What makes Communication Studies an extraordinary place for graduate studies?

High Quality Graduate Education

Faculty in Communication Studies are renowned for their commitment to teaching, research, and student advising. The department has won major awards in all three areas! Individual faculty members have won many awards within the university and the discipline. Below is a partial list of faculty awards.

Awards at the University of Kansas
Byron Alexander Graduate Mentor Award—College of Liberal Arts and Sciences:
   2007    Robert C. Rowland
   2003    Mary Lee Hummert
Center for Teaching Excellence Award for Communication Studies
   2002    Dorthy Pennington
   2002    Adrianne Kunkel
   2000    Robert C. Rowland
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Career Teaching Award
   2014    Donn W. Parson
H. Bernard Fink Award for Outstanding Classroom Teaching:
   1994    Robert C. Rowland
HOPE Award Finalist presented by the Senior Class
   2000    Tracy A. Russo
   1994    Robert C. Rowland
   1990    Robert C. Rowland
J. Michael Young Advisor Award—College of Liberal Arts and Sciences:
   2008    Robert C. Rowland
   2002    Robert C. Rowland
JHAWK Faculty Appreciation Award, University of Kansas Medical Center
   2013    David Cook
KU Women’s Hall of Fame:
   2005    Dorthy Pennington
   2003    Mary Lee Hummert
Louise E. Byrd Graduate Educator Award:
   2000    Robert C. Rowland
Ned N. Fleming Trust Award
   2015   Jeff Hall
   2012   Dave Tell

Outstanding Woman Faculty Member—The Commission on the Status of Women and the Emily Taylor Women’s Resource Center:
   2003   Adrianne Kunkel

Silver Anniversary Award for Excellence in Teaching:
   2004   Adrianne Kunkel

Steeples Award for Service to the People of Kansas:
   1999   Dorthy Pennington

W. T. Kemper Fellowship Teaching Excellence:
   2008   Mary Banwart
   2007   Yan Bing Zhang
   2006   Beth Manolescu
   2003   Tracy Russo
   2000   Mary Lee Hummert
   1997   Donn Parson
   1996   Robert C. Rowland

John C. Wright Mentor Award
   2011   Adrianne Kunkel

Teaching and Service Awards within the Discipline and Community

Central States Communication Association Young Teacher Award:
   2004   Adrianne Kunkel
   1968   Donn W. Parson

Donald H. Ecroyd Award for Outstanding Teaching in Higher Education—National Communication Association:
   2005   Robert C. Rowland

George Ziegelmueller Award—National Debate Tournament:
   2006   Scott Harris
   2003   Donn W. Parson

IARR (International Association for Relationship Research) Mentoring Award
   2014   Adrianne Kunkel

Kansas Statewide Transgender Project Education Award
   2012   Adrianne Kunkel

National Communication Association Teacher on Teaching Program
   2014   Tracy Russo
   2005   Tracy Russo
   1999   Robert C. Rowland
   1997   Dorthy Pennington

National Communication Association Wallace Bacon Lifetime Teaching Award
   2014   Donn W. Parson

National Communication Association Women’s Caucus, Francine Merritt Award
   2015   Adrianne Kunkel

Kansas Bar Association—Outstanding Service Award:
   2003   Robert C. Rowland
National Debate Coach of the Decade:

1970s  Donn W. Parson

National Debate Coach of the Year:

2006  Scott Harris
1986  Robert C. Rowland
1981  Donn W. Parson
1980  Donn W. Parson
1972  Donn W. Parson

The OSCLG (the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender) Feminist-Teacher Mentor Award

2014  Adrienne Kunkel

Central States Communication Association Hall of Fame

2015  Dorthy Pennington
2011  Donn W. Parson
2004  Wil Linkugel

**RESEARCH AWARDS**


Bill Eadie Distinguished Award for a Scholarly Article, 2016, Applied Communication Division, National Communication Association for “Changing deliberative norms on news organization Facebook sites,” Ashley Muddiman with co-authors, Natalie J. Stroud, Joshua M. Scacco, and Alexander L. Curry.


Interpersonal Division, National Communication Association, Early Career Award, 2015, Jeff Hall.

*Journal of Family Communication* Outstanding Article Award, 2013, Alesia Woszidlo.

Karl R. Wallace Memorial Award, National Communication Association, 2012, Dave Tell.


**MAJOR AWARDS WON AT OTHER UNIVERSITIES**

Baylor University Student Congress, Outstanding Faculty Member:

1987  Robert C. Rowland

**BREADTH AND DEPTH OF PROGRAM OFFERINGS**

*Communication Studies has a strong core of faculty who teach, advise, and research in the areas of rhetorical and argumentation studies, political communication, and interpersonal and group communication.*

**Rhetorical Studies and Argumentation Faculty**

Brett Bricker, Ph.D., University of Kansas—argumentation and the public sphere

Jay Childers, Ph.D., University of Texas—public sphere and contemporary rhetoric

Scott Harris, Ph.D., Northwestern University—argumentation studies and contemporary rhetoric

Beth Innocenti, Ph.D., University of Illinois—argumentation studies and public address

Dorthy Pennington, Ph.D., University of Kansas—African-American rhetoric

Robert C. Rowland, Ph.D., University of Kansas—rhetorical criticism, narrative and mythic studies, argumentation, and contemporary rhetorical practice

Dave Tell, Ph.D., Penn State—rhetorical criticism and critical/cultural analysis

**Political Communication Faculty**

Mary Banwart, Ph.D., University of Oklahoma—campaign communication and gender issues in political communication

Brett Bricker, Ph.D., University of Kansas—environmental rhetoric

Jay Childers, Ph.D., University of Texas—political communication and citizen engagement
Ashley Muddiman, Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin—political media effects, political incivility, and digital news
Robert C. Rowland, Ph.D., University of Kansas—campaign communication, contemporary presidential rhetoric, and political debates
Alcides Velasquez, Ph.D., Michigan State University—social media political activism, social media political effects, and social media and online political participation and expression

**Interpersonal and Group Faculty**
Tom Beisecker, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin—legal communication and persuasion
Dave Cook, Ph.D., University of Kansas—health and organizational communication
Angela N. Gist, Ph.D., University of Missouri—organizational communication
Jeff Hall, Ph.D., University of Southern California—interpersonal communication
Mary Lee Hummert, Ph.D., University of Kansas—interpersonal communication and aging
Adrianne Kunkel, Ph.D., Purdue University—interpersonal communication
Angie Pastorek, Ph.D., The University of Texas at Austin—organizational communication
Dorthy Pennington, Ph.D., University of Kansas—intercultural communication
Alesia Woszidlo, Ph.D., University of Arizona—interpersonal communication
Yan Bing Zhang, Ph.D., University of Kansas—interpersonal and intergroup communication

Communication Studies faculty excel at research and a number of faculty members are recognized as national and international scholars of renown. Below is a partial list of faculty accomplishments:

**Mary Banwart**
- Recipient of the Central States Communication Association Service Award and a participant selected for the Harvard Kennedy School Art and Practice of Leadership Development program.
- Principal Investigator and Academic Director of a nearly $1.7 million grant from the U.S. State Department focused on the creation of a Women’s Leadership Institute for women from the Middle East and North Africa.
- Well-known political communication scholar using multiple social science and qualitative methods to produce research that has been published in books and journal articles focused on gender in political communication.

**Tom Beisecker**
- Recognized leading scholar in legal communication and former president of the American Society of Trial Consultants.
- Inaugural Visiting Fellow in Legal Advocacy, University of Kansas Law School, 2011-2012.
**Brett Bricker**
- Has a developed research program focused on environmental rhetoric that includes publications in *Argumentation and Advocacy*, *the Western Journal of Communication*, and *Communication Studies*, among other journals.
- Has linked environmental communication to study of the public sphere, multiple publics, and counterpublics in a number of essays.

**Jay Childers**
- Has developed an important research program focused on rhetoric, politics, and democracy in a number of journal essays, including “The Democratic Balance: President McKinley’s Assassination as Domestic Trauma,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (2013), 156-179, an essay which is being developed into a book.

**Dave Cook**
- A leading scholar focused on communication, technology, and health care.
- Oversaw KU Med Centers’s continuing education activities.
- Led three major mass casualty simulation drills to educate and train communities in disaster response.

**Angela N. Gist**
- Organizational communication scholar with expertise in social mobility and power
- Participates in engaged scholarship with community-based organizations
- Developing a program of critical interpretive research that emerges out of the intersection of three areas of interest: social class, social identity, and organizational culture

**Jeff Hall**
- Has developed a broad program of research on flirting, friendship, humor, impression management and social media, which has appeared in top journals including *Communication Research*, *Human Communication Research*, and *New Media & Society*.
- Received the Early Career Award from the Interpersonal Division of the National Communication Association in 2015.
- His trade press book *The Five Flirting Styles* landed him on *The Steve Harvey Show* and magazines, newspapers, radio, and television programs nation-wide.

**Scott Harris**
- Inaugural Gene A. Budig Professor at the University of Kansas in honor of his work with argumentation and debate.
- A leading proponent of using academic debate as a vehicle for studying argument in the public sphere.
Mary Lee Hummert
• Fellow, Gerontological Association of America and Giles-Nussbaum Distinguished Scholar Award from the National Communication Association.
• A leading scholar studying aging and communication with numerous articles in leading journals, many book chapters, and two edited books.
• Three-time recipient of major grants from the National Institute on Aging/National Institutes of Health.

Beth Innocenti
• Has developed normative pragmatic theories of argument with a focus on emotion and style in essays published in Philosophy and Rhetoric, Argumentation, and Argumentation and Advocacy.
• Has published essays on Scottish Enlightenment rhetorical theories in Rhetorica, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, Rhetoric Review, and Advances in the History of Rhetoric.
• Has provided humanistic accounts of persuasive force that supplement social scientific theories such as the EPPM and ELM.

Adrianne Kunkel
• Has recently published two books—Researching Interpersonal Relationships (with Dr. Jimmie Manning, 2014) and co-edited Relationship Science: Integrating Evolutionary, Neuroscience, and Sociocultural Approaches (with Dr. Omri Gillath and Dr. Glenn Adams, 2012).
• Has developed a research program reflected in multiple articles in journals inside and outside the discipline focused on individual and group identity and how they are influenced by social support processes.

Ashley Muddiman
• Has developed a research program focused on the theoretical and normative implications of media effects, political incivility, and digital news.
• Received the 2014 Lynda Lee Kaid Outstanding Dissertation Award from the Political Communication Division of the National Communication Association.
• Has been involved with several foundation-funded grant projects, including a project focused on engagement with digital news (with the Engaging News Project) and a project investigating political fact checking (with the American Press Institute).

Angie Pastorek
• Collaborative applied organizational communication researcher on issues ranging from fair labor practices to the death penalty and medical consent documentation. Findings and recommendations earned publication in both public sector reports and top communication journals, including Communication Monographs and Health Communication.
• Theoretical research focuses on exploring organizational exit dynamics based on over 10 years corporate practitioner experience in the fields of global corporate communication, training and development, and management consulting.
• Published textbook chapters on workplace professionalism for millennials (2015) and managing team conflict (2013, 2015). Earned campus-wide Best Service Learning undergraduate course award in 2013 while completing her PhD at UT - Austin.

**Dorthy Pennington**
• Author of two books exploring rhetorical practices and cultural diversity.
• Has developed a significant research program in journal articles and book chapters focused on African-American rhetorical practice and intercultural communication.
• A leading proponent of integrating performance into rhetorical scholarship; she is especially well-known for her critical performances on Sojourner Truth.
• Honored by the NCA Feminist and Women’s Studies Division as a noted intercultural scholar and mentor.

**Robert C. Rowland**
• Has published three university press books, one of which (Shared Land/Conflicting Identity, with co-author David Frank) won the inaugural Kohrs/Campbell Prize in Rhetorical Criticism.
• Recipient of the Douglas W. Ehninger Distinguished Rhetorical Scholar Award from the National Communication Association and primary speaker on rhetoric at the Reagan Centennial held at USC and the Reagan Library.
• Has published 50 journal articles and book chapters and more than 90 total publications including articles in *Communication Monographs, Philosophy and Rhetoric, Rhetoric & Public Affairs, Communication Theory, the Quarterly Journal of Speech*, and all of the regional journals and main journals in argumentation.
• Editor-Elect, Western Journal of Communication. Rowland is the first editor selected from outside the Western region.

**Dave Tell**
• Recipient of National Communication Association and Rhetoric Society of America dissertation awards.
• Recipient of both the Golden Anniversary Monograph Award and the Karl R. Wallace Award from the National Communication Association.
• A leading scholar in rhetorical theory with articles in *Philosophy & Rhetoric, Rhetorica, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, Quarterly Journal of Speech*, and other important journals.
Alcides Velazquez
- Originally from Colombia, he received a Fulbright Scholarship to develop his Ph.D. studies in the United States. He was also the 2015 Langston Hughes visiting professor at University of Kansas.
- Has developed a research program focused on social media individual and collective activism, social media political expression, and the digital divide. His research has been published in top journals such as New Media and Society, Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, International Journal of Communication, and Information, Communication and Society.

Alesia Woszidlo
- Examines the intersection of family of origin experiences, mental health and personality (e.g., attachment styles, anxiety, depression, negative affectivity, and stress), communication processes (e.g., conflict resolution strategies, coping, family cohesion and adaptability, and social skills), and relationship quality (e.g., commitment, dedication, divorce proneness, and satisfaction) among family relationships (e.g., marital dyads, parent-child dyads and triads).
- Fulbright Scholar, Institute of Psychology, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany (2012-2013).
- Article of the Year from Journal of Family Communication (2013).

Yan Bing Zhang
- Has developed an extensive research program with thirty-five published journal articles focused on intergroup communication with a particular focus on age and cultural groups. She is interested in the ways in which cognitive (e.g., stereotypes), societal norms (e.g., filial piety), and institutional (e.g., mass media) representations of groups relate to communication processes.

A Commitment to Student Development and a Student-Friendly Culture
Communication Studies has a strong commitment to help graduate students develop as scholars, teachers, and professionals. The department’s commitment to students is evidenced in assessment data reporting very high student satisfaction. Alumni surveys reflect a similar finding. Additional evidence of the student-centered nature of the program can be found in the extensive development effort the department has developed for graduate students. Highlights of the development effort include:
Nurturing Teaching
Teaching Workshop—New GTAs participate in an intensive teaching workshop in August before they begin teaching and taking classes at KU. The workshop helps prepare them to teach the required public speaking class, but also more broadly gives them pedagogical skills that they can apply in a variety of contexts. The training workshop is so strong that when the Office of Research and Graduate Studies at the University of Kansas initiated efforts to improve GTA training across the university, the COMS program was used as a model for other departments.

Instruction in Pedagogy—New GTAs take a 2-credit class in the Fall semester of their first year at KU focused on pedagogy in Communication Studies. The class is focused on the basic public speaking class, but the topics covered apply across the curriculum. As with the teaching workshop, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies at KU has cited this class as a model for other departments.

Professional Development
On an annual basis, COMS offers eight 90-minute professional development workshops. At the workshops, faculty and senior graduate students help graduate students develop key professional skills. The professional development workshop includes:

- Basics of convention submission—this workshop covers the basics of submitting papers and panels to conventions in Communication Studies and related disciplines.
- CV development—this workshop covers the basics of constructing an academic CV. Faculty and senior graduate students will provide models and tips for CV construction.
- Library research skills—this workshop introduces students to available databases and search strategies for finding material to use in their teaching and research.
- Job search process—this workshop outlines the job search process. The focus is on informing second- and third-year doctoral students on the process so that they can be prepared to search for an academic position in their final year in the doctoral program.
- Convention presentations—this workshop provides practical tips for making an effective convention presentation. This workshop provides models for how to make a presentation stand out.
- Job talks—this workshop provides guidance on how to make an effective job talk either in a phone or an on-campus interview. Job candidates are encouraged to practice their job talks with their advisor prior to the interview.
Nuts and bolts of research—this workshop covers the basic principles of how to submit an article and how to pick a journal for submission, as well as tips for how to develop a research program.

Work life balance—this workshop focuses on the challenges faced by young faculty members and provides strategies for addressing those challenges and building a successful and fulfilling career.

Research Development
Communication Studies works very hard to nurture the research programs of graduate students. Many faculty members focus assignments in graduate classes on helping students develop a research record. In addition, the department has three other research development initiatives:

Colloquium Series
Each year, the department hosts an active colloquium series in which faculty, major scholars from other departments at KU and other universities, and senior graduate students present research to the department. The series for the most recent semester is included elsewhere on the website.

This series provides an opportunity for senior graduate students to present their work, for faculty in the department to talk about important new research projects and for distinguished guests from across the discipline to present research. In the last category among the distinguished scholars to present research in the colloquium series in recent years are David Zarefsky of Northwestern, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell of the University of Minnesota, J. Michael Hogan of Penn State, Chris Segrin of the University of Arizona, and Martin J. Medhurst of Baylor University.

Research Mentoring, Workshops, and Classes
COMS faculty have active programs to mentor graduate students to help them develop papers for presentation at the colloquium, as well as submission to conventions and journals. For example, the department offers a writing workshop series in which students present revised versions of a class paper in order to get feedback to assist in revising for submission to a journal or convention. In addition, faculty members provide feedback to students developing papers from faculty experts in an area of study, as well as the student’s faculty advisor. This takes several different forms. First, it takes the form of intensive mentoring. Second, it takes the form of participation in research teams. Third, it takes the form of coursework. The courses include Directed Study projects as well as a tutorial in which the students work intensively with the faculty member through multiple drafts in order to revise two essays for submission to journals in the field.
Graduate student accomplishments

Communication Studies is very proud of the accomplishments of current graduate students. Current students have received college and university wide teaching awards, published essays in regional and national journals, and otherwise been honored for their work. Additionally, there are opportunities for graduate students to be recognized for their outstanding teaching, research, and service, through numerous fellowships and scholarships given at the department level. These awards total ~$20,000 and are given during the spring semester at the end of the year department party.

Cassandra Bird received the J. Jeffery Auer Award for Top Student Paper in Political Communication at the 2015 Central States Communication Association, as well as another award for a paper in the Top Paper Panel in the Basic Course Division.

Brendon Bankey had a paper in the top paper panel of the Association of Rhetoric of Science and Technology at the 2015 National Communication Association (NCA) convention.


Lindsay Harroff was awarded a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship for the 2015-2016 academic year to study KiSwahili, Kansas African Studies Center. She also had a paper, “Witnessing South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: New Opportunities for Studying and Forming Community after Conflict,” on the top paper panel in the Peace and Conflict Division at the 2015 NCA convention.

Michael Kearney had a paper on the Top Paper Panel of Central States Communication Association’s Graduate Student Caucus, co-authored an essay in the 2015 publication Computers in Human Behavior, and also had three single-authored encyclopedia entries in the forthcoming M. R. Allen (Ed.), The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods, as well as an essay in the National Journal of Speech and Debate.

John Price served as Chair of the Central States Argumentation and Forensics Special Interest Group 2014-2015.

Chong Xing co-authored an encyclopedia entry in the forthcoming In M. R. Allen (Ed.), The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods, as well as published co-authored essays in Communication Methods and Measures, Communication Research, and the Journal of Nonverbal Behavior.
Alumni accomplishments and student placement

Alumni accomplishments

Departmental alumni have developed distinguished careers in and out of the discipline of communication studies. Former students have served in major leadership roles in national and regional organizations. For example, Dr. Bill Balthrop of the University of North Carolina served as president first of the American Forensic Association and later of the National Communication Association. Dr. Kevin Barger of Texas A&M served as president of the Central States Communication Association, while Dr. Shelly Hinck served as executive secretary. Many other examples of professional accomplishment could be cited.

In addition to professional leadership, department alumni have been recognized for their strong scholarly and teaching records. Below are listed a few examples drawn from the large category of distinguished alumni of the Ph.D. program in Communication Studies at the University of Kansas.

Bill Balthrop, Professor—University of North Carolina
Kevin Barge, Professor—Texas A & M University
Ryan Bisel, Associate Professor—University of Oklahoma
Ulla Bunz, Associate Professor—Florida State University
Tom Burkholder, Professor Emeritus—University of Nevada Las Vegas
Scott Campbell, Associate Professor—University of Michigan
Scott Chadwick, Professor and Provost—Xavier University
Phillip Clampett, Professor—University of Wisconsin, Green Bay
Erik Doxtader, Professor—University of South Carolina
Gus Friedrick, Professor Emeritus—Rutgers University
John Fritch, Professor—University of Northern Iowa
Tom Goodnight, Professor—University of Southern California
Michael Hazen, Professor—Wake Forest University
Ed Hinck, Professor—Central Michigan University
Shelly Hinck, Professor and Associate Dean—Central Michigan University
Mary Hoffman, Professor—University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire
Susan Huxman, Professor and President—Eastern Mennonite University
Randy Lake, Associate Professor—University of Southern California
Andrew Ledbetter, Associate Professor—Texas Christian University
Karla Leeper, Chief of Staff—Georgia Regents University
John McGrath, Professor—Trinity University
Caryn Medved, Associate Professor—Baruch College
Stephanie Kelley-Romano, Professor—Bates College
Jordan Soliz, Associate Professor—University of Nebraska Lincoln
Mary Tonn, Professor—University of Richmond
Gregg Walker, Professor—Oregon State University
The very partial list of KU alumni included above is one indication of the quality of the program. Another can be found in recent student placement data. The department has tracked student placement of every completed Ph.D. since 2000 and their initial or current academic or professional position. The list indicates to date 100 percent placement in either academic jobs or positions related to their degree in business, politics, the law, or other relevant fields. Many Communication Studies Ph.D. graduates pursue and achieve an academic career in research universities, teaching institutions and liberal arts colleges. They have gone on to careers in academic administration, the law, and the business world. The one constant among graduates with very different goals is that their coursework and other doctoral study at KU prepared them for great success in their chosen field or sub-field. A representative list of where doctoral graduates have been placed since 2008 is listed below.

Stephenson Beck—North Dakota State University
Ryan Bisel—University of Oklahoma
Kundai Chirindo—Lewis and Clark College
Makiko Imamura—St. Mary’s College
Pam Kennedy—H & R Block, Kansas City
Sarah Partlow Lefevre—Idaho State University
Sue Novak—State University of New York, Potsdam
Kyle Richards, Kearney & Company, Washington, D.C.
Ryan Neville Shepard—University of Arkansas
Yi Song—Beijing Foreign Studies University
Kirsten Theye—Concordia College
Sarah Topp—Trinity University
Astrid Villamil—University of Missouri
Ben Warner—University of Missouri

Communication Studies at KU—Great Training for a Role in Academic Administration

Doctoral education in Communication Studies at KU not only trains students for success in their chosen career, but also for leadership positions in academia, the law and business. Many departmental alumni have served as department chairs, associate deans, and deans. The list is a very long one. Below we list only Ph.D. alumni who have gone on to academic leadership at the level of the Provost, Vice-President, or President in academia or a similar level in business or the law.

Noreen Carrocci, President, Newman College
Scott Chadwick, Provost, Xavier University
Dave Cook, Vice Chancellor, University of Kansas
Jackson Harrell, President, The Harrell Group
Mary Lee Hummert, Vice Provost, University of Kansas
For further information on graduate education in Communication Studies at the University of Kansas please contact Dr. Robert C. Rowland, the Director of Graduate Studies for the department at rrowland@ku.edu or call him at 785-864-3633.