

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN COMMUNICATION STUDIES



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Welcome and thank you for your interest in graduate studies in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. With our current research initiatives, interdisciplinary collaborations, and involvement with academic associations, these are exciting times in our department! Our department is nationally recognized as a leader in research and teaching in Communication Studies, and we are proud to extend this tradition of excellence to a new generation of scholar-teachers through graduate education.

Our community is a collaborative one. Our graduate students develop strong working relationships with their primary advisor, other faculty, and fellow graduate students as they progress through the program. At Nebraska, our goal is not simply to guide students through the degree requirements but to mentor students in all facets of their future scholarly lives. For instance, we offer professional development workshops on topics such as searching for an academic position, developing a program of research, and creating a teaching portfolio. In order to encourage our students to make their scholarship visible, we offer financial support for attending regional and national conferences.

We offer Ph.D. and M.A. degrees in our department. Our doctoral students have great success in securing academic appointments upon graduation. Our M.A. program will prepare you for continuing your doctoral studies in prestigious doctoral programs. We encourage potential students to consider how interests fit with the primary areas of study and scholarly initiatives of our program. As you go through this process, please feel free to contact me to further discuss our department, faculty, and life as a graduate student. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Jordan Soliz, Director of Graduate Studies
jsoliz2@unl.edu



Fall 2016

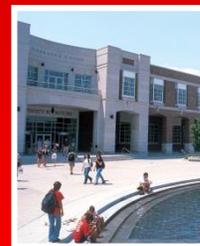
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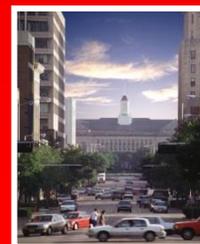
Graduate Program Information



Departmental Faculty Profiles



Information for Graduate Students



Department and Campus Photos

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GRADUATE PROGRAM INFORMATION

The mission of the faculty and students of the Department of Communication Studies is to examine human symbolic activity as it shapes and is shaped by relationships, institutions, technology, and culture. This work concerns the creation, analysis, and critique of messages ranging from face-to-face to digital media contexts. The department's research and teaching devote particular attention to three cross-cutting scholarly initiatives: **Health and Well-Being, Civic Engagement, and Identity and Difference**. The goal of these scholarly initiatives is to understand and explain the role of communication in (a) constituting individual health and well-being, promoting healthy behaviors, identifying processes that differentiate positive and negative psychosocial outcomes, and helping persons navigate relational challenges, (b) facilitating civic engagement, mediating public controversies, and organizing for social change, and (c) creating, maintaining, and challenging personal, social, and community identity in a complex and diverse world.

PRIMARY AREAS OF STUDY & SCHOLARLY INITIATIVES

The department offers two primary **graduate emphases** in **Interpersonal, Family, and Intergroup Communication** and **Rhetoric & Public Culture**. Our goal is to nurture scholars who appreciate and embrace the interconnectedness of these primary areas as well as other faculty foci (e.g., organizational communication).

INTERPERSONAL, FAMILY, AND INTERGROUP COMMUNICATION

Faculty and students focus on diverse methodological and theoretical approaches to understanding human relations in personal, family, and intergroup contexts. Specific specializations include the negotiation of relational problematics and relational dialectics, discourses in and about family relationships and family forms, communication and narrative sense-making, communication surrounding relational and social identity, and communicative processes and outcomes associated with mental and physical health.

RHETORIC AND PUBLIC CULTURE

Faculty and students focus on understanding the communicative sites of citizenship as they are transformed by globalization, digital mediation, and an accelerating cultural pluralism. Scholars explore the tensions created by these paradigmatic changes through the study of cultural myth and civic identity, networked public spheres and deliberation, and relationships between social identity and public argument.

Our faculty members are active scholars with established and innovative areas of research. We pride ourselves on our student-faculty collaborations and the independent scholarship produced by our students. You can find our work published in highly respected journals including *Argumentation & Advocacy*, *Communication Education*, *Communication Monographs*, *Communication Research*, *Communication Studies*, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *Journal of Family Communication*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Personal Relationships*, and *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*. Faculty members have also authored and edited important scholarly books. The quality of the scholarship produced by our faculty and students is evident in the recognition they receive from the university and at national and regional conferences.

To support research efforts, students have access to analytical and survey development software (e.g., SPSS, MPlus, Qualtrics). Additionally, the Communication Studies Social Interaction Lab offers capabilities for audio and video recording of dyadic and small group interaction, focus group space, and an area for scholarly interviews. In addition to working with our faculty inside/outside the classroom, the department's *visiting and summer scholars* programs allow access to distinguished scholars in our discipline. Graduate students have the opportunity for doctoral specializations that complement the degree in Communication Studies. Current specializations include *Ethnic Studies*, *Women's and Gender Studies*, and *Great Plains Studies*.

Our emphasis on research is complimented by our dedication to teaching. Members of our faculty have been recognized for teaching and advising on the undergraduate and graduate level and we make it a point to share philosophies and practices with our students as part of graduate education. Throughout the program, students are given the opportunity to teach a variety of courses and may also serve as teaching assistants to faculty in upper-level classes. We offer professional development programs on teaching (e.g., Preparing Future Faculty Program) and a series of professional development relevant to academic life. We take great pride in the quality of our graduate teaching assistants and the numerous awards they have received on campus and in the discipline. *Our department also houses a nationally-recognized Speech & Debate program which offers opportunities for assistant coach positions.*

[Learn More!](#)

DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY PROFILES



DR. DAWN O. BRAITHWAITE, WILLA CATHER PROFESSOR AND DEPARTMENT CHAIR, studies how people in personal and family relationships communicate and manage family change and challenges. Her scholarship and research teams are focused on communication in understudied and changing families, communication rituals, and dialectics of relating in stepfamilies, among voluntary (fictive) kin, and family kinkeepers. Dr. Braithwaite has authored over 100 articles and is co-author or co-editor of five books including *Family Communication: Cohesion and Change* and *Engaging Theories in Interpersonal Communication*. She received the National

Communication Association's Brommel Award for Outstanding Contributions in Family Communication, the division's Book Award, the UNL College of Arts & Sciences Award for Outstanding Research in Social Science. She is co-chair of the Qualitative and Mixed Methods Interest Group at UNL. Dr. Braithwaite was named the Western States Communication Association Distinguished Scholar in 2014. She is currently a Senior Fellow with the Council on Contemporary Families. She is a Past President of the Western States Communication Association, received the Distinguished Service Award, and was President of the National Communication Association.



DR. CHARLES BRAITHWAITE, SENIOR LECTURER, is a Fellow in the Center for Great Plains Studies, a Graduate Fellow in the Dept. of Anthropology. He teaches courses in intercultural communication, conflict management, interviewing, and nonverbal communication for the Department of Communication Studies. Dr. Braithwaite also directs the "Global Classroom Project," which uses the commercial internet to have live, synchronous video classes between Nebraska and universities in Pakistan, Turkey, Yemen, Russia, and Costa Rica. His international experience includes serving as a North Vietnamese interpreter for U.S. Naval Intelligence, and studying

international business communication along the U.S./Mexican border. Dr. Braithwaite has a special interest in American Indian higher education, and had conducted research on the Navajo Nation, and among the U-Mo'n-Ho'n (Omaha), the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) tribes of Nebraska.



DR. KATHY CASTLE, DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION AND PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE, studies interpersonal and family health communication. Kathy's research is focused on improving the overall physical, mental, and relational health and well being of those experiencing and working within the context of chronic illness. Communicated narrative sense-making is at the heart of her research with a focus on the role that it plays in identity (re)construction as patients, families, and medical providers communicate to make sense of and constitute the experience of chronic illness within a master narrative of restitution that fails to account for

chronicity. She has a keen interest in exploring how personal narratives of chronic illness contribute to or detract from health and well-being throughout the chronic illness experience. She is specifically interested in how these narratives are negotiated in relationships to (re)shape identity, illness orientation, access to social support, and ultimately self-management behavior over the course of the intersecting individual, family, and illness transitions that characterize chronic illness. Learn more at www.kathycastle.com.

DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY PROFILES



DR. AARON DUNCAN, DIRECTOR OF SPEECH & DEBATE PROGRAM AND PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE, received his Ph.D. from the Department of Communication Studies at UNL in 2011 with a specialization in Rhetoric and Public Culture. His research focuses on sporting culture, public mythology, and political communication. During his time as Director of Speech & Debate, UNL students have won 25 individual state championships, broken over 100 at national tournaments, and competed in over 30 final rounds at national tournaments.



DR. JODY KOENIG KELLAS, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, conducts research and teaches classes on interpersonal, family, and health communication. The overarching purpose of her research is to study the ways in which narratives, storytelling, and related forms of communicated sense-making can help individuals and families understand, negotiate, and improve communication and coping within the context of difficulty and illness. Dr. Koenig Kellas' research lab at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln - **NARRATIVE NEBRASKA** - seeks to implement interdisciplinary, narrative-based interventions to improve caregiving, communication, and psychosocial well-being for families and care providers. Grounded in the theory of *Communicated Narrative Sense-Making* (Koenig Kellas & Kranstuber Horstman, 2015), we study the impact of family stories; the process of family storytelling; and the ways in which narrative research theory, and methods can be used to inform interventions for individuals and families coping with illness and other difficulties. Her most recent research interests focus on the intersections of family and health communication, including narrative interventions for helping families cope within the context of cancer and palliative care, perspective-taking interventions for improving communication satisfaction and ameliorating the negative health effects of conflicts in relationships, and storytelling interventions designed to improve the health and well-being of older adults. Learn more at www.jodykoenigkellas.com.



DR. KATHY KRONE, PROFESSOR, is an organizational communication scholar whose research highlights the ways in which various forms of organizing enable and constrain participation and the development of voice. Recent projects take up this issue as it arises in a local community consensus-building process and in challenges of organizing on behalf of refugee resettlement. Together these projects share a concern for the creative potential of communication to work more meaningfully with socially complex situations. Dr. Krone is past chair of the Organizational Communication Division of the National Communication Association, a member of the International Communication Association and a participant in the Aspen Conference on Engaged Communication Scholarship. Here at UNL she also serves as a program faculty with Women's & Gender Studies.

DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY PROFILES



DR. RON LEE, PROFESSOR, studies contemporary American political discourse. His research deals with the rhetorical construction of presidential legacies, the discourses of poverty, the mythical use of American place in national politics, the evolving standards of journalistic coverage of religion, and the use of race in post-civil-rights era political discourse.



DR. ANGELA PALMER-WACKERLY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, studies health communication and the ways in which interpersonal and intergroup communication processes can be used to improve health and well-being in sensitive health contexts and underserved communities. Her research broadly explores identity, social support, and family decision-making during chronic illness. She uses mixed methods and community-based participatory research (CBPR) principles to seek interdisciplinary solutions to community-defined problems, such as support gaps during patients' cancer and infertility treatment decision-making. Her studies have investigated self-disclosure, support, risk, literacy, culture, and illness identity in cancer, infertility, and HIV. Examples of her work can be found in *Health Communication*, *The American Journal of Community Psychology*, and *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*.



DR. WILLIAM SEILER, PROFESSOR, studies instructional communication from a variety of perspectives. His current interests centers around delivery systems in the introductory communication course and how pedagogy can influence classroom learning and interactions. He is the first in the discipline to incorporate the Personalized System of Instruction (PSI) into an introductory performance course. He has been the Director of the introductory communication course since 1972 and served as department chair from 1990 to 2011.



DR. JORDAN SOLIZ, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES, studies communication and intergroup processes primarily in personal and family relationships, with a current emphasis on multiethnic-racial families and interfaith families. He also investigates processes and outcomes of intergroup contact. In addition to various edited volumes, his recent work has been published in *Communication Monographs*, *Communication Quarterly*, *Communication Research*, *Journal of Family Communication*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, and *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*. Dr. Soliz is currently editor of the *Journal of Family Communication* and the vice-chair of the Intergroup Communication Interest Group of the International Communication Association. He is a core faculty member of the Minority Health Disparities Initiative at the university.

DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY PROFILES

FACULTY CONNECTIONS AND COLLABORATIONS ACROSS CAMPUS

- *Center for Civic Engagement*
 - *Gerontology*
 - *Great Plains Studies*
 - *Humanities on the Edge*
 - *Institute for Ethnic Studies*
 - *Judaic Studies*
- *Minority Health Disparities Initiative*
- *Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools*
 - *Rhetorical Society of America*
 - *Qualitative and Mixed Methods Interest Group*
- *Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Consortium*
 - *Translational Research Initiative*
 - *Women's and Gender Studies*

Two NEW Rhetoric and Public Culture Faculty
Joining us in Fall 2017 focusing on *Civic*
Engagement and Identity and Difference



INFORMATION FOR GRAD STUDENTS

“UNL has a family atmosphere that encourages graduate students to produce exceptional research. I love the colloquiums, feedback from professors, and opportunities that are provided here.”

ALEXIS JOHNSON, Recent PhD Graduate



“UNL offers a collaborative environment that has helped me gain hands-on research experience with some of the best scholars in interpersonal, family, and organizational communication.”

AMANDA HOLMAN, Recent PhD Graduate

“What I appreciate the most about UNL is the collaborative academic environment. Being at UNL has allowed me to co-author work and participate in intellectual conversations with a number of people both within and outside of communication studies.”

JOSH EWALT, Recent PhD Graduate

GRADUATE COURSES WE OFFER

In addition to the courses listed below, we also work with students to identify method and topic courses in other departments and develop independent studies.

- An Organizational Communication Perspective on Globalization
- Classical Rhetorical Theory
- Contemporary Rhetorical Theory
- Critical Research Design
- Cultural Criticism
- Dark Side of Interpersonal and Family Communication
- Health Communication
- Family Communication
- Influential Books in Communication Studies
- Social Identity and Intergroup Communication
- Interpersonal Communication
- Interpretive Research Methods
- Media and Culture
- Modern Rhetorical Theory
- Narratives, Relationships, and Health
- Networked Rhetorical Theory
- Perspectives in Organizational Communication Research
- Political Communication
- Public Argument and Deliberation
- Rhetoric, History, & Memory
- Rhetorics of Gender Activism
- Quantitative Research Methods in Communication Studies
- Seminar on Kenneth Burke

COURSES YOU CAN TEACH

In addition to opportunities to teach our standardized courses, our goal is to provide experience teaching courses independently with at least one course in your general area of study

- Business and Professional Communication
- Communication in the 21st Century
- Family Communication
- Gender and Communication
- Intercultural Communication
- Interpersonal Communication
- Introduction to Social Scientific Research Methods in Communication Studies
- Introduction to Rhetorical Research Methods in Communication Studies
- Organizational Communication
- Public Advocacy and Civic Engagement
- Public Speaking
- Small Group Communication
- Visual Communication

The department has a strong commitment to fielding a nationally competitive team in both speech and debate. Graduate students have the opportunity to serve as assistant coaches for this program. Contact [Dr. Aaron Duncan](#) for [Speech & Debate Coaching Opportunities](#).

INFORMATION FOR GRAD STUDENTS

BENEFITS FOR UNL GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

RESEARCH

Students collaborate with energetic, diverse, and accomplished faculty to develop a program of research; work on research teams with faculty and graduate students; receive travel funding to present at national and regional conferences; publish in national and regional journals; attend monthly professional development seminars; take classes with top disciplinary guest scholars; and learn about a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches. For doctoral students, our goal is to prepare you for an academic career whereas the M.A. program prepares you for continuing your doctoral studies.

TEACHING

Students receive competitive GTA stipends; teach large lower-division courses, lower/upper-division standardized and stand-alone courses, and have some opportunities for summer teaching. Many of our graduate teaching assistants have won disciplinary and university awards for teaching. We offer a variety of department and university programs to assist with instructional development and prepare students for academic employment.

SERVICE

Students serve on departmental committees, represent the department at the university level, hold leadership roles in national and regional associations, advise undergraduate students and student athletes, and lead COMM Club and the Lambda Pi Eta honorary society.

PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY

Doctoral students have the opportunity to participate in the UNL Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program, a professional development opportunity for advanced doctoral students interested in pursuing a faculty position. Through PFF, participants learn about faculty roles and responsibilities (research/scholarship, teaching, service) and gain direct knowledge of the diversity of higher education institutions (large public research, liberal arts, comprehensive, private religious, etc.) through a structured mentoring experience with partner institution mentors.

RECENT ALUMNI'S INITIAL PLACEMENT AND CURRENT HOME INSTITUTIONS

- Angelo State University
- Arkansas Tech University
- Brooklyn College
- College of Charleston
- College of Saint Mary
- Creighton University
- Dixie State College of Utah
- East Carolina University
- Eastern Illinois University
- Emerson College
- Hastings College
- Illinois College
- Illinois State University
- Iowa State University
- Fairfield University
- James Madison University
- Kean University
- Luther College
- Northwest Missouri State University
- Ohio University
- Olivet Nazarene University
- Penn State Berks
- Southern Utah University
- SUNY Geneseo
- SUNY Oneonta
- Texas A&M-Corpus Christi
- Texas Christian University
- Texas State University
- University of Denver
- University of Hartford
- University of Illinois-Springfield
- University of Mary Washington
- University of Missouri
- University of Montevallo
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- University of Nebraska-Omaha
- University of Northern Colorado
- University of San Francisco
- University of Southern Indiana
- University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
- University of Texas-Arlington
- University of Texas-San Marcos
- University of Utah
- Wayne State College
- Weber State University
- West Virginia University
- Western Kentucky University

APPLYING TO OUR PROGRAM

The deadline for Fall 2017 admissions is **January 15th, 2017**. The following materials are required for a complete application:

- GRE
- Three Recommendation Letters
- Curriculum Vitae
- Statement of Purpose
- Writing Sample
- Demonstration of Teaching Effectiveness (if applicable)

SUGGESTIONS FOR PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS

RESEARCH THE PROGRAM

Spend time reviewing information about our faculty, department and the university. We recommend you pay particular attention to our scholarly areas, strategic initiatives (health and well-being, identity and difference, civic engagement), and faculty research as this will assist you in determining if our program fits with your scholarly goals. In addition to information on department and university websites, many members of our faculty have individual websites that provide more detailed information about their work.

TALK WITH FACULTY

To learn more about a faculty's research interests, current scholarly activities, and recent work of doctoral advisees, you should feel free to communicate with individual faculty members. Contact our Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Jordan Soliz, at jsoliz2@unl.edu or (402) 472-8326 to set up a time to talk with specific members of our faculty.

PREPARING YOUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

All statements vary as applicants bring their own voice and character to the document. However, at minimum, make sure you include the following: (a) a discussion of your overall academic goals, (b) a review of your undergraduate and graduate experiences that prepare you for master's or doctoral-level graduate work, and (c) a clear articulation of your perspective on the potential intersections between our research endeavors and scholarly initiatives and your current research interests. For this last point, it is not necessary to link your research interests with all faculty members. For instance, you may identify a specific faculty member's program of research or you may see a cluster of scholarly foci from different faculty that you believe will assist you in achieving your academic goals. Either approach is acceptable.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

We recommend letters of recommendation from faculty you have worked with you during your undergraduate and/or graduate studies. If applying for the doctoral program, it is important that some of your letters speak specifically to your research potential.

WRITING SAMPLE

Provide a writing sample that reflects *your* research and *your* writing (i.e., send samples in which you are the solo or first author).

If you have any questions, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies: [Dr. Jordan Soliz](#).

We look forward to receiving your application!

[Apply Online](#)

DEPARTMENT AND CAMPUS PHOTOS



Oldfather 438: Graduate courses, professional development opportunities, and research colloquium take place in our main seminar room.



Graduate Student Offices: Share a Wi-Fi friendly work space with other graduate students and host undergraduate students during office hours.



Communication Studies Social Interaction Lab: You will have the opportunity to conduct research in this space that is fully equipped for video-recording, focus groups, interviewing, collecting surveys, and experiment designs. The department also has other space available for research activities.



University of Nebraska-Lincoln: Chartered in 1869, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is located in Lincoln, the capital and second-most populous city in Nebraska with a population of over 275,000. Lincoln was ranked as the #2 U.S. City for Quality of Life by the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index in 2011, one of America's Top 10 Most Livable Cities by Forbes.com in 2010, and the 5th Best Place for Business and Careers by Forbes.com in 2010.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT LINCOLN, NEBRASKA](#)