

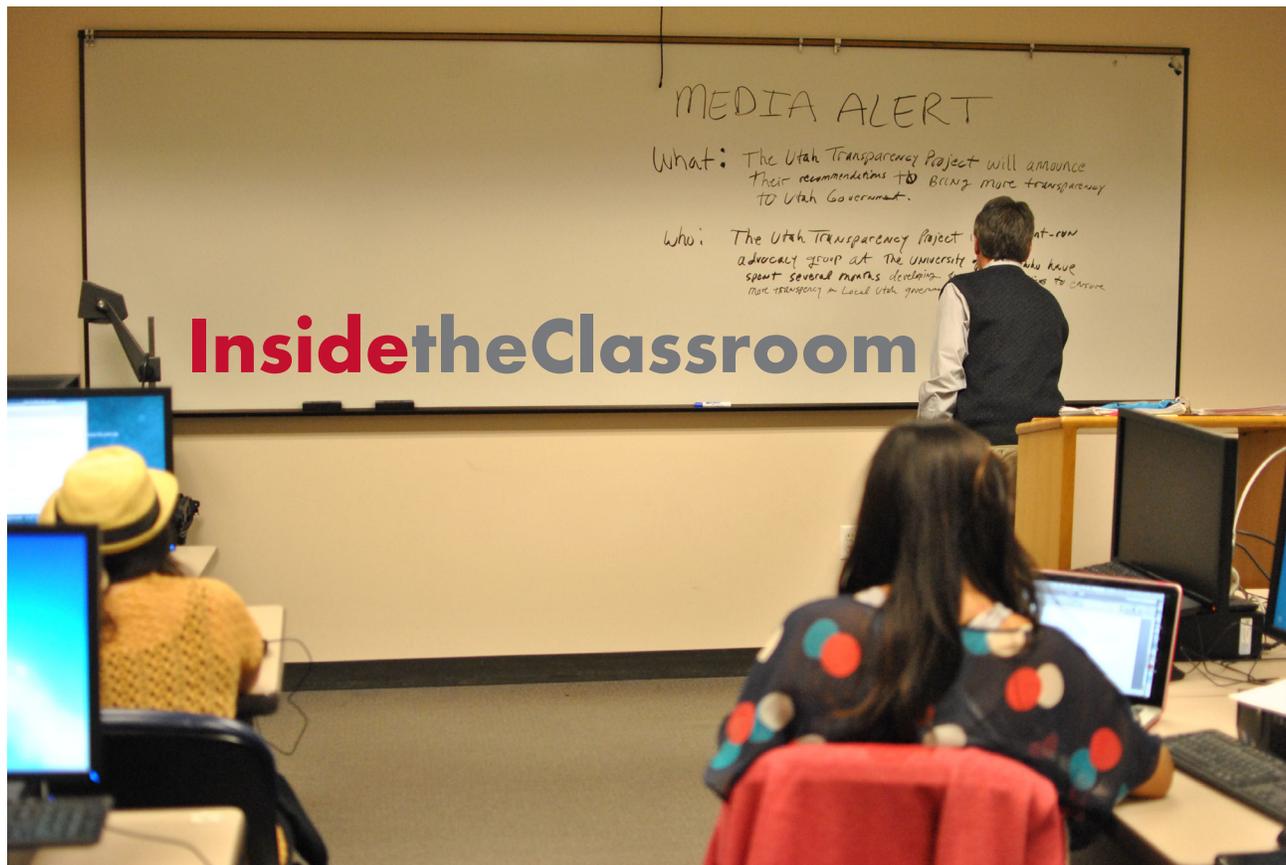


# Strategic Communication



*Strategic communication students present their campaign idea to the Utah Brain Injury Council.*

Strategic communication is the study of persuasion, social influence, and behavior change. It is a popular focus area for Communication majors because it is the underlying framework for several growing professions, including public relations, advertising, and health communication.



Strategic communication students will focus first and foremost on developing their writing skills. Students will cultivate their abilities by completing high quality research papers (20+ pages) as well as shorter documents geared toward professional practice (e.g., press releases, media kits, fundraising letters, magazine stories, message planners). Most entry-level positions require large amounts of writing, making mastery of the written word a central component of strategic communication training.

Sample Courses:

- COM 1270: Analysis of Argument
- COM 1610: Intro to News Writing
- COM 3670: Principles of Advertising
- COM 4580: Strategic Com Theory & Practice
- COM 4590: Writing for Strategic Communication
- COM 4610: Magazine Writing
- COM 4670: Political Reporting

# absolute

C O M M U N I C A T I O N

**U** THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH™

Writing aside, strategic communication students learn to develop powerful arguments, work in diverse teams, and present ideas to classmates and clients. Concerning the latter, students in the Department of Communication can work with real world clients as part of the in-house, student-run advertising and public relations agency: Absolute Communication. Absolute Communication provides public relations, social media, advertising, and strategic planning services in order to create campaigns comparable to work done by Utah's leading ad agencies. In addition to Absolute Communication, strategic communication students can gain valuable experience as part of PRSSA, K-UTE, Newsbreak, the Daily Utah Chronicle, Voices of Utah, and the Utah Speech and Debate Team.



*“What skiing looks like in Texas.” Strategic communication students created recruitment materials designed to attract Texas high school students to the University of Utah.*



## CultivateSkills

Strategic communication professionals often design and execute a multitude of materials for their clients/organizations (e.g., logos, brochures, websites, promotional videos). Thus, students have the opportunity to take professionally-oriented courses in digital photography, graphic design/photo editing software, publication editing/design, web development/design, and video production/editing.

### Sample Courses:

- COM 1535: Basic Digital Photography
- COM 3510: Intro to Web Design
- COM 3530: Advanced Photography
- COM 3560: Video Production I
- COM 5510: Interactive Narrative
- COM 5550: Digital Imaging
- COM 5555: Documentary Photography

# Change the World

Students studying strategic communication can pursue pro-social goals as well, both before and after graduation. Pro-social organizations around the world (e.g., Peace Corps, UNICEF) need gifted individuals with training in strategic communication to address significant health problems. Strategic communication students could develop campaigns to increase the use of mosquito nets in South Sudan, raise awareness of HIV/Aids in China, or increase utilization of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine in India. Closer to home, students could combat meth use in Utah, increase use of helmets by bike riders to prevent brain injury, or work with pro-social organizations to raise awareness and funds.



Many Communication majors are interested in changing the world. Thus, the strategic communication track at the University of Utah includes courses on science, health, and environmental communication. Our program specializes in training students to apply strategic communication skills not only to consumer situations but also issues central to the security and well-being of the public at large.

#### Sample Courses:

COM 3115: Com Science, Health, & the Environment

COM 3580: Strategic Health Communication

COM 5115: Health Communication

COM 5116: Health, Com, & Culture

COM 5117: Health Campaigns & Media

COM 5360: Environmental Communication

COM 5370: Environmental Conflicts

# Advanced Degrees

It is increasingly common for strategic communication students and professionals to pursue advanced degrees.

## MBA

Strategic communication courses provide a strong foundation for business school; therefore, many communication students pursue a Master's of Business Administration (MBA).

## MPA, MPP, MPH

Public policy and public health are defined by the ability to understand and effectively engage community perceptions. Strategic communication students interested in either of these areas find it useful to pursue Master's of Public Administration (MPA), Master's of Public Policy (MPP), or Master's of Public Health (MPH) (or two at the same time, e.g., in Utah's joint MPA/MPH program).

## Law School (JD)

Communication majors often obtain law degrees following graduation. This is not surprising as law schools value students with training in "critical analysis, logical reasoning, and written and oral expression" (Law School Admission Council, 2008).

## MA, PhD

Finally, students can pursue a Master's in Communication, if they want to further refine their focus, or a Ph.D. in Communication if research/teaching is their ultimate objective. The Department of Communication at the University of Utah has a strong undergraduate curriculum in strategic communication. At the graduate level, students can study strategic communication in any of our five focus areas. Thus, strategic communication students benefit from a rich curriculum that allows them to tailor their coursework to their ultimate career goals. For example, students following the Science, Health, and Environmental (SHE) Communication sequence can emphasize strategic communication. Because students can pursue strategic communication in any of the five focus areas, there are countless combinations available. Individuals interested in studying strategic communication at the graduate level should contact the Strategic Communication Sequence Coordinator, Professor Jakob Jensen ([jakob.jensen@utah.edu](mailto:jakob.jensen@utah.edu)).