

## Department of Communication Studies

### Core Competencies

#### Learning Outcome: Critical Thinking

Students will be able to examine, critique and synthesize information in order to arrive at reasoned conclusions.

#### Outcome Measure:

COM 3095 (spring), COM 4060 (fall), COM 4065 (fall)

- COM 3095: Media Literacy – 2-page “Adaptation Comparison/Contrast Paper” (James/Drake Hills)
- COM 4060: Final rhetorical critique paper (Braedon)
- COM 4065: Communication Theories and Research – 500-750 work “Definition of Communication” paper (Jeff)

#### Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):

- Use the AAC&U Critical Thinking Rubric, Average Score of 3+

#### Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):

1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
5. Civic and Global Learning

#### Longitudinal Data:

	COM 3095:	COM 4060:	COM 4065:	Combined Score
2026	3.045	3.4	3.33	3.26

#### Conclusions Drawn from Data:

*Threshold met.*

As this is the first year that the Dept. of Communication Studies is collecting data for Core Competencies, additional years of data will enable the opportunity to compare and contrast data, as well as observe trends.

#### Changes to be Made Based on Data:

Given that the scores in Critical Thinking were above 3.0, no action is necessary at this time. However, in future years it would be beneficial to break down the categories of the Critical Thinking rubric as well to locate more precise data.

**Rubric Used:** <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BgAq71IRgPqzniur4dH-SHaNAi5-eTXs/view>

**Department of Communication Studies  
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**Learning Outcome: Written Communication**

Students will be able to effectively express ideas and information to others through written communication.

**Outcome Measure:**

COM 3000 (fall); COM 3030 (fall/spring)

- COM 3000: Narrative and Documentary Film – Final three one-page film responses (James)
- COM 3030: "Propaganda Poster Paper" (Lisa) "Theory Essay #2" (Capra)

**Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):**

- Use the AAC&U Written Communication Rubric, Average Score of 3+

**Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):**

1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
5. Civic and Global Learning

**Longitudinal Data:**

	COM 3000	COM 3030	Combined Score
2026	3.16	3.61	3.38

**Conclusions Drawn from Data:**

*Threshold met.*

In general, students appear to be performing reasonably well in their writing proficiency based on numerous opportunities to achieve mastery across the Com Studies, Org. Com, and Media Com programs. Future analyses—as this is our first year to collect data—will enable opportunities to identify where specific weaknesses in the ideation, draft/planning, and final draft stages might emerge.

**Changes to be Made Based on Data:**

Given that the scores in Critical Thinking were above 3.0, no action is necessary at this time. Over time, however, more data can be compiled in terms of how effective the rubric is as well as further consideration of our prompts so that our students are prepared to write at a professional level.

**Rubric Used:**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11H6Z2ADOztawvqYwGY-ewWwRuwuSteD4/view>

**Department of Communication Studies  
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**Learning Outcome: Quantitative Reasoning**

Students will be able to solve problems that are quantitative in nature.

**Outcome Measure:**

COM 3095 (spring), COM 4022 (fall/spring)

- COM 4022: Quantitative Reasoning Assignment, (Jeff)
- COM 3095: (James, Melissa, Drake Hills)

**Criteria for Success (how do you judge if the students have met your standards):**

- COM 4022: Use a tool from COM 2065 to assess Quantitative Reasoning
- COM 3095: Use AAC&U Quantitative Reasoning Rubric 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 (except for 3 "Calculation")

In both cases, 80% of students score greater than 70% using raw score.

**Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):**

1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
5. Civic and Global Learning

**Longitudinal Data:**

	COM 3095	COM 4022	Combined Score
2026	17.43 out of 20, 87.1%	14.77 out of 15, 98.5%	92.5%

**Conclusions Drawn from Data:**

*Threshold met.*

Students are in general meeting our requirements this first year of data collection for quantitative reasoning.

In the spring of 26 a new assignment was created to assess quantitative reasoning in COM 3095: Media Literacy in order to assess Media Com majors. Meanwhile, the assessment tool used for Org Com and Communication Studies students has been assessed by Dr. Birdsell for a number of years, although this is the first year that it is formally documented as part of the Department of Communication Studies' longitudinal data.

**Changes to be Made Based on Data:**

Students in the Department of Communication Studies met the benchmark for quantitative reasoning in this, the first year of data collection. In future years the Dept. of Communication Studies faculty will continue to assess the tools we are using to measure our graduate's quantitative reasoning skills.

**Rubric Used:** COM 3095: AAC&U Quantitative Reasoning Rubric

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AdJpFmdHRDj7jkF2gkzi7lplww2t9cOX4sAJ7eoig-c/edit?tab=t.0>

**Department of Communication Studies  
Core Competencies**

**Learning Outcome: Oral Communication**

Demonstrate effective communication through both written and verbal means.

**Outcome Measure:**

COM 4085 (fall/spring) "Wonderfully Made" Manifesto final presentation (Paul)

**Criteria for Success:**

Use the AAC&U Oral Communication Rubric, Average Score of 3+

**Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):**

1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
5. Civic and Global Learning

**Longitudinal Data:**

	COM 4085
2026	3.583

**Conclusions Drawn from Data:**

*Threshold met.*

Oral communication is a core component of our Dept. of Communication Studies program so it is excellent to see solid numbers across the AAC&U Oral Communication rubric in this first year of assessment for the program.

**Changes to be Made Based on Data:**

Given that the scores in Oral Communication were above 3.0, no action is necessary at this time. However, in future years it would be beneficial to break down the categories of the Oral Communication rubric in order to locate more precise data in terms of which oral communication skills are at a "good" level and which skills are at a "superior" level.

**Rubric Used:**

<https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value-initiative/value-rubrics/value-rubrics-oral-communication>

**Department of Communication Studies  
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**Learning Outcome: Information Literacy**

Demonstrate effective communication through both written and verbal means.

**Outcome Measure:**

COM 4022 (fall Media Com/fall and spring for Com Studies and Org Com)

- Students evaluate a true-to-life resume scenario
- COM 4022: "Resume Evaluation Task" (James, Jeff)

**Criteria for Success:**

- Use lines 1, 3, 4, and 5 from the AACU Information Literacy Rubric, Average Score of 3+

**Aligned with DQP Learning Areas (circle one or more but not all five):**

1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills/Core Competencies
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning, and
5. Civic and Global Learning

**Longitudinal Data:**

	<b>COM 4022 Org and Com Studies</b>	<b>COM 4022 Media Com</b>	<b>Combined Score</b>
<b>2026</b>	3.175	3.2	3.18

**Conclusions Drawn from Data:**

*Threshold met.*

In order to assess Information Literacy across the three programs housed within the Department of Communication Studies, Dr. Birdsell created an assignment that measures this core competency as part of our capstone courses's (COM 4022: Media Com and COM 4022: Org. Com and Com Studies) emphasis on creating resumes. Specifically, the assignment requires students to critically analyze information within a specific resume creation scenario.

**Changes to be Made Based on Data:**

Since the scores in Information Literacy were above 3.0, no action is necessary at this time. Going forward, the Dept. of Communication Studies will continue to identify where Information Literacy might be best assessed.

**Rubric Used:**

The AAC&U Information Literacy Rubric is contained within this document created by Dr. Jeffrey Birdsell in Organizational Communication  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1THA4zV49ONUzS8EtoSiAjMtshvc-dSIEzvthYwuBQBc/edit?tab=t.0>