students choose a client, develop the project with an appropriate method of investigation, and report the finding in writing and in an oral presentation.

From challenges to solutions: A communication plan to improve the Global Ambassador Mentorship Program for international students

by Sydney Avelino

Advisor: Dr. Lingling Zhang

Sydney Avelino developed a communication plan to enhance the Global Ambassador Mentorship Program's ability to address the diverse needs of Towson's international students.



The Real Wings, Inc.

AN ETIQUETTE AND LIFE SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

Clicks that count: How nonprofits use social media to engage audiences and attract donors

by Nadia Payne

Advisor: Dr. Lingling Zhang

Nadia Payne developed a content strategy plan to improve the engagement and credibility of The Real Wings, Inc. among participants and donors.

Program Milestones

Comprehensive Exams



About the Exams

Students take six credits of additional electives and pass three written, on-campus comprehensive exams.

Exams are in communication theory, a research method, and a 600-level mass communication course chosen by the student.

Chazz's Experience

Chazz Kibler successfully completed his comprehensive exams in spring 2022. He prepared extensive notes to study. In addition to communication theory, he took exams on quantitative research methodology and social media content strategy.



Chazz's Tips for Success:

- Write a literature review for the communication theories.
- Teach what you've been studying to a family member or friend.
- Study even when you may not feel like it.
- Don't forget to take breaks.

Faculty Highlights



Dr. Rauf Arif

Dr. Arif's most recent publication, **"College students' perceptions of artificial intelligence (AI) risks and benefits in Pakistan,"** appeared in the *Human-Machine Communication Journal*.

This study examined how young people in non-Western societies perceive the risks and benefits of AI. Findings show that the majority of college students hold positive views of AI technology. His research adds to the growing body of literature on AI adoption in non-Western contexts and provides meaningful insights for future scholars interested in the role of AI in diverse cultural settings.

Expertise:

- **Social media & social movements**
- **Artificial intelligence & communication**
- **Public diplomacy in a digital age**
- **International journalism**

Dr. Jung-Sook Lee

Dr. Lee recently presented her work titled **"Consumer trust and attitude toward sustainability messages in social and environmental sustainability"** at the **75th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association** in Denver, Colorado.

This study used an online experiment to investigate the competence and intent dimensions of trust and their influence on consumers' attitudes toward sustainability messages and their outcomes in social and environmental sustainability contexts.



Expertise:

- **Information processing in consumer behavior**
- **Celebrity and influencer endorsement**
- **Sustainability communication**
- **Racial disparities in advertising**

Dr. Juan Liu



Expertise:

- Strategic communication
- Corporate social advocacy
- Stakeholder engagement
- Social media and misinformation
- Communication and technology
- Media surveillance
- Public opinion

Dr. Liu recently published “**Applying ethics of care-based response strategies to mitigate AI-related corporate crisis: The moderating role of crisis involvement**” in the *International Journal of Strategic Communication*.

This study aims to fill the gap in research on the dynamics of ethics of care messaging and crisis involvement in mitigating AI-related corporate crises. Utilizing a 2X2 experimental design, Dr. Liu explored how crisis involvement affects corporate reputation, impacting the interaction effect on product evaluation and purchasing intention.

Dr. Elia Powers



Expertise:

- Multimedia journalism
- Data journalism
- Sports journalism
- Journalism ethics and pedagogy
- News/media literacy
- Nonprofit media and new business models
- Mass communication research

Dr. Powers recently published “**More than ‘just advisers’: How consultants’ audience-centered approach shaped self-presentation in TV News**” in *American Journalism*.

Through archival research of audience reports spanning the years 1963–1979, this study examines how McHugh and Hoffman, the first news consulting firm, helped stations identify their core audience and cater to their tastes in newscasters. Their consultation shaped journalists’ on-air presentation and reinforced restrictive norms for appearance and vocal delivery.

Dr. Hyang-Sook Kim



Expertise:

- **Health communication**
- **Human-computer interaction**
- **Computer-mediated communication**
- **Strategic communication**

Dr. Kim recently published **"Cancer vlog community building for social support on YouTube: A social capital perspective"** in *Information, Communication & Society*.

This study investigates how cancer vloggers and their viewers cultivate supportive online communities through personal storytelling and interaction. Grounded in social capital theory, the research analyzes how these digital interactions contribute to community formation and emotional resilience, underscoring the potential of video-based platforms fostering meaningful connections and contributing to the well-being of individuals navigating serious health challenges.

Dr. Kwangmi Kim



Expertise:

- **International advertising**
- **Globalization and expansion of media industries**
- **Political economy of mass communication**
- **Commercialization and representation of gender and race in advertising**
- **Social media and sports**

Dr. Kim presented her study, **"Sports betting advertising in the U.S.: Uncovering sentiments and topics from YouTube comments by a hybrid approach,"** at the **International Conference on Research in Advertising 2025** in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

The study explores public attitudes toward sports betting ads including the use of celebrities, humor, and music in commercials, alongside concerns about gambling addiction and frustrations with betting apps. These insights emphasize the importance of more responsible advertising practices and the role of regulation in addressing public concerns.



Dr. Sushma Kumble

Dr. Kumble was awarded the Faculty Development & Research Committee grant for '25-'26 for her project **"Evaluating chatbot-assisted communication: The impact of chatbot information source and interactivity on message complexity, creditability, and engagement."**

The grant awarded \$5,570 for her multi-study experiment design study on how AI-powered chatbots can be used to understand complex scientific and health messages in the mass communication landscape.

Expertise:

- **Big Data analytics and machine learning**
- **Social media messaging**
- **Stigma communication**
- **Strategic communication**

Dr. Christopher Vardeman

Dr. Vardeman recently published **"An investigation of consumer responses to visual and textual elements of meme marketing advertisements"** in the *Journal of Social Media Marketing*.

This study examines how ad type, brand identity, humor, and perceived popularity shape consumer responses to meme-based advertising on social media. Results suggest that humorous memes outperform non-humorous memes and text ads, and that less-serious brands and popular posts yield more favorable attitudes and purchase intentions.



Expertise:

- **Strategic communication**
- **Advertising psychology**
- **Digital advertising**
- **Media effects**
- **Media ethics**



Dr. Lingling Zhang

Dr. Zhang recently presented **"When influencer narratives backfire: Sponsorship disclosure and consumer trust in hotel sustainability posts"** at the **108th Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication** in San Francisco, California.

The study evaluated how social media posts by influencers in a narrative format affect consumer engagement and booking intentions for hotels with sustainable practices. Studies revealed that influencers' posts in a narrative format reduced perceived manipulative intent, enhancing perceived trustworthiness, higher engagement, and booking intentions.

Expertise:

- **Marketing communications**
- **Consumer behaviors**
- **Social media branding**

EVENTS



Graduate Social

The Communication Management Graduate Program hosted a social event for students to connect with their peers and faculty. The Fall 2025 Graduate Social took place on Tuesday, Sept 23, 2025, from 5:30 p.m.- 7:30 p.m. in VB 107. Twenty three students and faculty attended the event to network and share survival tips. Students appreciated enthusiastic faculty support for their journey in the graduate program.



Information Session

In the spring, students are invited to an information session to hear faculty talk about their research expertise. Alumni will also share their milestone experiences with the thesis, graduate project and comprehensive exams.

Be on the lookout for an email in mid-February 2026 about this event.



OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, Nov 1, 2025, is Towson University's Fall Graduate All-Programs Open House.

Another Graduate Open House will be scheduled for spring 2026.

Come and learn more about the Communication Management program.

QUOTES FROM CURRENT STUDENTS & RECENT ALUMNI

"I was drawn to the Communication Management program because of all of the Mass Comm professors I had as an undergrad. They were all very knowledgeable in the field of communication and supportive of their student's endeavors which inspired me to pursue my masters degree."
 – Mekila Ha, current student

"The faculty in the program care about your success and well-being. Within my first year in the program, faculty encouraged and supported me through research funding and academic opportunities tailored to my unique interests."
 – Grace Hoggarth, current student

"Communication Management faculty were not only eager to support me as a student in their classes, but also an aspiring professional with a unique set of interests and aspirations."
 – Kayla Kozak, Class of 2024

"The program provided me with high-quality professors, hands-on projects, and insightful discussions that expanded my thinking and pushed me to grow as a communications professional. It gave me the skills and experience to confidently market myself in today's competitive job market."
 – Sydney Avelino, Class of 2025



**Communication Management
Master's at Towson University**



@tucommmgmt



**Towson University
Communication Management**