At High Point University, every student receives an extraordinary education in an inspiring environment with caring people.℠

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The Master's Degree in Strategic Communication at High Point University provides students the foundation to create, implement, and evaluate communication campaigns, programs, and training seminars. In addition to coursework in either Health Communication or Public Relations, students graduate with mastery level knowledge in three areas: the theories that explain why and how messages work; the technical and production skills to create campaign materials; and the research skills to evaluate the success of the campaign.

Degree: Master of Arts

Admission Term: Fall (August), Spring (January) or Summer (June)

Prerequisite Work: None

Comprehensive Examinations: None

Class Time: 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Application Requirements: An official transcript from all colleges attended (including High Point University) showing a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

Required Materials Include:
- online application with a nonrefundable $50 application fee;
- an official transcript from all colleges attended (including High Point University);
- professional resume;
- personal statement that addresses the applicant's interest in the program, experience in strategic communication, and career goals (3-5 pages);
- three professional letters of reference each attached to a completed Graduate School reference report form

Program of Study (35 semester hours)
Students in the Strategic Communication Master's Degree program focus on one of two areas: Health Communication or Public Relations. In addition to taking core courses in strategic communication, research methods, and communications technology, each student also takes two courses in their focus area.

“One of the best parts of this program is how well the students work together. Not only do they support each other in the classroom, but they also collaborate on projects outside of the classroom. This helps us create a complete learning environment.”

- Dr. Virginia McDermott
Associate Professor of Communication

“Dr. Virginia McDermott"
Our graduate students find the M.A. program rigorous and challenging but, at the same time, supportive and rewarding. They learn communication theory and methodology like students in other graduate programs, but at HPU they also have the opportunity to apply what they have learned and gain real-world experience developing, implementing, and evaluating strategic messages, which adds tremendous value to their education.

- Julie Wiest
Assistant Professor of Communication

## Course Descriptions

**COM 5000 Strategic Communication Theories, Practices, and Ethics (3)**
This course provides a general overview to the theories and practices of strategic communication. Emphasis is placed on understanding how strategic communication can influence public opinion and audience behavior. Students will examine real and hypothetical situations in health communication and public relations and will critically analyze them by applying best practices. Students will also examine how the First Amendment and communication law influences strategic communication campaigns and the ethical implications of campaigns and strategic communication.

**COM 5002 Persuasion and Media Effects (3)**
The primary goals of this course are to examine major theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence about what convinces an audience to take action after processing a message and how media influence what people think about. Special attention will be paid to how people underestimate the effect of persuasion and media on themselves. Students will analyze and evaluate existing public relations and health communication campaigns.

**COM 5005 Practicum in Strategic Communication (1)**
The goal of this class is to have students gain practical experience in strategic communication. Options include internships in public relations or health organizations, research internships, or on the job experience. Students may also opt to take a course outside their designated track. Credit/No Credit

**COM 5100 Research Methods (3)**
Students will learn how to review and evaluate quantitative and qualitative research. Attention will be paid to evaluation methods, including surveys, experiments, focus groups, and interviews. Students will design individual research projects and needs analyses and develop skills in reading, writing, and reporting research.

**COM 5110 Qualitative Methods and Analysis (3)**
Apply learned concepts to develop relevant research questions, design a qualitative project, collect, organize and index data, and analyze findings to make convincing arguments with qualitative data.

**COM 5120 Quantitative Methods and Analysis (3)**
The purpose of this course is to provide understanding and skills in quantitative research methods in strategic communication study, with main emphasis on the statistical methods most commonly used in communication research. Quantitative research methods are those in which concepts are operationalized as variables expressed in numerical form.

**COM 5130 Mixed Methods and Analysis (3)**
This course presents a brief overview of research paradigms with a particular emphasis placed on formulating research questions, methods, and analysis appropriate for a mixed method/model approach to communication and evaluation research.

**COM 5200 Message Design and Production (3)**
Students develop message campaigns for specific corporate and non-profit audiences and learn how to reframe and deliver the messaging appropriately across a variety of technological interfaces: traditional outlets, web sites, web video, social media, and Twitter.

**COM 5210 Video and Audio Production (3)**
Students learn to write and produce projects that support the needs of specific strategic communication audiences using the latest in high definition digital video and audio technology. The coursework focuses on development of effective craft and message design skills necessary in producing corporate image videos, press conferences, video news releases and promotional messages.

**COM 5220 Current Trends in Communication Technology (3)**
Topics include creating usable and credible websites and effective internet advertising. The course will also examine...
This course provides students with a fundamental understanding of crisis management, risk communication and media relations in multiple contexts. It introduces students to crisis management principles, strategies, tactics, and communications methods.

COM 5250 Topics in Technology for Strategic Communication (3)
Focusing on the latest technological developments used in reaching audiences and presenting information, students examine their impact on society, on corporate culture and on the audiences served. Students consider, not only technology and its effective use, but also the economic and ethical implications technology places on the workplace world. Topics may include social media, the use of game design software in the simulation of strategic communication programs, the impact of iPad and iPhone technology on the way people use and process information, or the use social networking to link people, interest groups, organizations.

COM 5300 Health Communication Research and Strategies (3)
This course provides a general overview to the history of health communication research and practice. After analyzing existing health communication research and campaigns, students will be able to identify the stages and best practices of campaign design, implementation, and evaluation. This course will explore health risk prevention and health promotion media campaigns, community based approaches to health communication, and media effects of campaigns.

COM 5310 Culture and Health Communication (3)
Students taking this course will be expected to develop an understanding of the ways in which culture interacts with health, illness, and health care. Health promotion, risk prevention, the role of mass media, popular culture and advertising will be emphasized. Each student will investigate how health communication practices are enacted in specific cultural contexts.

COM 5320 Interpersonal Health Communication (3)
This course examines how interpersonal relationships are affected by and affect health and communication patterns. Attention will be paid to provider/patient interaction, social support, and interpersonal issues in behavior change. Techniques for enhancing communication and relationships within the health context will be discussed.

COM 5330 Health Communication Campaigns (3)
Using examples of current and past communication campaigns in the United States and other parts of the world, this course provides students an opportunity to think about what does and does not work with health communication campaigns. By integrating theory and practice, and using principles of community-based participatory research, students will apply these concepts to create and implement a local health communication campaign.

COM 5350 Topics in Health Communication (3)
In this course, instructors will address a variety of topics and current trends in health communication research and practice.

COM 5400 Public Relations Research and Strategies (3)
This course provides a general overview to public relations history and practices. Specific topics examine media planning and buying strategies, strategies for advocating for social causes, and campaign management.

COM 5410 International and Intercultural Public Relations (3)
This course examines the problems and opportunities presented when strategic communication activities cross international and intercultural borders. This course applies intercultural communication theory to individuals, groups, organizations, and nations and demonstrates how culture can affect personal, national, and international understanding, beliefs, and behaviors.

COM 5420 Crisis Communication (3)
This course provides students with a fundamental understanding of crisis management, risk communication and