

# COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION SCIENCES (CIS), PHD

## The collegewide doctor of philosophy degree in the College of Communication and Information Sciences is designed to:

- prepare communication scholars for positions of leadership in education, public service, the media, libraries, information-management positions, and other communication-related fields
- add to a student's usable body of knowledge in a chosen area of specialization within the field of communication and information sciences
- develop each student's research, teaching, and professional capabilities
- promote scholarly achievement and advancement of knowledge in the communication and information science disciplines, through basic and applied research

Representing four academic units of Advertising and Public Relations, Communication Studies, Journalism and Creative Media, and Library and Information Studies, C&IS offers a multidisciplinary doctoral program in communication and information sciences that enables students to either build an interdisciplinary plan of study or specialize in one of seven concentrations, in Advertising and Public Relations, Book and Publishing Studies, Health Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Media Processes and Effects, Rhetoric and Political Discourse, or Social Justice and Inclusion Advocacy. The interdisciplinary plan of study allows students to craft a curricular plan unique to their skills and interests while the concentrations provide students an opportunity to earn distinction through a prescribed suite of courses preparing them to contribute to the academe as distinguished scholars and teachers at a variety of institutions across the globe.

Students who take the interdisciplinary approach or select a concentration are encouraged to pursue their own research agendas in tandem with their coursework.

## Admissions

Applicants to the doctoral program in communication and information sciences must meet the admission criteria of the Graduate School of The University of Alabama and those stated below.

Applicants may be considered for regular admission if they have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 overall, 3.0 for the last 60 semester hours in a degree program, or 3.0 for a completed graduate degree program. International applicants who are required to submit a English language test score (please see the admission section of this catalog) must score at least 90 on the TOEFL iBT language proficiency exam and also score at least 24 on the speaking and writing sections of the iBT exam. International applicants who prefer to submit IELTS test scores must score at least 7.0 and also score at least 7.5 on the speaking section and 6.5 on the writing section. International applicants who meet these criteria may also be invited to participate in a videoconference with the college application review committee.

Applicants may be considered for admission on a permission-to-continue basis if they do not meet the GPA criterion for regular admission.

In addition to the Graduate School requirements, applicants must:

- Provide a Statement of Purpose. Please consult our program guidelines for the Statement of Purpose, available on the program website.

- Provide a resume/CV
- Provide a Writing Sample. Please consult our program guidelines for the Writing Sample, available on the program website.
- Provide names and contact information, including an email address and phone number, for three academic references in the "Other Documents" section of the application. Actual letters of recommendation are required only if you would want to be considered for University-wide fellowship opportunities. Please note that if you put names in the "Letters of Recommendation" section of the application, those references will receive an automatic request to provide a letter in your behalf.
- Admission without a Master's Degree: The Expedited Admission Track

The Expedited Admission Track into the C&IS doctoral program allows highly qualified students to be admitted into the doctoral program after they complete an undergraduate degree. Such students must:

- Submit a statement of purpose (for the master's and doctoral program) indicating interest and commitment to graduate work through the doctoral level
- Hold regular admission status for a specific College of Communication and Information Sciences master's program.

Students admitted on the expedited track are encouraged to apply to be awarded the master's degree when they have completed the requirements for the master's degree. Students admitted on the expedited track must complete the requirements for master's degree to be awarded the Ph.D. degree. Students supported in graduate assistant positions must complete the requirements for the master's degree in four contiguous regular semesters of enrollment to be eligible to hold a graduate assistant position in the fifth and subsequent semesters in the program.

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

## Curricular Requirements

The student's program advisory committee determines, in consultation with the student, the specific courses the student must take to satisfy program requirements. Students must complete 48 coursework hours and 18 hours of dissertation research.

C&IS PhD Curriculum	Hours
<b>Core Foundation Requirement</b>	<b>3</b>
CIS 610 Foundations Doctoral Study CIS	
<b>Core Theory Requirement</b>	<b>6</b>
CIS 604 Mass Communication Theory	
CIS 605 Cultural and Critical Theory	
CIS 606 Knowledge & Information Theory	
CIS 607 Theory Constructn Epistemolgy	
Advisor Approved Alternative Elective (up to 6 hours)	
<b>Core Resesarch Methods Requirement</b>	<b>6</b>
CIS 603 Quantitative Research Methods	
CIS 608 Qualitative Research Methods	
CIS 609 Humanistic Research Methods	
Advisor Approved Alternative Elective (up to 6 hours)	
<b>Concentration or Focused Area of Study</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>12-18</b>
Advertising and Public Relations Concentration	
Book and Publishing Studies Concentration	

Health Communication Concentration	
Interpersonal Communication Concentration	
Media Processes and Effects Concentration	
Rhetoric and Political Discourse Concentration	
Social Justice and Inclusion Advocacy Concentration	
Focused Area of Study - Advisor Approved	
<b>Cognate</b>	<b>9-15</b>
Advisor Approved Courses	
<b>Electives</b> <sup>2</sup>	<b>0-12</b>
<b>Dissertation</b>	<b>18</b>
CIS 699 Dissertation Research	

**Footnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Students must select either a formal concentration or a focused area of study.
- <sup>2</sup> Students must reach a minimum of 48 course hours independent of dissertation research.

## Additional Academic Requirements

In addition to the credit hour and coursework requirements specified above, the following policies apply:

- A minimum of 36 hours of coursework, exclusive of dissertation research hours, must be completed after enrollment in the CIS doctoral program.
- If approved by the student's program advisory committee, up to 12 of the 48 hours exclusive of dissertation research hours required in the program may be hours of graduate coursework completed prior to enrollment in the program. Credits so approved must have been earned within a period of no more than six years prior to the semester of admission to the program. Please see the Transfer Credit section below for additional information.
- A minimum of 24 hours of coursework exclusive of dissertation research hours must be at the 600 level. The remainder of hours of approved graduate course credit must be at the 500 or 600 level. A maximum of six hours of 400- or 400/500-level credit may be transferred if completed as part of a master's degree program.
- Each student must complete a minimum of nine hours in 600 level courses in the College of Communication & Information Sciences exclusive of dissertation research hours, and exclusive of credit hours that satisfy the student's core program requirements. In other words, any course counted toward meeting the student's core program requirements cannot also be counted toward meeting the requirement that students complete a minimum of nine hours in 600 level courses in the College of Communication & Information Sciences exclusive of dissertation research hours.
- Students in one of the seven approved concentrations in the program cannot count a course required in their concentration as an alternate theory or alternate research methods course in satisfying their core theory or research methods requirements. In other words, a course that is to serve as an alternate theory or alternate research methods course cannot also be counted toward satisfying the requirements for the concentration.
- It is not permissible to complete more than one doctoral concentration. That is, the degree awarded to students who complete a concentration will list one and only one concentration. However, students are permitted and encouraged to consider electing additional courses for their programs of study from across all seven concentrations in the program.

## Advertising and Public Relations Concentration

Students in this concentration must select CIS 604 Mass Communication Theory in their program and then complete the following 15 hours of coursework:

Code and Title	Hours
APR 551 Foundations of Integrated Comm	3
APR 524 or Reputation Comm Strategy	3
APR 525 Brand Communication Strategy	
CIS 682 Seminar Applied Comm	3
CIS 684 Advanced Topics Applied Comm	3
CIS 650 or Seminar in C&IS (advisor-approved topic)	3
CIS 664 or Health Communication Campaigns	
CIS 671 or Public Opinion	
CIS 673 or Political Communication	
CIS 674 Sports Media	

## Book and Publishing Studies Concentration

Students in the concentration must select CIS 605 Cultural and Critical Theory and CIS 609 Humanistic Research Methods in their program core and then select **15 hours** of coursework from the following courses, with **at least one course from each category** (Physical Book, Theoretical Book, and Future Directions), and with at least 9 hours at the 600 level:

The Physical Book	Hours
BA 520 Elements of Letterpress	3
BA 530 Elements of Bookbinding	3
BA 541 Techniques of Hand Papermaking	3
The Theoretical Book	Hours
LS 555 Intro Archival Studies	3
LS 557 Archival Appraisal	3
LS 653 Descriptive Bibliography	3
LS 654 Print Culture and Society	3
LS 655 Book Artifact Materiality Text	3
Future Directions of the Book	Hours
CIS 656 Electronic/Contemporary Pub.	3
CIS 672 Media History	3

## Health Communication Concentration

Students in this concentration must select five courses from the following list to complete 15 hours of coursework, with no more than 6 hours of electives approved by their advisors:

Code and Title	Hours
CIS 650 Seminar in C&IS (Health Communication)	3
CIS 651 Interpersonal Health Comm	3
CIS 659 Health Information Seeking	3
CIS 664 Health Communication Campaigns	3
CIS 670 Health and Mass Media	3
Approved elective(s) at the 500-level or above in health communication and/or statistics	3

## Interpersonal Communication Concentration

Students in this concentration must select CIS 603 Quantitative Research Methods in their program core and then complete the following **15 hours** of coursework:

Required Foundation Course	Hours
CIS 660 Interpersonal Comm Theory	3
<b>Three hours from one of the following two courses:</b>	<b>Hours</b>
COM 513 Communication & Diversity	3
COM 565 Intercultural Communication	3
<b>Six hours from the following five courses:</b>	<b>Hours</b>
CIS 651 Interpersonal Health Comm	3
CIS 662 Mediated Interpersonal Comm	3
CIS 663 Deception	3
CIS 667 Persuasive Communication	3
COM 563 Relational Communication	3

**Three hours of approved College elective, 500 or above, in interpersonal communication studies.**

500 or 600 level elective 3

## Media Processes and Effects Concentration

Students in this concentration must select CIS 603 Quantitative Research Methods and CIS 604 Mass Communication Theory in their program core and then complete the following **12 hours** of coursework:

Code and Title	Hours
CIS 680 Sem. Media Processes/Effects	3
CIS 681 Advanced Quantitative Methods	3
CIS 650 or Seminar in C&IS (approved topic in emergent media, health communication, political communication, or sports media)	3
CIS 670 or Health and Mass Media	
CIS 673 or Political Communication	
CIS 674 Sports Media	
CIS 683 Advanced Topics - Media P&E	3

## Rhetoric and Political Discourse Concentration

Students in this concentration must select CIS 605 Cultural and Critical Theory and CIS 609 Humanistic Research Methods in their program core and then complete the following **15 hours** of coursework:

Code and Title	Hours
CIS 650 or Seminar in C&IS (approved topic in political communication)	3
CIS 673 Political Communication	
CIS 652 Sem Culture Criti Rhetor Stdy	3
COM 541 Contemporary Rhetorical Theory	3
COM 548 Sem Rhetorical Criticism	3
Approved 500 or 600 level elective in rhetoric or political discourse	3

## Social Justice and Inclusion Advocacy Concentration

Students in the concentration must select CIS 605 Cultural and Critical Theory and CIS 609 Humanistic Research Methods in their program core and then complete the following **15 hours** of coursework. All students in the concentration must complete:

Code and Title	Hours
CIS 668 Social Justice & Inclusion	3

Students must complete **12 hours** from the following courses, with **at least 3 hours from each category** (Foundations, Perspectives, and Applications) and at least 6 hours taken at the 600 level:

Foundations	Hours
CIS 652 Sem Culture Criti Rhetor Stdy	
CIS 667 Persuasive Communication	
COM 565 Intercultural Communication	
LS 583 Social Aspects of Information	

Perspectives	Hours
COM 513 Communication & Diversity	
COM 515 African American Rhetoric	
COM 525 Gender & Pol Com	
LS 582 Race Gender & Sexuality in LIS	

Applications	Hours
CIS 666 Information Policy	
LS 544 Cultural Div Prog Youth & Fam	
LS 580 Outreach to Diverse Population	
LS 581 Universal Access	

## Transfer Credit

The university Graduate School-wide policies related to transfer credit are applicable to the doctoral program in communication and information science, with a notable exception that students in the program are eligible to have no more than 12 hours of graduate coursework completed prior to enrollment in the program count toward the requirement that students complete 48 hours of coursework exclusive of dissertation hours.

## Doctoral Plan of Study Requirement

University Graduate School-wide policies require that students submit an advisor-approved plan of study.

It is recommended that students in the doctoral program in communication and information sciences file an advisor-approved Plan of Study in their first semester in the program. It is strongly recommended students do this no later than the semester during which they will complete 12 hours of university course credit that they plan to count toward their degree requirements. It is required that students do this no later than the semester during which they will complete 30 hours of university and/or transfer course credit. By the time each doctoral student has completed 30 graduate semester hours of university and/or transfer credit, the student must have a doctoral Plan of Study approved by the dean of the University of Alabama Graduate School. Failure to obtain approval of the Plan of Study by the completion of 30 hours may result in the student's having a hold placed on future registrations.

Students admitted to the doctoral program may be required to complete additional coursework to be prepared for doctoral-level (600-level) study and research in communication and information sciences, at the

discretion of the student's program advisory committee or the C&IS associate dean for graduate studies.

Doctoral students who begin the program with incomplete master's theses must complete the master's thesis during the first year of doctoral study. Students must provide official transcripts of their master's degree work as evidence that their master's degree has been awarded. If a student fails to provide the transcript, the College may refuse to administer the PhD preliminary examination and/or may withdraw financial support. The Graduate School may nullify the doctoral program admission.

## Preliminary Exam

A preliminary examination is required of all doctoral students. This examination is given after

- any foreign language/research skill requirements are met;
- two full years of graduate study are completed; and
- the Dissertation Committee deems the student to have adequate preparation in the major and minor fields of study.

The examination is overseen by the student's Dissertation Committee Chair, who has discretion on the individuals involved in the examination committee to include no fewer than 2 other members of the student's Dissertation Committee. The chair may call on other faculty members associated with the student's coursework for assistance in preparing the examination questions.

Whereas one of the purposes of the preliminary examination is to determine the student's research competence to begin work on a dissertation, the examination should be completed at least nine months before the degree is to be awarded. A student may take the examination only twice. Failing the examination twice results in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School.

The student must demonstrate, through written and oral components, a capacity to understand, synthesize, and apply theory and research techniques in communication and information sciences, as well as demonstrate knowledge of the pertinent literature, issues, and recent advances in the student's concentration or focused area of study and cognate area of study. In other words, the examination must cover the student's (1) theory core, (2) research methodology core, (3) concentration or focused area of study, and (4) cognate area.

Preliminary exam questions may be answered exclusively in a controlled "in-house" format in the College, exclusively as a "take-home" format, or some combination of both "in-house" and "take-home" formats depending on the examination committee's decision about the best way to examine a particular student. The oral component of the exam must be scheduled as quickly as possible following the written component. Oral components are determined by the examination committee, and examples include, but are not limited to, a formal defense by the student of each examination question, an academic discussion about theory and methods between the student and examination committee, or an academic conference-style presentation which includes a question and answer session.

Preliminary examination questions that are assigned as "in-house" are closed book—meaning students must answer those questions on campus without reference material or internet access. No individual "in-house" examination question can exceed 4 hours, and the total time assigned for "in-house" examination questions cannot exceed 16 hours.

Preliminary examination questions that are assigned as "take-home" are open book—meaning students may answer those questions from any location and may use any available reference materials. No individual "take-home" examination question can exceed 5 days, and the total time

assigned for all "take-home" examination questions cannot exceed 21 days.

Upon completion of the preliminary exam, the examination committee will convene to determine whether the student has passed, must perform additional work to demonstrate understanding of competency, or has failed the examination. All questions must be passed in order to pass the examination.

In the case of a clear failure, the re-examination must take place after six months and before twelve months have elapsed. Each question on the preliminary exam may be taken only twice, and the examining committee may only rule either pass or fail on the second examination.

As noted above, university policy stipulates that failure to pass the examination on a second attempt will result in dismissal from the program and from the Graduate School.

## Admission to Candidacy Requirements

A student is certified by the dean of the UA Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the PhD in Communication & Information Sciences after the student has completed of all required coursework, exclusive of dissertation hours, as listed on the student's approved program of study.

## Continuous Enrollment Policy

Students should be aware of university policy related to continuous enrollment in Dissertation Research, as specified in the university Graduate Catalog. Students in the C&IS doctoral program are required to complete 18 hours in dissertation research through enrollment in CIS 699 Dissertation Research.

Students are able to initiate enrollment in CIS 699 no earlier than the semester following admission to candidacy. In other words, students must be admitted to candidacy before they are permitted to initiate enrollment in CIS 699. Students cannot initiate enrollment in CIS 699 in the same semester in they will have completed all coursework listed on the approved program of study; students must be admitted to candidacy *prior to* initiating enrollment in CIS 699.

Students register for CIS 699 with their dissertation advisor as the instructor. If a student does not yet have an approved dissertation committee, the student may enroll in CIS 699 with an intended dissertation advisor if the intended advisor approves of this arrangement, so long as the intended advisor is a member of the C&IS faculty who is eligible to chair or co-chair dissertation committees under university and program guidelines for the dissertation committee. If the student has not yet identified an intended dissertation advisor, the student may initiate CIS 699 enrollment with the chair of the student's approved program advisory committee serving as instructor in CIS 699 if the program committee chair approves of this arrangement.

Students who plan to initiate enrollment in CIS 699 but who do not yet have an approved dissertation committee should contact the associate dean for graduate studies to report that an intended dissertation advisor or their approved program committee chair has agreed to serve as instructor of CIS 699 in the initial semester of registration. The associate dean for graduate studies will verify the intended dissertation advisor or approved program committee chair has agreed to serve as the instructor of CIS 699 in the initial semester of registration. Having verified this, the associate dean for graduate studies will issue a permit for the student to register for CIS 699 with this instructor.

Students unable to secure an instructor for CIS 699 should contact the associate dean for graduate studies to develop a plan to secure an instructor.

Students who initiate enrollment in CIS 699 with an instructor who is the student's intended but not yet approved dissertation advisor or the student's program committee chair must in the next semester register for CIS 699 with the approved dissertation advisor as the instructor. In other words, students who initiate 699 enrollment with an instructor who is not the approved dissertation advisor must have a dissertation committee approved before they will be permitted to register for second semester in CIS 699. Only students with approved dissertation committees will be permitted to register for a second semester in CIS 699.

Students who may be uncertain that a dissertation committee can be approved before a second semester in CIS 699 begins should not initiate 699 enrollment. Such students should consider registering for coursework other than CIS 699, coursework that can help prepare the student for pursuing dissertation research continuously, under the direction of an approved dissertation advisor, when CIS 699 enrollment is initiated.

## Dissertation Requirements

Students in the doctoral program in Communication & Information Sciences must form a dissertation committee. It is important to note that program policy regarding the committee includes stipulations in addition to the stipulations specified in university Graduate School-wide policy regarding the dissertation committee.

The dissertation committee, with the director of the dissertation as its chairperson, supervises the preparation of the dissertation. The committee shall have not fewer than five members. The Graduate Faculty of the College of Communication & Information Sciences must be represented by at least three members. Other members may be from the College of Communication & Information Sciences or from a college or school outside the College of Communication and Information Sciences. One member *must* be from a college or school outside the College of Communication & Information Sciences.

All members of the committee must be members of the university Graduate Faculty. The chair of committee must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty. At least one committee member in addition to the chair must also be a full member of the Graduate Faculty. All other members may be associate members of the Graduate Faculty. No more than one affiliate member of the Graduate Faculty may serve on the committee. A majority of the committee members must be regular UA faculty.

The UA graduate dean's approval of the proposed dissertation committee must be obtained before significant progress is made on the dissertation—typically just before or just after the dissertation proposal meeting. For this purpose, the student submits the form for Appointment/Change of a Doctoral Dissertation Committee.

### Dissertation proposal

After successful completion of the preliminary examination, degree candidates must submit a written proposal to their dissertation committee.

The proposal describes the importance of the proposed topic, outlines the hypotheses to be evaluated, provides an overview of relevant literature, specifies the methodology to be used, and includes a timetable for completion of the project. The dissertation must make a significant original contribution to the field of communication and information sciences and must demonstrate the candidate's ability to

report that research in writing in a clear, comprehensive, and scholarly manner.

The student must submit the proposal, and later the dissertation, to the committee at least 14 days prior to the defense. After the proposal has been circulated among the members, the student's dissertation committee meets for the student's oral defense of the proposal.

### Dissertation final examination

The candidate must present a copy of the final draft of the dissertation to each committee member at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the final examination. After the dissertation has been completed and accepted by the candidate's dissertation committee for purposes of the examination, the candidate will be given a final oral examination by the dissertation committee.

The final examination is concerned primarily with the research embodied in the dissertation and with the field in which the dissertation lies, but it may extend over the student's entire primary field of study. The final oral examination is governed by the rules of the Graduate School of The University of Alabama.

The dissertation must comply with the regulations in A Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Graduate School deadlines, including each semester's dissertation deadline, are available at the Graduate School's homepage.

Electronic submission of theses and dissertations (ETD) is required. Consult the ETD website for details of ETD submission.

## Time Limits for Degree Completion

The doctoral program in communication and information sciences follows university Graduate School-wide policy regarding the time limits for degree completion.

## Academic Misconduct Information

The doctoral program in communication and information sciences follows university Graduate School-wide policy regarding academic misconduct.

## Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information

The doctoral program in communication and information sciences follows university Graduate School-wide policy regarding withdrawals and leaves of absence.

## Academic Grievances Information

The doctoral program in communication and information sciences follows university Graduate School-wide policy regarding academic grievances.

## Grades and Academic Standing

A student must maintain cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for graduate courses undertaken following admission to the doctoral program. A doctoral student whose grade point average falls below 3.0 at any time after 12 semester hours have been completed will be placed on academic warning by the Graduate School and the College of Communication & Information Sciences. A student on academic warning will not be permitted to apply for admission to candidacy and may not hold an assistantship. Students who are suspended from the program for failure to raise their GPA to 3.0 under academic warning status may petition the college for readmission. The college may in turn

make a request to the dean of the university Graduate School for approval of the student's readmission.

University Graduate School-wide policies related to grades and academic standing.

## **Graduate School Deadlines Information**

Information on Graduate School Deadlines.

## **Application for Graduation Information**

Information on the Application for Graduation.