

RICHARD T. ROBERTSON SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND CULTURE

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The Robertson School of Media and Culture prepares effective and skilled communicators through quality instruction, advising and student services, based on real-world applications. Through research, professional service and scholarship in applied communications, the school advances the knowledge and practice of a multidisciplinary and evolving media environment. The school values truth, ethics, creativity, innovation, collaboration, cultural diversity, shared governance and community engagement.

The school offers a Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications with specialization in one of four concentrations: advertising, journalism, media production or public relations. The school also awards the Master of Science in Mass Communications, with concentrations in the areas of integrated communication and multimedia journalism along with a graduate Certificate in Media and Leadership.

Undergraduate information

Admission guidelines and requirements

Incoming students can declare mass communications as their major through the last day of add/drop. VCU students in other programs who wish to declare mass communications as their major must complete MASC 101 with a minimum grade of C and have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5. In addition, students planning to major in advertising must complete MASC 201 with a minimum grade of C; students planning to major in public relations must complete MASC 210 with a minimum grade of C; and students planning to major in media production must complete MASC 255 with a minimum grade of C.

Full-time students can spend no more than two academic years in the foundation from the time of enrollment. If they have not advanced to a concentration, then they will be separated from the major.

Admittance to a concentration in the Robertson School of Media and Culture is contingent on meeting the following requirements: an overall minimum GPA of 2.5 in all courses and completion of the required mass communications foundation courses. Transfer students will be evaluated on an individual basis but generally will be required to meet the prerequisites for admission during the second semester they are enrolled at VCU.

Once admitted to a concentration, students must maintain a minimum cumulative and major GPA of 2.5. If a student's GPA falls below 2.5, he or she will have one year to meet the GPA requirement. Students who fail to do so will be separated from the program. This does not preclude the student from completing another major at VCU.

Certification of these requirements must accompany a formal petition for admission to a concentration. Students at this time must select a concentration and, if available, a sub-concentration.

Students who have been separated from the major may appeal to the school's Undergraduate Studies Committee by following the process described on the school's website.

Mass Communications Scholars Program

The Mass Communication Scholars Program demands a rigorous course load and a high GPA. It prepares students for professional positions in the communications fields and for competitive post-graduate programs. The program supports the highest standards of excellence in education and is designed to enhance the education achievement of students through a variety of special opportunities, demands and programs.

The Mass Communication Scholars Program is open to undergraduate mass communications majors who have been accepted into the VCU Honors College.

To graduate as Mass Communications Scholars, students must:

- Maintain an overall 3.5 GPA and a 3.5 GPA in the major.
- Maintain good standing in the VCU Honors College.
- Complete 18 credit hours in honors courses or "variants." At least 15 of these honors credits must be taken in the school. At least three honors credits must be completed each academic year.
- Attend at least four Honors-speakers events or colloquia each academic year for exchange of ideas.
- Complete a capstone, three-credit thesis or project course, MASC 492.
- Complete an approved international component.
- Compile a dossier or portfolio of their work to document their educational career, major, interests and scholarly pursuits. The dossier will include an essay on how the student has become a well-educated individual deserving of Mass Communications Scholars designation.

The Robertson School of Media and Culture will offer at least two honors courses or "variants" per year. Variants are courses in which students may receive honors credit while in non-honors courses by meeting additional requirements such as more advanced readings, greater depth in research or project work or additional assignments as deemed appropriate by the instructor (and approved by the Honors College).

The Mass Communications Scholars Program is a departmental honors program linked to the VCU Honors College. Mass communications students will be able to graduate with mass communications honors and with university honors. Mass Communications Scholars will earn a distinctive designation at their graduation ceremony.

Honors courses and courses designated as variants will be listed in the Schedule of Classes for each semester. Students wishing to enter the Mass Communications Scholars Program should contact the program coordinator.

- Mass Communications, Bachelor of Science (B.S.) with a concentration in:
 - Advertising/creative (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/mass-communications-bs-concentration-advertising-creative/>)
 - Advertising/strategic (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/mass-communications-bs-concentration-advertising-strategic/>)
 - Journalism/broadcast (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/mass-communications-bs-concentration-journalism-broadcast/>)
 - Journalism/digital (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/mass-communications-bs-concentration-journalism-digital/>)
 - Media production (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/mass-communications-bs-concentration-media-production/>)
 - Public relations (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/mass-communications-bs-concentration-public-relations/>)
- Media studies, minor in (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-media-culture/media-studies-minor/>)

MASC 101. Mass Communications. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. A comprehensive overview of mass media which examines its history and evolution. Emphasis is given to the ways in which communications technologies have shaped and are shaped by society. Considers how digital and earlier technologies have led to increasing integration of world cultures and economies. Includes discussion of mass media law and ethics, including the origins and evolution of a free press and the legal framework of contemporary mass media practice.

MASC 151. Global Communications. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Explores how communication media and globalization drive each other and how they both impact the nation-state as well as international institutions. Examines how technology, the global economy and international media corporations influence culture, politics, business, law and other institutions in countries around the world. Explores the relationship between media systems and governments and how both are affected by technology and globalization. Crosslisted as: INTL 151.

MASC 201. Curiousness. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Study and practice of the first attribute for success in creativity: curiousness. Students engage in practical applications, readings, lectures, demonstrations and in-class exercises that build curiosity and help students identify and trust their natural curious nature. Provides advertising and non-advertising majors with rigorous and provocative challenges to stimulate further interest in creating for media.

MASC 203. Journalism Writing. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 101 minimum grade of C, UNIV 112 or both ENGL 295 and HONR 200 with minimum grade(s) of C, and minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5. Study and practice in fact gathering and development of basic writing skills for print, broadcast and online journalism. Focuses on journalistic storytelling, grammar, Associated Press style and knowledge of current affairs.

MASC 204. Story. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 4 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 101 minimum grade of C and 201 minimum grade of C, UNIV 112 or both ENGL 295 and HONR 200 with minimum grade(s) of C, and minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5. Focuses on writing for advertising and consumer communications (the best advertising tells stories to which consumers can relate). Students study the parts of a story, what makes a story interesting and how to find those things. Practice includes looking for, finding and constructing a story. A survey of many different ways storytelling is involved in making advertising. Practice in applying storytelling skills to several advertising and communication projects.

MASC 210. Public Relations. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Introduction to public relations principles and practices, including analysis of tools, media, ethical responsibilities and emerging technologies. Special attention to the theory and research literature on rational and ethical persuasion.

MASC 251. Global Health and Social Media. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An online service-learning class in which students explore the theory and practice of social media campaigns for global health issues and develop projects for nonprofit clients. The class will explore the following issues: theories and concepts of social media campaigns about global health issues; practical application of social media in health campaigns; targeting online audiences through social media; utilization of multimedia content for social media; and organizational strategies for social media to achieve social benefits.

MASC 255. Introduction to Media Production. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Overview of media production history, evolution and contemporary impact domestically and internationally. Focuses on the development and review of appropriate technologies and media formats, the industries and businesses who use them, and how these technologies have been and are used to create and share various types of communication messages. Examines relevant global, economic and regulatory influences and forces.

MASC 261. History and Development of Journalism. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 101 with a minimum grade of C. An examination of the regulatory, technical, economic and creative foundations of print, broadcast and Web-based journalism. Historical, contemporary and ethical issues are also addressed.

MASC 274. Diversity in the Media. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 101 with a minimum grade of C. Examines historical and contemporary issues associated with the presence and portrayal of selected groups in/by the media in the United States. Examines groups based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion and other characteristics. Issues related to diversity and diversity awareness in advertising, journalism and public relations are also explored.

MASC 285. Media Writing. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits.
Prerequisites: MASC 101 and MASC 255, each with a minimum grade of C; UNIV 112 or both ENGL 295 and HONR 200 with minimum grade(s) of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5. Introduces students to various kinds of media writing, such as advertisements, training materials, and dramatic programming. Includes study and practice of content and styles of informational, persuasive and dramatic writing for various media platforms. Focuses on appropriate storytelling techniques, grammar and writing impact.

MASC 290. Ethical Problems in Mass Media. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 101 minimum grade of C. Examination and analysis of contemporary issues and problems in conventional and new media. The philosophical foundation and principles of ethical decision-making are explored. Critical and unresolved issues are discussed within the legal and ethical framework of modern mass media practice. Students are required to design and justify resolutions to the issues and present defenses for the resolution proposals.

MASC 291. Topics in Communications. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits. May be repeated once with different content. A study of a specialized topic in mass communications. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered.

MASC 300. Technical Prowess. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203, MASC 204 or MASC 285 with a minimum grade of C. Examines the functions of visual and graphic communication in the print and electronic media. Focuses on mastery of graphics software and basic design principles. Students gain hands-on experience with state-of-the-art computer graphics and layout programs.

MASC 301. Graphics for Journalism. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203 with a minimum grade of C. For journalism students only. Examines the functions of visual and graphic communication in the print and electronic media. Focuses on creative typographic and layout design principles and integrates practice in editing, graphic creation, digital-image manipulation and professional publishing. Students gain hands-on experience with state-of-the-art computer graphics and layout programs used in newspaper and magazine journalism. (May not be taken if student has taken MASC 300 or 334.)

MASC 303. Reporting for Print and Web. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits.
Prerequisites: MASC 203 minimum grade of C and UNIV 200 minimum grade of C or HONR 200 minimum grade of C. Detailed study in reporting and writing news stories for print publications and websites. Focus on interviewing, writing news and features and preparing for entry-level reporting assignments. Students also will learn online presentation skills, including photos, audio, video and interactive elements.

MASC 305. Copy Editing. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 300 with a minimum grade of C. Instruction and practice in basic newspaper and online editing with a focus on practical experience in editing local and news service copy for publication. Includes emphasis on headline writing, development of news judgment, accuracy and fairness, and potential legal problems for copy editors. Attention also will be paid to layout and design for newspapers and online.

MASC 317. Visual Acuteness. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 300 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to advertising majors. Study and practice of visual problem-solving and graphic design. This course uses design thinking, conceptual thinking and process. Topics include building harmonious systems, using the typographic grid and understanding the relationship between type and image.

MASC 333. Public Relations Technical Writing and Media Relations. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 203, MASC 210, and UNIV 200 or HONR 200, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to public relations students. An intensive writing course that builds a practical foundation for writing in public relations. Establishes writing techniques and methods for message development, storytelling, persuasiveness and action. Includes development of organizational background and branding materials, community relations materials, and the creation of materials for key stakeholders in news media and other influencer media. Explains the value, role and function of mass communication channels, including a strategic approach to pitching, engaging and interviewing for mass media with a plan for monitoring and evaluating media mentions. Establishes a diverse writing portfolio.

MASC 334. Visual Communication and Design for Public Relations. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 203 and MASC 210, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to public relations students or media studies minors. Provides hands-on experience with current graphic design software such as Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign while building skills for concepting, developing and critiquing design projects for public relations. Explores theoretical and practical approaches to visual communication and message development. Exposes students to the language skills and empathy required to work with professional designers in the industry. Establishes a diverse portfolio of graphic design materials. (May not be taken if student has completed MASC 300 or MASC 301.)

MASC 335. Multimedia Production. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 300 with a minimum grade of C. Multimedia technology course used to advance the digital and practical skills developed in prerequisite course. Explores current and innovative approaches to multimedia tools and technology used for communication professionals including, but not limited to, multimedia photography, audio and video storytelling, desktop publishing and website design. Explores industry trends in digital, online and mobile communication. Establishes a diverse portfolio of multimedia projects.

MASC 336. Social Media for Public Relations. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: ENGL 304, MASC 300, MASC 333 and MASC 337, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to public relations students. Covers development, trends and application of social media. Focuses on social media as a strategic tool for public relations professionals. Identifies and analyzes functionality and best practices, including audience engagement, benchmarking and appropriate metrics for social media monitoring, measurement and evaluation.

MASC 337. Public Relations Strategy. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 203 and MASC 210, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to public relations students. Teaches the strategic process for building public relations campaigns and other communication plans. Includes thorough instruction for setting goals, objectives, strategies and tactics. Establishes a method for measuring and evaluating effectiveness in public relations efforts supplemented by industry examples and case studies.

MASC 338. Public Relations Professionalism. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: ENGL 304, MASC 333, MASC 334 and MASC 337, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to public relations students. Reinforces professionalism skills and career competencies for the public relations industry. Strengthens verbal and interpersonal skills used for pitching, presenting, influencing and engaging with audiences. Institutes a plan for employment supported by skillsets in networking, job-seeking and applying, interviewing, and relationship building. Explores options for public relations career paths, development opportunities, specializations and certifications. Establishes a diverse portfolio of public relations materials.

MASC 341. Feature and Article Writing. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 303 minimum grade of C or 363 minimum grade of C. Practice in preparing articles and features for newspapers and magazines. Emphasis is on creative journalistic writing and development of writing skills.

MASC 344. Data Journalism and Visualization. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 203; and STAT 208 or STAT 210. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. A practical guide to computer-assisted reporting and data-driven storytelling. Focus on finding authoritative sources and information on the internet, analyzing data with spreadsheets and other tools and creating online graphics. Students will learn how to evaluate the reliability of electronic information and how the First Amendment and journalism ethics apply to data.

MASC 359. International Media Coverage: The Middle East. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 101 or MASC 151 with a minimum grade of C. This interdisciplinary course explores the media's role in covering cultural, political, religious and other issues in the Middle East. Students will examine the role and impact of the media in both the United States and Middle East in shaping global and regional public opinion. Using webcam and online technology, VCU students will discuss cross-cultural perspectives with students from the other U.S. universities and universities in the Middle East. Crosslisted as: WRLD 359.

MASC 363. Introduction to Broadcast Writing. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203 with a minimum grade of C. Corequisite: MASC 367. Students will concentrate on developing news writing and reporting skills for television and radio. Course work will include weekly writing assignments and the production of broadcast-quality radio and television stories. Knowledge of current events is essential.

MASC 367. Beginning Media Production. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 300 and UNIV 200, both with minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. Focuses on the purpose, function and execution of basic techniques of media production, especially for audio and video. Emphasizes production of professional-quality media content for various applications. Covers equipment, stages of production, recording and editing.

MASC 380. Media and Culture. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203, MASC 204 or MASC 285 with a minimum grade of C. An advanced conversation about the development of media, technology, trends and their impact on culture. Examines the role of traditional and underrepresented media. Challenges students to critically consider the role of media against evolving changes in society.

MASC 381. Great Advertising. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 380 minimum grade of C. Explores the practitioner-oriented approach to the creation, preparation and evaluation of advertising, branding and communications. Views great advertising from the perspective of integrated marketing communication and utilizes case studies of advertising and branding campaigns for some of the world's best-known brands.

MASC 382. Acumen. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 380 minimum grade of C. Focuses on excelling in the business aspects of advertising, branding and communications. To understand an advertising client's business needs, one must understand how the client does business. Students will learn about advertising from within the context of marketing, business and commerce.

MASC 383. User Experience. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 300 with a minimum grade of C. Introduction to the strategy and design of user experiences in communications. Students learn to create both physical and digital experiences for audiences based on research, data and human behaviors. This is a class about demystifying UX design, which goes beyond web design, and using principles to improve skills students can use in any field. This includes the UX process, collaboration, design thinking, storytelling, user personas, and research, accessibility and testing. By the completion of the class, students will have knowledge of the fundamentals of UX design, be proficient in design thinking principles and have developed skills that can be used with their chosen concentration.

MASC 390. Ethical Problems in Mass Media. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203, MASC 204 or MASC 285 with a minimum grade of C. Examines and analyzes contemporary issues and problems in conventional and new media. Explores the philosophical foundation and principles of ethical decision-making. Discusses critical and unresolved issues within the legal and ethical framework of modern mass media practice. Students are expected to engage in active discussions both online and in class.

MASC 392. Perspicuousness. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 204; and UNIV 200 or HONR 200, both with a minimum grade of C. Intensive practice in choosing the right word for the right occasion. Study of the different types of advertising copy used by both local and national advertisers. Focuses on creative thinking and inspired writing for advertising, branding and communications.

MASC 393. Creativity for Television. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 380 minimum grade of C. For mass communications majors only. Learn the process of developing professional-level television advertising with a concentration in creative thinking and solutions. Students create TV commercials with attention to scripts, storyboards, talent, visual composition, editing, music, sound effects and direction.

MASC 394. Imagination. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 300 with a minimum grade of C. Study of art direction: practice in visualizing and utilizing media space aesthetically. Students complete assignments each week, ranging from traditional advertising to alternative media venues. Results are presented in front of the class for critique by faculty and fellow students.

MASC 396. Mobile and Social Media Journalism. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 303 with minimum grade of C. Integrates journalism skills and concepts from previous writing and reporting classes and adapts them to mobile and social media. Students work in a newsroom environment to utilize mobile devices and social media platforms to identify compelling story ideas, effectively break news and report on important news events and issues while applying theories and concepts of social networking to journalism. Students explore emerging technologies, develop their own professional social media portfolios and build digital communities.

MASC 397. Ubiquity. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 204 minimum grade of C. Using media to help achieve the client's ad objective. An intensive problem-based course on using mass, personal and social media to engage the consumer, to help communicate the brand's message and to add impact to a communications campaign. Students will study media planning and buying of all types of media (TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, outdoor, online and nontraditional).

MASC 398. Awareness. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 204 with a minimum grade of C. Understanding what advertisers can look for in their research and how they use research to connect with consumers. Through this intensive research practicum focused on account planning, students will learn to research consumers, competition and brands. Students will use quantitative (such as online surveys) and qualitative (such as focus groups, panel studies, one-on-one interviews) methods to research consumers and target audiences. Students will conduct competitive market research on brands.

MASC 399. Empathy. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 204 with a minimum grade of C. Focuses on managing client accounts, team management, group dynamics, negotiating and presentation skills. Students learn how to persuade through understanding of others, including how to make smarter decisions, spark innovation and solve problems more quickly, and how to create a culture of candor, trust, resilience and accountability in clients and in coworkers.

MASC 401. Introduction to Podcasting. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203, MASC 204 or MASC 285 with a minimum grade of C. This project-based course teaches the production skills necessary to begin a career as a podcast producer. Students will learn how to develop, pitch and produce a podcast, with a focus on the narrative and technical aspects of production. This includes the use of industry standard audio production software and hardware, research methods, scripting practices, interview techniques, and hosting.

MASC 403. Advanced Reporting. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 274 and MASC 303, both with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. Capstone course for journalism/print-online concentration. Intensive study of the techniques of reporting meetings and news of public affairs. Attention will be paid to covering governmental agencies at all levels. Instruction in newspaper editing included. Quality of writing will be a paramount and continual consideration. Emphasis on fast-paced deadlines. This course may not be taken simultaneously with MASC 404, MASC 475 or MASC 496 without permission from the instructor.

MASC 404. Specialized Project Reporting. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 274 and MASC 303, both with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. Capstone course for journalism/print-online concentration. Provides news beat experience for students reporting on complex issues facing the public in the urban community. Emphasis also on editing, team reporting, in-depth research and interviewing techniques, and use of public records. This course may not be taken simultaneously with MASC 403, MASC 475 or MASC 496 without permission from the instructor.

MASC 408. Communications Law. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203, MASC 204 or MASC 285 with a minimum grade of C. Study of legal issues affecting the practice of advertising, journalism and public relations. Examination and analysis of contemporary issues and problems in conventional and new media. Critical and unresolved issues are discussed within the legal framework of modern mass media practice.

MASC 409. Truth and Honor. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 204 minimum grade of C and 380 minimum grade of C. For mass communications majors only. A survey of laws pertaining to the creation of advertising, such as trademark and copyright, and to the effects of advertising in the culture. A discussion of ethical questions pertaining to persuasion, communication and the effects of advertising in the culture.

MASC 410. Media Entrepreneurship. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 285 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. Students will execute hands-on, media-based, public-facing entrepreneurial projects with a view to how, why and for whom independent and freelance professional work rises above the noise and can serve both local and global audiences. Students will learn how to start their own business/passion-led project work with intention and diversity via partnership, collaboration, social calls and direct discourse.

MASC 415. Advanced Media Production. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 367 with a minimum grade of C. Study and practice of advanced media production skills and techniques. Focuses on audio and video production for visual storytelling, including advanced professional field production, camera operation and media editing.

MASC 423. Tourism and Hospitality Public Relations. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203 and MASC 210, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to public relations students. Examines the role and practice of public relations in the tourism and hospitality industries. Students will learn how to use public relations strategies and tactics to stimulate interest among travelers in destinations and specific activities. Emphasis on media relations, special events, sponsorships/partnerships and social media.

MASC 424. Sports and Entertainment Public Relations. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203 and MASC 210, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to public relations students. Examines the role and practice of public relations in the sports and entertainment industries. Students will learn the role of public relations in managing relationships with the news media, fans and fan groups, and other key audiences. Focus on media relations, social media, sponsorships/partnerships, promotions and community relations.

MASC 425. Public Relations Research Methods. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: STAT 208 or STAT 210; MASC 333 and MASC 337, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to public relations students. An introduction to the role of research in public relations, with primary emphasis on content analysis, focus group, survey and communication audit methods, and the evaluation of quantitative research data.

MASC 426. Influencer Relations. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 333 and MASC 336, each with minimum grade of C for public relations students; MASC 392 or MASC 398, each with a minimum grade of C for advertising students. Enrollment is restricted to public relations and advertising students. Explores the evolution and impact of online influencers such as bloggers, vloggers, reviewers and critics and their ability to affect audience decision-making. Presents strategies and best practices for identifying and cultivating strategic relationships with these influencers, as well as how to apply their influence to a larger communication strategy. Students will learn to leverage the influencer framework to generate better content and more subscribers for clients and organizations.

MASC 433. Special Events. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203 and MASC 210, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to public relations students only. Students learn the theory and organizational strategies of special events as a function of public relations. Topics include client consulting, objective setting, budgeting, sponsorships, vendor negotiations and follow-up procedures.

MASC 435. Crisis Communication. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 300, MASC 333 and MASC 337, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to public relations students. Students learn techniques for dealing with sudden and unexpected situations that have a negative impact on organizations and their images to key constituencies. Through case studies and crisis simulation exercises, students develop strategic solutions for crisis situations. Students are provided with the insights, confidence and practical expertise needed to manage the consequences of a wide range of possible crises in ways that maintain, or even enhance, their employer's reputation.

MASC 438. Organizational Communications. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 425 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to public relations students only. Focuses on the tools to communicate with employees, volunteers and special organizational internal publics, and how those internal messages are used to achieve the goals and objectives of organizations. Students learn the theories of organizational communication and the techniques used to conduct an internal audit of the communication climate in an organization.

MASC 439. Agency. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 333, MASC 335, MASC 336, MASC 337, MASC 425 and MASC 499, each with a minimum grade of C. Corequisite: MASC 274. Enrollment is restricted to public relations students. Fast-paced, professionally driven course where students take the lead to fulfill the public relations needs of clients in the community. Working from the first class through the end of the semester, students apply theoretical and practical skillsets learned in the program to perform research, strategic plan development, tactical design and execution. Assesses students' theoretical and practical learning achieved in the program as a capstone course concluding with a final presentation for critical feedback by the client(s) and other industry professionals.

MASC 440. Media Animation. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 300 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. Study and practice of media animation, including physical (e.g., puppets and claymation) and digital creations. Focus on development and current applications of the art form and demonstrating basic digital media animation competency through class projects.

MASC 450. Style. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 392 and MASC 394, both with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. An advanced, intensive study of advertising style, forming one's own sense of style and the creative process. Emphasizing strategic and creative development of advertising campaigns. Students will conceptualize advertising campaigns, execute digitally produced, comprehensive advertisements and campaign materials, and assemble a final portfolio. Culminates in a formal portfolio review with professionals from the advertising industry.

MASC 451. Invention. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 274 and MASC 450, both with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. An advanced, intensive study of inventiveness in the creative process. Emphasis on strategic and creative development of advertising campaigns that builds on what students learned about advertising style in MASC 450. Prepares students for post-graduate work or study. Students will conceptualize and produce advertising campaigns and assemble a final portfolio. Culminates in a formal portfolio review with professionals from the advertising industry.

MASC 459. Judgment. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 274, MASC 398, MASC 399 and six additional credits of MASC electives, each with minimum grades of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. Application and demonstration of inspiration, innovation, advertising knowledge and skills. Designed to help students in the strategic concentration compile a strong, comprehensive body of work used in brand communications. Students will develop competence in evaluating communication concepts, market situations and client and agency concerns.

MASC 460. Advanced Television Newsgathering. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 363 and 367, both with minimum grade of C. Corequisite: MASC 415. Television news practicum. Using the university and the city of Richmond as their classroom, students will report, write and produce television and multimedia news stories. Electronic newsgathering and editing equipment will be utilized to create professional-caliber projects.

MASC 462. Photojournalism. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 363 minimum grade of C and 367 minimum grade of C. Examination of theoretical, technical and practical use of photography in communications and reporting, along with theories and legal guidelines of photojournalism. Training in news photography (both still and video) and its application in converged media. Students must have their own manually operable 35 mm film or digital (minimum 3.2 megapixels) single lens reflex cameras with at least a 50 mm lens or a zoom lens capable of 50 mm shooting. Students will use departmental video cameras.

MASC 463. Advanced Radio Newsgathering. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 363 minimum grade of C and 367 minimum grade of C. Radio practicum. Using the university and city of Richmond as their classroom, students will report, write and produce radio news stories. Studio and remote equipment will be utilized to create professional-caliber projects.

MASC 465. Newscasting. 6 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 8 laboratory hours. 6 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 274, MASC 303, MASC 415 and MASC 460, each with minimum grade of C. Concentrates on developing on-air and producing skills across television studio and field situations. Emphasizes journalistic principles in delivery of news, public affairs, editorial and interviews. Stresses grammar, diction and broadcast writing. Students are expected to create timely, proficient video news content that could be published through the Robertson Newsroom's distribution channels.

MASC 466. Television Studio Production. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 4 laboratory hours. 3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of six credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203, MASC 204 or MASC 285 with minimum grade of C. Instruction and practice in basic television and studio production. Explores standards, contemporary technologies and best-practice techniques for modern studio video production.

MASC 467. CreateAthon at VCU. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: for advertising students: MASC 392 and 394 each with a minimum grade of C, or MASC 398 and 399 each with a minimum grade of C, or approval by instructor; for public relations students: MASC 333, MASC 335 or MASC 337 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. Students will be selected to work with area nonprofit clients to create and produce a wide variety of advertising and promotional materials. Students develop strategy, write creative briefs, recruit teams to work with them during CreateAthon at VCU (a marathon creative event held during the semester), present work to clients and follow deliverables through production. Strong emphasis on leadership and commitment to working with nonprofits.

MASC 474. Diversity in the Media. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 101 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to mass communications majors and media studies minors. Examines historical and contemporary issues associated with the presence and portrayal of selected groups in/by the media in the United States. Examines groups based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion and other characteristics. Issues related to diversity and diversity awareness in advertising, journalism and public relations are also explored.

MASC 475. Capital News Service. 6 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 8 laboratory hours. 6 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 274 and MASC 303, both with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. Advanced journalism students report on complex issues facing the public. Emphasis on covering state government and politics, including the Virginia General Assembly, the governor, regulatory agencies and elections. Students are expected to create timely, proficient news content that could be published through the Capital News Service newswire and the Robertson Newsroom's other distribution channels. Strong emphasis on fast-paced deadlines.

MASC 480. Touch. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 398 minimum grade of C and 399 minimum grade of C. For mass communications majors only. Designing advertising strategies that touch the target audience and engage them in the brand. Students learn to understand the research, the consumer, the competition and the client's brand so that they can develop a strong communication strategy. This is an advanced study of the strategic side of advertising.

MASC 481. Completeness. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: creative advertising concentration: MASC 392 and 394, both with minimum grade of C; strategic advertising concentration: MASC 398 and 399, both with minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. Intensive study in the planning and preparation of advertising campaigns. Students develop complete advertising plans including research, media and creative strategies, sales promotion plans and merchandising plans.

MASC 483. The Documentary. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 367 with a minimum grade of C. An examination of documentary concepts through analysis of radio, television and film documentaries. The course will center on the development, writing and production of a documentary, with students ultimately completing their own documentary project.

MASC 484. Media Foundry. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 4 laboratory hours. 3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of six credits with different topics. Prerequisites: MASC 274, MASC 415, MASC 499 and PHTO 290, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to mass communications majors. Capstone course. Advanced application of perspectives and skills learned about developing stories and creating compelling media production portfolio content for various audiences.

MASC 485. Web Site Design. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 300, 301 or 334 with a minimum grade of C. Students will receive an introduction to the processes, principles and tools of website design, development and production. The course will focus on the development of strong interactive interfaces, animation, graphic images, text, and functional site design and organization. In this hands-on, computer-based course, students will design and develop a comprehensive site and launch it to the Internet. Increasing the students' knowledge of design principles and technical skills with Web development tools will be emphasized.

MASC 488. Strategic Health Communication. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: MASC 336 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to public relations students. Covers the design, implementation and evaluation of health-focused media campaigns, and examines behavioral theories and research on media influences with respect to both beneficial and harmful effects on well-being. Students will focus on effective message design as well as responding to emerging viral conversations, translating health communication language into language accessible for the public and designing a digital media-based health communication campaign for an actual client.

MASC 491. Topics in Communications. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 1-3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a maximum of nine credits. Prerequisite: MASC 203 or 204, either with a minimum grade of C. An intensive study of a specialized field of mass communications.

MASC 492. Independent Study. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; variable hours. Variable credit. Maximum of 3 credits per semester; maximum total of 6 credits for all independent study courses. Prerequisite: MASC 203 or 204 with a minimum grade of C. The course is designed for students who wish to study subject matter not offered elsewhere in the mass communications' curriculum.

MASC 493. Fieldwork/Internship. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 field experience hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 1-3 credits. May be repeated with different topics; maximum total of six credits may be applied toward graduation. Prerequisites: MASC 203, MASC 204, or MASC 285 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment requires permission of internship coordinator. Selected students receive on-the-job training under the supervision of an instructor and the employer. Internships are available in a variety of media outlets and related organizations.

MASC 496. Mobile and Social Media Journalism. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 303, 363 and 367, each with minimum grade of C. Capstone course for print-online journalism students. Integrates journalism skills and concepts from previous writing and reporting classes and adapts them to mobile and social media. Students work in a newsroom environment to utilize mobile devices and social media platforms to identify compelling story ideas, effectively break news and report on important news events and issues while applying theories and concepts of online social networking to journalism. Students develop their own professional social media portfolios and build online communities. This course may not be taken simultaneously with MASC 403, MASC 404 or MASC 475 without permission from the instructor.

MASC 499. Career Minded. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: MASC 398 and MASC 399, each with a minimum grade of C; or MASC 392 and MASC 394, each with a minimum grade of C; or ENGL 304, MASC 300, MASC 333 and MASC 337, each with a minimum grade of C; or MASC 303 with a minimum grade of C; or MASC 367 and MGMT 321 each with a minimum grade of C. A study of emotional intelligence and transferable skills in the workplace. Students explore multi-platform interview skills, strategic networking, career plans and a professional online presence while developing career documents such as resumes that incorporate AI and applicant tracking system innovations.