Graduate information
Admission requirements for graduate study

All areas are open to graduates of accredited colleges and universities. Applicants must satisfy the general requirements for admission to graduate programs in the Graduate School and the College of Humanities and Sciences (see the College of Humanities and Sciences guidelines in this bulletin). In addition, they should hold a baccalaureate degree in an area appropriate to the program to which they are applying and a GPA that indicates the ability to pursue graduate work. Although the type of undergraduate degree is not critical to admission, the programs require approved undergraduate curricula or the equivalent in order to grant full admission.

- Mass Communications, Master of Science (M.S.) with a concentration in integrated public relations and advertising with Fudan University [dual degree] (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/mass-communications-ms-concentration-integrated-public-relations-advertising-fudan-university)
- Mass Communications, Master of Science (M.S.) with a concentration in multimedia journalism (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/mass-communications-ms-concentration-multimedia-journalism)
- Mass Communications, Master of Science (M.S.) with a concentration in strategic public relations (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/mass-communications-ms-concentration-strategic-public-relations)
- Media, Art, and Text, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/media-art-text-phd)

MASC 591. Topics in Mass Communications. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable lecture or laboratory hours (depending on topic). 1-3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisite: permission of instructor and director of graduate studies. An advanced study of a selected topic in mass communications. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topic(s) to be offered.

MASC 602. Advertising Technology for Copywriters, Strategists and Media Planners. 2 Hours.
Semester course; 2 laboratory hours. 2 credits. Restricted to Brandcenter students only. This course covers a number of computer applications, tailored to the specific needs of copywriters, account managers, account planners and media planners. Students will learn how to create and format documents using Microsoft Word for the Macintosh, including placement of images and manipulation of text from various sources such as the Internet. Students will learn how to create computer presentations with Microsoft PowerPoint for Macintosh. This course will teach the basics of page layout, including formatting documents, placement of images and basic typography. Additionally, students will learn how to use a scanner to capture images into Adobe Photoshop, and basic image modification techniques, such as brightening and sharpening, silhouetting an image and saving the image. Additionally, this course covers the appropriate applications designed to capture and edit digital video, and will include discussion of the use of the Brandcenter's digital video cameras, and other accessories such as external microphones and lights. Certain applications specific to the needs of media planners and account planners, such as Simmons, SRDS and MRI also will be covered in this course.

MASC 604. Media Stories. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Students will identify, create and translate stories to the multiple screens of contemporary media with an emphasis on advertising, public relations and journalism. Students study contemporary storytelling cases and create original stories for professional communications.

MASC 605. Technology in the Classroom. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Beginning with a brief treatment of basic desktop publishing skills, students will learn layout and design using newspaper, magazine and yearbook models. They will master the functions of Photoshop, Illustrator, Adobe PageMaker and/or QuarkXpress and create promotional fliers/brochures and advertisements for their journalism programs. They will set templates and a style palette for school publications.

MASC 611. Research Methods in Mass Communications. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Fundamentals of mass communications research techniques (content analysis, survey research, experimental design, historiography), including an overview of computer applications, statistics, theory development and trends in the published literature.

MASC 612. Mass Communications Theory. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 seminar hours. 3 credits. Nature, function and application of mass communications theory; structure, content and effects of media systems; social and technological events accounted for by a generalized theory of mass communications.
MASC 613. Mass Media and Society. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 seminar hours. 3 credits. A study of the mass media of the United States, with special attention to their historical development and their impact on other institutions. Consideration of ethical and legal aspects of the media, and problems such as access, control and accountability.

MASC 614. Media-governmental Relations. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 seminar hours. 3 credits. Study of the interaction between the media and the government, and the role of the press in the governmental process as a disseminator, opinion-maker and adversary.

MASC 615. Depth Reporting. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 seminar hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: three undergraduate reporting courses or permission of instructor. A thorough examination of one or more issues in the forefront of the news, the environment, education, health care, science and others relevant to today’s readers.

MASC 616. Mass Communication Law. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An intensive examination of media rights and restrictions, including libel, privacy, access to information, copyright, free-press fair-trial. Attention will be given to First Amendment theory, research techniques and administrative regulation of broadcasting and advertising.

MASC 617. Advanced Research Methods. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 611. An examination of a mass medium through design and execution of a research project using one of the traditional research techniques of the field. Students will have major and minor projects for systematic study of a medium.

MASC 618. Media Economics and Management. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 colloquium hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 611 and MASC 617. Advanced work in media management research based on an examination of major contemporary issues and challenges concerning media management and economics. Student interaction with faculty, media managers and each other will lead to the design and implementation of major problem-solving projects.

MASC 619. Media and Public Opinion. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the role of the mass media in the formation and change of beliefs and attitudes, the involvement of the media with policy makers in shaping public opinion and public policy, and the interaction of media and public opinion polling.

MASC 620. Seminar in Mass Communications History. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 credits. An examination of historical methodology and content as related to the investigation and writing of mass communication history in the United States. Special attention is placed on the adaptation and the use of historical method by mass communications historians.

MASC 621. Advanced Public Relations. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Students will explore a variety of case studies, decision-making analyses and advanced public relations programming in relation to private and public policy-making at the senior levels of management.

MASC 626. Critical Thinking in Media. 2 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Focuses on the application of critical and creative thinking to solve communication problems. Provides students with opportunities to explore and expand their creative abilities through brainstorming sessions, creative techniques and team-oriented activities dealing with contemporary advertising, public relations and media cases.

MASC 642. Online Journalism I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Exploration and production of various means of journalistic communication using online resources. Various multimedia projects will be reviewed and discussed, as well as the best use and application of media types based on the information being communicated. Students will research news stories and examine the effectiveness of online presentations while exploring how online journalism can work with more traditional forms of communication.

MASC 643. Online Journalism II. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 642. Development of online journalism production skills and familiarity with the best uses and practices for publishing material on the Web and for administering news websites. Students will learn the skills for posting media and also about the systems for maintaining news organizations’ entire websites.

MASC 644. Computer-assisted Reporting. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 611 and 642. Provides a practical guide to online research, data analysis and other computer-assisted reporting and research skills. Students will learn how to find authoritative information, including news sources and data, through the Internet and other online resources. Students will also learn how to use spreadsheets, database managers, mapping programs, social networking analysis, statistical packages and other software to sort, summarize, analyze, visualize and present data. Course will cover how to evaluate the reliability of electronic information, how to find trends and integrate them into news reports, and how the First Amendment and journalism ethics apply to digital information.

MASC 645. Visual Journalism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 611 and 642. A theoretical and hands-on course that immerses students in all aspects of visual journalism, including videography, photography, informational graphics and photojournalism. Examines visual communication theory and applied uses of multimedia, particularly in online journalism. Activities include professional-quality projects for multimedia publication. Addresses legal issues in producing multimedia packages, including copyright law.

MASC 646. Convergence Law and Ethics. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 611, 642 and 685. Explores the delicate balance that exists between freedom and control of the mass media (print, broadcast and new media). Focuses on judicial decisions and reasoning, given the impact the courts have on interpreting the First Amendment. Will also focus on new legal and ethical concerns created by the Internet and digital newsgathering and presentation technologies. Students will be immersed in the ethical decision-making process through the case-study approach.

MASC 654. Organizational Communication. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Study of theoretical constructs of the communication process in organizations. Application of communication principles to managerial functions, training, telecommunications and other organizational situations.

MASC 658. Account Leadership. 2 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. Restricted to Brandcenter students only. Students will learn first-hand general leadership skills crucial to developing successful relationships with agency personnel and clients. Emphasis will be given to exploring ways students can contribute to accounts not only strategically but creatively as well. Students will learn presentation and communication skills as well as effective ways to manage accounts. Students will sharpen previously prepared strategies as well as interviewing skills.
MASC 660. Advertising Account Research and Planning. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits.
Prerequisites: MASC 650 and MASC 651. Develops student's ability to choose the most effective research methods for determining both the correct target market for a product and specific issues most pertinent to that market, in regards to positioning the product. Research work with consumer groups will demonstrate student’s ability to develop thoughtful questions that will deliver valuable insight.

MASC 665. Building Global Brands. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 650 and MASC 651. Restricted to Brandcenter students only. Provides thorough coverage of an approach and framework for designing a comprehensive marketing plan suitable for implementations in an international setting, with particular focus on identifying and analyzing the important cultural and environmental uniqueness of single nations or global regions. We also will look at specific examples of cases that will better inform our planning efforts and will spend time examining various cultures in order to respectfully and appropriately engage them in our marketing plan.

MASC 661. Strategic PR in a Digital Environment. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. An introduction to the thinking and actions required to communicate strategically in today’s dynamic socioeconomic environment. Focus is on the skills and information to handle strategic public relations. Introduces cutting-edge technology and using the Internet as a strategic communications tool. Professional responsibilities emphasized.

MASC 662. Strategic PR Research and Evaluation. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. Introduces the basic theories and practices of strategic public relations research and evaluation. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques are examined.

MASC 663. Strategic PR in the Global Environment. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 671, 672 and permission of instructor. Examines the phenomenon of global strategic communications, including the enabling environmental factors. How to develop an integrated, holistic global communications program and how to manage such a program. Students experience one region of the world with an in-depth study tour.

MASC 664. Multiplatform Storytelling. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 643, 645 and 646. Students will develop new ways of storytelling that leverage the power of the print, broadcast and online media, combining two or more of those platforms into a single, multimedia package. Analyses the origins of multimedia and its current trends. Themes include the history of multimedia journalism, the adaptation process for traditional media, the search for a business model and the new news audience.

MASC 665. The Business of Media. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Will provide students with both a macro and micro understanding of the business operations of small and large newspapers, television and radio stations and online media. Students will examine newsroom operations, advertising and human resource issues. Will also examine laws and regulations governing media as well as ownership trends.

MASC 666. International Journalism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 611, 642, 643, 644, 645 and 646. Explores how major news organizations in the U.S. and abroad cover international news in the 21st century as well as the various media structures and systems that are in place in countries around the world. Students will examine the power and impact of global news media in shaping public opinion. They will study trends in international coverage. Students will explore the role of the press in a democracy as well as in authoritarian or communist nations. They will examine the ethical and legal dimensions of international reporting across various media systems, regulations and protocols. The course will also emphasize the ways in which technology is rapidly changing how news is developed and disseminated. Coverage of wars and major world conflicts will also be emphasized.

MASC 667. Converged Media Applications. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 644 and 684. Graduate-level research and production focused on multimedia. Students will complete a significant multimedia project that draws on their experiences and the skills learned in other graduate courses.

MASC 668. Topics in Mass Communications. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; 1-3 credits. May be repeated for 6 total credits. Prerequisite: permission of instructor and director of graduate studies. An advanced study of selected topic in mass communications. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topic(s) to be offered each semester.

MASC 669. Independent Study. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; 1-3 credits. A maximum of 3 credits may be submitted toward the master's degree. Prerequisite: permission of instructor and director of graduate studies.

MASC 670. Practicum in Mass Communications. 1-6 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 1-6 credits. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: permission of director of graduate studies. Student participation in planned research or internship experience under the supervision of mass communications faculty. Graded as pass/fail.
MASC 694. Strategic PR Campaign Design and Implementation. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 675, 676, 681 and 682. Brings together all the various tasks and concepts used in public relations work to shape an effective campaign. Through projects students become competent and proficient in analyzing cases, strategizing, implementing and evaluating public relations campaigns at senior management levels.

MASC 695. Fieldwork/Internship. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 1, 2 or 3 credits per semester. Maximum total of 3 credits toward graduation. Prerequisite: permission of director of graduate studies. Selected students will receive on-the-job training under the supervision of an instructor and the employer. Internships are available in newspapers, magazines, public relations, advertising, radio and television. Graded S/U/F.

MASC 697. Portfolio Development for Strategists. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 653. Continues the development and demonstration of critical thinking skills, insights and creative abilities in a variety of areas sought by agency planning directors, media planning directors, management supervisors and recruiters. Development of concepts and materials necessary for the creation of mini-books and individual portfolios will be one of the main focal points. Independent projects pursued specifically for portfolio development also will be conducted.

MASC 699. Thesis. 1-3 Hours.
1-3 credits. May be repeated. A maximum of 3 credits may be submitted toward the master's degree.