



College of
Communication &
Information Sciences

**JOURNALISM
& CREATIVE
MEDIA**

Handbook for Master of Arts Degree

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Department of Journalism and Creative Media
The University of Alabama
490 Phifer Hall
Box 870172
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0172

(205) 348-7155

[Cory L. Armstrong, Ph.D.](#)

Department Chair

[Scott Parrott, Ph.D.](#)

Graduate Coordinator

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Introduction

The [Department of Journalism & Creative Media](#) (JCM) offers a [Master of Arts](#) (M.A.) degree in Journalism. Two documents contain the rules, procedures and guidelines for graduate students in the department. The first is the Official Graduate School Catalog, available on the Graduate School's [website](#). The second is this handbook, which contains the requirements, policies and procedures specific to this department and adopted by the master's advisory committee on behalf of the faculty.

About JCM

The Department of Journalism & Creative Media, part of UA's College of Communication and Information Sciences (CIS), is home to students who are passionate about the art and science of storytelling. As a JCM student, you will come to know faculty who possess extensive knowledge in the fields of journalism and creative media. They share your quest for knowledge and information, and they have rich understanding of the responsibility of mass distribution. With their guidance, you will develop the ability to create media messages across platforms.

JCM Mission Statement

The Department of Journalism and Creative Media teaches students to make sense of information, sort truth from fiction, and tell stories with authenticity and inspiration—all critical tasks in an information age. We prepare our graduates to find jobs and excel across many fields, and to be discriminating media consumers. We also prepare our graduates to think critically about media and their role in a democratic and diverse society. We believe that those who can collect information, filter it for accuracy and importance, and tell it well can change the world.

Master's Programs at a Glance

The Department of Journalism and Creative Media offers multiple **paths toward a master's in journalism**, each requiring 31 credit hours. Regardless of the path, students take an orientation to graduate school course, courses in mass communication theory and research, a history course, and a course in ethics and contemporary issues in journalism. Detailed information on the programs **appear later in this handbook**.

These paths include:

- Plan I: The thesis track, a scholarly focused program that requires students to create an original piece of research worth six credit hours, or complete comprehensive exams worth three credit hours. Graduates typically go into the journalism field, teach, or pursue a doctoral degree. Students typically complete the degree in four semesters, although it is possible to finish in three semesters.
- Plan II: The project track, which requires students to complete a substantial work of journalism or approved work worth three credit hours **or comprehensive exams**.

The project track provides either on-campus or distance learning offerings.

A. The [one-year focus in community journalism](#), an August-to-August track in which students create a news project while completing coursework during two semesters on campus. Students earn additional credit while working at a news organization between early May and late July. The track is designed for students seeking more journalism experience, and graduates from non-journalism fields who seek to gain practical skills in addition to higher-level thinking skills.

B. The [distance learning path](#), in which all classes are taken online and typically do not require students to be online at any specific time of day. Students range from well-established professionals seeking professional advancement or to teach at the college level, to recent graduates seeking to bolster their skills while working at their first job. Students complete their studies with a three-credit-hour journalistic project or a social-scientific project, or take comprehensive exams.

Admission Requirements

Students interested in joining the JCM master's program [must be admitted](#) into the Graduate School at The University of Alabama (visit [The Graduate School](#) website for admission requirements) as well as admitted to the department. Students can be admitted in the fall, spring or summer, but the community journalism pathway is only available with a fall start.

To be considered for *regular admission*, all students must have a minimum **grade point average of 3.0** during their higher education undergraduate career.

Students can be admitted with *permission to continue* status if their GPA scores do not meet minimum standards. Students admitted with this status must earn a 3.0 GPA in their first 12 hours in the program or are subject to removal from the program.

In addition to test scores, the JCM graduate committee considers **statements of purpose and three letters of recommendation** in determining admission into the program and research/teaching assistant funding. Students also are invited to submit examples of their journalistic work, or other writing or video work. It is recommended that documents are submitted as PDF, with links embedded as needed.

International applicants 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 meet these criteria may also be invited to participate in a videoconference with the college review committee.

Students can be removed if either their GPA or entrance exam scores do not meet minimum standards. Students admitted generally must earn a 3.0 GPA in their first 12 hours in the program to maintain admission.

Students transferring from another graduate program can have up to 12 hours accepted from their prior program for the M.A. degree, pending a curriculum review by the graduate coordinator. In addition, non-degree seeking students can enroll in M.A. classes, pending a review by the graduate coordinator. **Non-degree students must seek degree status in order to continue after taking 12 credit hours.**

Accelerated **Master's** Program

Through the [Accelerated Master's Program](#) (AMP), rising UA seniors who have demonstrated high performance can take courses that count simultaneously toward their undergraduate and graduate degrees. Once admitted, an AMP student can take up to 12 hours of courses that count toward both the **bachelor's and master's** degrees, which reduces the time it takes to earn a **master's** degree by one year. Interested students apply for the AMP program during their junior year and work with the graduate coordinator to create a plan of study to complete their

undergraduate degree during their first year as a graduate student. Applicants must have earned 90 or more credit hours by the Fall semester they start the AMP program and have a minimum GPA of 3.3.

Expedited Admission Track into the CIS Doctoral Program

The Expedited Admission Track into the CIS doctoral program allows highly qualified students who completed an undergraduate degree to join the doctoral program. Such students begin graduate coursework in the JCM **master's** program and complete their graduate degree as College-wide doctoral candidates, with a streamlined application process for admission or to transfer **master's** credit hours into the doctoral program. In short, if admitted on the expedited track, candidates will be able to count 24 hours of **master's** coursework, rather than the **usual maximum** of 12 hours, toward their doctoral degree. Students cannot simultaneously enroll in the AMP program and Expedited Admission Track. See the [C&IS Statement of Purpose Guidelines](#) for requirements.

Requirements

- Admission into the JCM **master's** program and the CIS doctoral program.
- Submit a statement of purpose indicating interest and commitment to graduate work through the doctoral level
- Upon completing 24 hours of graduate coursework at the **master's** level (18 hours of core classes, and two journalism classes), students must pass a comprehensive qualifying exam to continue toward the doctoral degree.

The University of Alabama Graduate School

The Graduate School offices are at 102 Rose Administration Building. To confirm compliance with UA's Graduate School, review and submit a copy of appropriate forms to the JCM graduate coordinator before submitting to the Graduate School. Students must file for graduation online through myBama. To locate other forms, log on to www.graduate.ua.edu, click on "Current Students," then "Academic Forms." Critical forms that should be submitted include, but are not limited to:

- Appointment/Change of **Master's** Thesis Committee Form
- Committee Acceptance Form for Electronic Thesis or Dissertation
- Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit
- Courses Drop/Add Form
- Approval of 400-Level Course Work for **Master's** Credit

In addition, please check the Graduate School website for deadlines for applying for graduation and submitting paperwork. The Graduate School staff closely monitors applications for admission into the program, graduation requirements, academic progress, academic warnings, in-progress grades, conditional admission, graduation exit requirements, transcripts and commencement information.

Students are responsible for [meeting deadlines](#).

Master's Program Overview

The Master of Journalism program is designed for aspiring students who wish to gain proficiency in the principles and practices of sound journalism and scholarly inquiry. We help motivated students transition from skills to an advanced understanding of the role of media within society, while becoming ethical and globally competent thought leaders in their future careers. Students who complete our program will be well-prepared for doctoral studies and to step into roles that will help them advance more easily into mid-level positions in their desired fields.

The Department of Journalism and Creative Media offers two plans of study.

- Plan I: Research track

The research track allows you to study and think critically about journalism from a variety of scholarly approaches. You will explore news and its role in society and its effects on audiences, factors that shape **journalists'** decisions, the history of journalism and the legal and ethical implications of journalism. This two-year option is highly customizable and allows for 12 hours of elective credit that can be taken across disciplines.

- Plan II: Project track

1. On-campus option: Our award-winning, one-year professional offering is designed to support community journalism by establishing trained professionals in the field. In this program, you will explore new ways to serve communities through evolving journalism practices and digital innovation. **The hands-on curriculum relies heavily on experiential learning, rather than a thesis. It includes a May-through-July internship at the University's Digital Media Center, which includes Alabama Public Radio and WVUA-23, a commercial television station in Tuscaloosa.**

2. Online option: A professional option is also available entirely online for students who wish to have flexibility to complete coursework around their everyday lives. Students can complete the program in as little as 18 months, taking both skills and conceptual courses that help students master knowledge about journalism and media.

Program Objectives

After completion of JCM's M.A. program, all graduates will:

- Have a comprehensive knowledge of industry and professional trends that shape contemporary practice in news media; of the social and psychological effects of news media; and an understanding of theories that help explain trends and their effects.
- Be proficient in research-driven critical thinking and problem solving by understanding ethical issues in media.
- Connect with top scholars and professionals who are experts in an evolving communication landscape.

- Gain expertise in journalistic skills and practices.

Choosing Faculty Advisers

The graduate coordinator serves as adviser to new students in the program. Plan I students must choose a permanent faculty adviser by the end of their first semester. Plan II students will be advised by the graduate coordinator until the completion of the program. The faculty adviser helps students determine their plan of study during the M.A. program.

Although the faculty adviser does not have to be chair of the **student's** capstone project, students are encouraged to pick an adviser with similar interests so they can easily transition into that role. Early in their studies, students are introduced to faculty to help facilitate the process of choosing a faculty adviser, and the graduate coordinator can provide assistance in choosing advisers.

Students must register for graduation before the deadline of the semester in which they expect to complete their degree. Information is available [online](#).

Degree Requirements: Plan I

Students who choose Plan I work with a faculty adviser to complete the M.A. degree. Plan I students who start in a fall semester should complete the degree by the fall semester or spring semester of their second year. The degree takes 31 hours to complete.

Required Courses

- JCM 500 Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)
- MC 550 Sem in Comm Methods (3 credits) **OR CIS609 Humanistic Research Methods**
- MC 551 Sem in Comm Theory (3 credits) **OR CIS605 Cultural & Critical Theory**
- JCM 563 History of Journalism and Media (3 credits)
- JCM 562 Contemporary Issues (3 credits) **OR JCM522 OR JCM520 OR MC526**
- Electives (12 credits, outside or inside the department, approved by adviser)
- JCM 599 Thesis Research (6 credits) or **JCM597** comprehensive exams (3 hours) and one ~~additional~~ **traditional** course

Recommended Sequence

Fall Semester, Year 1: 10 credits

- MC 550 Communication Research Methods (3 credits)
- MC 551 Seminar in Communication Theory (3 credits)
- JCM 563 History of Journalism and Media (3 credits)
- JCM 500 Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)

Spring Semester, Year 1: 9-12 credits

- JCM 562 Contemporary Issues in Journalism (3 credits)
- Elective (3 credits)
- Elective (3 credits)
- Elective (3 hours)

Fall Semester, Year 2: 6 credits

- Elective (3 hours)
- JCM 599 Thesis (3 hours) or elective if taking comprehensive exams

Spring Semester, Year 2: 6 credits

- Elective (3 hours)
- JCM 599 Thesis (3 hours) or JCM 597 comprehensive exams

Electives can be chosen from a variety of options:

- A graduate-level (500 or above) course in JCM or another department. Students who choose a course outside of the department or College must contact the instructor to ensure they can enroll in the course.
- An independent study with a faculty member: Students must sign up for three credit hours of JCM 590 with the supervising professor. A proposal must be submitted to the graduate coordinator detailing the purpose of the independent study.

Thesis

Students will work with their adviser to identify a gap in the scholarly research devoted to a topic in journalism and creative media. The student will conduct a review of related literature, and propose and execute original research that will answer the **student's** overarching research inquiry. Completing a thesis will be suggested to students who are looking to pursue a doctorate. The thesis can be completed no earlier than the second year of a **student's** program. Students will enroll for six hours in JCM 599, as part of that process.

Committee: Students must form a committee of two JCM faculty members and one faculty member outside of JCM. Students are encouraged to have their faculty adviser serve as thesis chair. The thesis chair must be a tenured or tenure-track professor with associate or full graduate faculty status.

Proposal: Students must submit a proposal detailing (1) a specification of the topic and its significance, (2) a review of relevant literature, along with proposed research questions and/or hypotheses, (3) a proposed methodology and (4) a calendar for projected completion. The committee must approve the proposal before the student can proceed with the project.

Final Report: The final thesis must include (1) a specification of the topic and its significance, (2) a review of relevant literature, along with proposed research questions and/or hypotheses, (3) a detailed methodology, (4) an analysis of the results, and (5) a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the results. The final report must be submitted to the committee at least two weeks before the oral defense.

Oral Defense: Students will defend their final thesis to their committee for approval. It is the **student's** responsibility to notify the Graduate School of their defense by submitting the final thesis and the relevant paperwork before the deadlines set by the Graduate School. Defenses are open to all faculty members in the department. Students must be enrolled in JCM 599 during the semester they defend their thesis.

Comprehensive exam

Instead of creating a thesis, approved students can instead take comprehensive exams by enrolling in JCM 597 (three hours) during their final semester, and a three-hour approved elective, to reach the required 31 hours for a degree. Students must have completed their five core courses (JCM 500, JCM 562, JCM 563, MC 550, MC 551) before taking JCM 597.

Each student is tested over the program's four core knowledge areas (theory, methods, contemporary issues, history) via four essay questions. The questions are written by professors who teach the program's core courses. The JCM 597 instructor will coordinate and collect the questions.

Comprehensive exam procedure

- Students are assigned a reading list in the JCM 597 course, with due dates throughout the semester.
- Students must take the written exam by week 11 of the semester (no later than three full weeks before the deadline for submitting examination results to the Graduate School) in order to graduate that semester.
- Students will have 48 hours to complete **all** the exam questions, with an open-book format. Test questions must be rewritten at least once a year.
- The examination committee will determine whether the student has passed, must perform additional work to demonstrate competency in one or more areas of the examination, or has failed the examination. This determination will be made within one week (seven days) of completion of the exam. When additional work is required, the examining committee may choose to administer another oral examination within the same semester. In the case of a clear failure, re-examination must take place after six months and before twelve months have elapsed. Each of the four portions of the preliminary examination may be taken only twice. The examining committee will rule either pass or fail on the second examination.

Degree Requirements: Plan II On Campus

This one-year M.A. is designed to provide a general understanding of newsgathering and storytelling in community journalism. The general program requires:

- Completion of a specific 31-hour program of graduate courses (detailed below)
- Completion of a **master's** project in JCM 597
- Successful achievement within the internship at **UA's Digital Media Center (WVUA, APR)**.

Courses and Requirements

Fall Semester: 13 credits

- JCM 500: Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)
- JCM 501: Media Production Tools (3 credits)
- JCM 511: Depth Reporting (3 credits)
- JCM 552: Journalism Theory and Research (3 credits)
- JCM 563: History of Journalism & Media (3 credits)

Spring Semester: 14 credits

- JCM 502: Producing Community Journalism (3 credits)
- JCM 553: Making Media Innovation (3 credits)
- JCM 562: Contemporary Issues in Journalism (3 credits)
- General Elective (3 credits) or broadcast-focused class
- JCM 597: Research Project (2 credits)

Interim Session: 2 credits

- JCM 571: Practice of Community Journalism (1 credit) (internship)
- JCM 597: Research Project (1 credit – completion of spring JCM 597 course)

Summer Session: 3 credits

JCM 572: Seminar in Professional Journalism (internship)

Degree Requirements: Plan II Distance

The online Master of Arts in Journalism requires 31 credit hours of coursework. Students complete a professional project (or take comprehensive exams) in lieu of a thesis. **Students have six years to complete the program once they are admitted. They typically take two or three courses per semester to reach the required 31 credit hours, depending on the flexibility of the student's schedule and the availability of courses.**

Required Courses (13 credits)

JCM 500: Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)
JCM 562: Contemporary Issues in Journalism (3 credits)
JCM 563: History of Journalism & The First Amendment (3 credits)
MC 550: Communication Research Methods (3 credits)
MC 551: Seminar in Communication Theory (3 credits)

Cognate Electives (15 hours)

Students can specialize in areas such as writing and reporting, digital media and information, entrepreneurialism and management, and social science and research for journalism. **Students may also take courses outside the department with advisor approval.** Some three-credit elective courses include:

JCM 501: Digital Media Production Tools
JCM 517: Advanced Sports Writing
JCM 533: Seminar in Emerging Media
JCM 545: Feature Writing in the Digital Age
JCM 544: Data Journalism
JCM 555: Entrepreneurial Journalism
MC 501: Mass Media Law
MC 513: Communication and Diversity
MC 517: Public Opinion

Professional Project (3 hours)

Students enroll during their final semester in the program. Required courses must be completed before enrolling.

JCM 597: Master's Project or Comprehensive Exam.

Capstone Project or Comprehensive Exam

A Capstone project or a comprehensive exam is required for distance learning students.

Capstone Project

The project option is competitive. Students wishing to pursue a project option must formally **submit a brief proposal for the project to the student's M.A. committee before the end of the first week of the student's final semester. Students will be notified about acceptance during the second week.** Detailed instructions for the proposal can be found on the program website.

The students' master's committees, each of which consists of the JCM 597 instructor and one other faculty member (see committee details below), will collectively review proposals and approve no more than five M.A. projects each semester –i.e., the five projects that are judged to be the best will be selected each semester. Judgment criteria include relevance, importance, coherence, thoroughness, creativity, practicability and writing quality.

Students who are not approved for the project option must pursue the comprehensive exam option.

About the project

The M.A. project may focus on a media work (e.g., an in-depth journalistic report, a documentary, etc.); a media innovation (e.g., an online entrepreneurial media product or app); or a scholarly research study (in the social sciences or the humanities).

The project is not a fully completed work, but instead consists of the following three **components**: (1) a detailed plan for carrying out a completed work; (2) a “prototype” or “pilot” of the work; and (3) a conceptual paper in which the student reflects on the project.

Here are details about each component:

1. A detailed plan (due week 6): In this component, students provide a rationale for the project that includes evidence that demonstrates a need, and a description of how the full project will be completed. For journalistic works, students provide background on the issue, statistics and other evidence that show it is a socially important issue, information about previous journalistic reporting on the issue, and details about how the piece will be reported. For research studies, students produce a literature review, theoretical explanation, and a methodology section. For media innovations or entrepreneurial works, students provide a brief explanation of the innovation, and a business plan, including mission and goals, audience/market analysis, and revenue plans. Students receive feedback that may inform their project moving forward.
2. Prototype/pilot of the finished product (due week 10). In this component, students produce an example of the completed work. For a journalistic work, this is a substantial reported and sourced overview that introduces what would be a more involved journalistic work. For an **entrepreneurial project, this is a “minimum viable product,”** such as a skeletal version of a website or app. For a research project, this would be a pilot study (including an IRB application, **if necessary**). **The student's committee will provide guidance about the nature of the prototype.**
3. Reflection paper (due week 12). Students write a six-page conceptual paper that draws implications about the project from the perspective of two of the four core knowledge areas of the program (theory, methods, history, issues/ethics). This paper includes citations and demonstrates understanding of, and an ability to think critically about, these perspectives.

To graduate the same semester, each student must orally defend their projects to their two-person committee no later than week 12 of the semester (no later than two full weeks before the last day to submit examination results to the Graduate School). The defense serves as an **examination of the student's work. The defense will be held via video conferencing software or in person.** A phone conference is acceptable only if there are technological barriers.

Project committee

Each student pursuing a project will have a committee of two graduate faculty: (1) the JCM 597 class instructor and (2) a second faculty member. The JCM 597 instructor serves as the committee chair and must be a full or associate member of the **Department's graduate faculty.** The second committee member may be a temporary, associate or full member of the graduate faculty. The second member may come from outside the University, but in this case, must be appointed as temporary graduate faculty. The area of expertise of the second committee member **should be consistent with the student's project topic area.**

Committee responsibilities: In the case of project students, committee members provide feedback on the project proposal, feedback on student questions during the JCM 597 class, and feedback on the completed project. Committee members determine if the project proposal is accepted. Both attend the defense of the project and determine if the project and defense demonstrate competency.

Each student pursuing comprehensive examinations must have a committee of four graduate faculty from the JCM Department. The JCM 597 instructor serves as a member of the committee and chairs the committee.

Committee members for students pursuing examinations help organize the reading list for JCM 597, attend the oral examination, and render a judgment on the acceptability of written and oral responses.

Preparing students

- Students will be fully informed about the M.A. project and comprehensive exam options in JCM 500 Orientation to Grad Studies.
- The department website provides full details about projects and comps options, including models of hypothetical projects or past projects, and the project proposal form will be online.
- In the JCM 500 (Orientation to Graduate Studies) course, students will be introduced to the **department's graduate faculty, their backgrounds, interests and areas of expertise, via videos, lists of scholarly works, and a project that requires interaction through phone or email.** These will inform students' **decisions about their master's committees.**

- Students interested in the project option should reflect on possible project ideas in their classes throughout the program, and consult with their adviser and other faculty members about possibilities. Students must make a choice before the start of their final semester.
- Students and their faculty advisers should keep in touch. If advisers have not heard from their students, they will contact students during their next-to-last semester to discuss their choices about projects/comps and committee members. Students are responsible for knowing the requirements and deadlines.

Distance students not approved for the project option must pursue the comprehensive exam option.

Comprehensive exam

Instead of creating a project, approved students take comprehensive exams by enrolling in JCM 597 (three hours) during their final semester. Students must have completed their five core courses (JCM 500, JCM 562, JCM 563, MC 550, MC 551) before taking JCM 597.

Each student is tested over the program's four core knowledge areas (theory, methods, contemporary issues, history) via four essay questions. The questions are written by professors who teach the program's core courses. The JCM 597 instructor will coordinate and collect the questions.

Comprehensive exam procedure

- Students are assigned a reading list in the JCM 597 course, with due dates throughout the semester.
- Students must take the written exam by week 11 of the semester (no later than three full weeks before the deadline for submitting examination results to the Graduate School) in order to graduate that semester.
- Students will have 48 hours to complete the exam questions, with an open-book format.
- Test questions must be rewritten at least once a year.
- The examination committee will determine whether the student has passed, must perform additional work to demonstrate competency in one or more areas of the examination, or has failed the examination. This determination will be made within one week (seven days) of completion of the exam. When additional work is required, the examining committee may choose to administer another oral examination within the same semester. In the case of a clear failure, re-examination must take place after six months and before twelve months have elapsed. Each of the four portions of the preliminary examination may be taken only twice. The examining committee will rule either pass or fail on the second examination.

Assistantships and Financial Aid

JCM offers several graduate assistantships for exceptional students that are admitted into the program. Graduate assistants are usually assigned to support faculty through teaching, research or administrative responsibilities. These assistantships are nine-month appointments (August – May) that can be renewable for the following academic year, pending a performance review and satisfactory academic progress (at least a 3.0 GPA for earned credit hours). Departmental assistantships are typically 0.25 FTE (10 hours a week of work).

Types of Graduate Assistantships

While some assistantships may be offered that are unique to the department, students are typically assigned to one of three assistantships, based on departmental needs and student talents:

- *Administrative Assistants:* Usually one or two assistants with design experience assist faculty with a variety of administrative-related tasks for 10 hours per week, as part of the Alabama Scholastic Press Association organization, which is housed in JCM.
- *Research Assistants:* GRA assistants assist faculty with a variety of research and professional development-related tasks for 10 hours per week
- *Teaching Assistants:* GTAs generally assist faculty with large lecture classes for 10 hours per week. Graduate students with professional journalism experience may be asked to teach sections of JCM 303 (News Writing and Reporting), or another writing-intensive class.

External Assistantships and Financial Aid

In addition to the assistantships offered by the department, students can pursue other assistantships within the University. Students who have received a departmental assistantship can accept another assistantship, as long as their total FTE does not exceed 0.5 (check with the graduate coordinator for approval).

Exceptional students may be nominated for [University-wide scholarships and fellowships](#). Multiple journalism students have won Graduate Council Fellowships and (in-state) National Alumni Association fellowships, which provide full tuition and five-figure stipends.

The application for student loans is available online (www.fafsa.ed.gov) or through the UA Office of Student Financial Aid. <http://financialaid.ua.edu/>.

University Policies and Procedures

Academic Integrity Statement

All students in attendance at The University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University of Alabama expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct by students includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. The Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy will be followed in the event of academic misconduct. The full Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Code is at <https://provost.ua.edu/academic-misconduct.html>. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to each of the following acts when performed in any type of academic or academically related matter, exercise or activity.

- a) Cheating--using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids or computer-related information.
- b) Plagiarism--representing the words, data, pictures, figures, works, ideas, computer program or output, or anything not generated in an authorized fashion, as one's own. Students agree that their enrollment in this course allows the instructor the right to use electronic devices to help prevent plagiarism. All course materials are subject to submission to Turnitin.com for the purpose of detecting textual similarities.
- c) Fabrication--presenting as genuine any invented or falsified citation or material.
- d) Misrepresentation--falsifying, altering, or misstating the contents of documents or other materials related to academic matters, including schedules, prerequisites and transcripts.

Equal Opportunity Policy Statement

UA provides equal opportunity in education and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, age, genetic or family medical history information, disability, protected veteran status or any other legally protected basis. UA makes employment decisions based only on valid job-related requirements. UA does not discriminate on the basis of a physical or mental disability or an **individual's** status as a disabled veteran or any other protected veteran with regard to application for employment and any terms and conditions of employment, provided the individual is qualified, with or without reasonable accommodations, to perform the essential functions of the job.

UAct: Ethical Community Statement

The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website (<http://www.ua.edu/uact>) provides a list of reporting channels that can be used to report incidences of illegal discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, sexual violence, retaliation, threat assessment or fraud.

Code of Student Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct requires that students behave in a manner that is conducive to a teaching/learning environment. Students who engage in behavior that is disruptive or obstructive to the teaching/learning environment will be subject to disciplinary sanctions outlined by the Code of Student Conduct. Disruptive/obstructive behavior is not limited to but may include the following: physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, stalking, intimidation, harassment, hazing, possession of controlled substances and possession of alcoholic beverages. In addition, inappropriate use of electronic devices during class is strictly prohibited. Moreover, behavior exhibiting general inattentiveness (texting, reading the newspaper, excessive talking, etc.) to class discussions will not be tolerated.

Severe Weather Protocol

In the case of a tornado warning (tornado has been sighted or detected by radar; sirens activated), all university activities are automatically suspended, including all classes and laboratories. When West Alabama is under a severe weather advisory, conditions can change rapidly. It is imperative to get to where you can receive information from the National Weather Service to follow the instructions provided. Personal safety should dictate the actions that faculty, staff and students take. The Office of Public Relations will disseminate the latest information regarding conditions on campus in the following ways: (a) weather advisory posted on the UA homepage, (b) weather advisory sent out through email to faculty, staff and students, (c) weather advisory broadcast over WVUA at 90.7 FM, (d) weather advisory broadcast over Alabama Public Radio (WUAL) at 91.5 FM, and (e) weather advisory broadcast over WVUA-TV 23. The UA Office of Emergency Management provides more information at <https://ready.ua.edu/>.

University Resources

Career Center

The UA Career Center is an excellent resource for assistance with resume, job application, potential interview questions, dress attire, etiquette, career and recruitment events, and general questions about job placement in the work force. For further information on the UA Career Center, visit their website at <https://career.sa.ua.edu>.

Disability Services

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is 1000 Houser Hall, and is the central contact point for university students with disabilities. The goal of ODS is to ensure that university programs and services are accessible to qualified students with disabilities. ODS works to provide individualized academic accommodations and services, where necessary, while promoting student responsibility and self-advocacy. It is the **student's** responsibility to make known a need for academic accommodations and services by providing documentation of his or her disability to ODS and by formally requesting accommodations. For more information, contact ODS by phone (205-348-4285) or via <http://ods.ua.edu/>.

Graduate Student Services (GSS)

This office is located within the Office of Student Affairs. It acts as a centralized resource for student services at The University of Alabama. In cooperation with various university offices and organizations, GSS offers support and informational resources to address the unique needs of graduate and professional students. Also, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) is formed to further enhance the developmental opportunities that we offer to our graduate students. The GSA was created many years ago to be the governing organization for graduate students and will enable the GSA to fulfill its mission (<https://gsa.ua.edu>) .

Graduate Parent Support Program (GPS)

This office provides an innovative and accessible academic, social and emotional support system for graduate students who have children. Through their website, you will find campus and community resources, health and medical resources, local childcare and school options, a schedule of child-friendly events and activities and their sitters for service program (<https://graduate.ua.edu/current-students/graduate-parent-support>).

Student Services Center

The Student Services Center houses all basic student services, including admissions, transcripts, ACTION Card, parking, telecom, student receivables, financial aid, student employment, orientation, and testing (<http://tour.ua.edu/tourstops/stuserv.html>).

Student Health Center

The Student Health Center and Pharmacy provides health care and education to help students lead a healthier life. Walk-ins are encouraged for any non-emergent visits. However, you will need to make an appointment for the following issues: annual physicals, GYN examinations, prescription medication maintenance, chronic or on-going conditions, nutrition counseling, psychiatric services and allergy injections. In addition, you can inquire about student health insurance provided to graduate students (<http://cchs.ua.edu/shc/>).

UA Libraries

The University of Alabama Libraries (<http://www.lib.ua.edu>) support academic research and service programs with a variety of creative, innovative and practical resources designed to meet the needs of a growing, dynamic campus. UA Libraries are widely recognized for their innovative services and quality reference materials. Students and faculty can choose from a number of major facilities that provide the basis for students and faculty to conduct research and enhance their educational experience. UA Libraries' outstanding faculty and staff have received special recognition from campus groups and professional library organizations for their many accomplishments and innovative programs. UA Libraries house much of the reference materials of the university, and provide tremendous academic resources to the university as a whole.

Writing Center

The University Writing Center provides free one-on-one consultations for UA students in all disciplines. We help students build confidence as writers, revise drafts, and develop the skills necessary for long-term improvement. We offer feedback on any kind of writing, whether it is personal, professional, or academic. Students can bring their draft in at any stage in the process and get help with brainstorming, understanding an assignment, researching a topic, drafting, revising, working with sources, or improving their grammar & style. The Writing Center also provides consultations to help faculty members create effective writing assignments and incorporate writing instruction into their classes (<http://writingcenter.ua.edu/>).

Appendix A Suggested Timetables for Completion

Plan I: Thesis Option, two years

Fall Semester, Year 1

November Identify a faculty adviser and complete a plan of study

Spring Semester, Year 1

April Identify a thesis committee and have an initial meeting

Fall Semester, Year 2

August Submit paperwork for professional experience credit
September Submit a proposal for committee review and approval
Complete IRB proposal for submission

Spring Semester, Year 2

February/early March Submit final thesis for committee review and approval

Plan II: On-campus, one year

Fall Semester

Complete JCM 500, 501, 511, 552 and 563

Spring Semester

Complete JCM 502, 553, 562, 597 (two hours) and an elective.

Summer Semester

Complete JCM 597 (one hour), and internship courses 571 and 572

Plan II: Distance learning

Not every class is offered every semester, so students are urged to consult with their adviser for **the list of each semester's course offerings**. MC 500 is required to be taken in the first semester it is offered to a new student.

Required courses

It is important to finish prerequisites (JCM 500, 562, 563, MC 550, MC 551) as early as practicable, as they provide a foundation for the JCM 597 project course that is completed during the final semester. JCM 500 (orientation to grad studies), MC 550 (research methods) and MC 551 (theory) are foundational courses for students.

Cognate electives

Students have choices of courses in writing and reporting, digital media, entrepreneurialism and management, and social science and research methods. Not every course is taught every semester. Courses include:

JCM 502: Media Production Tools

JCM 517: Advanced Sports Writing & Reporting:

JCM 533: Journalism and Emergent Media

JCM 536: Teaching Journalism

JCM 545: Feature Writing in the Digital Age:

JCM 554: Entrepreneurial journalism

MC 513: Communication and Diversity

MC 517: Mass Communication and Public Opinion

Students can take 500-or 600-level [online courses outside](#) of the Department of Journalism and Creative Media with **permission of the student's academic adviser and course instructor**.

Students who seek to teach can take courses in Education courses, for example, and students with an entrepreneurial focus can take courses in marketing.

Final semester: Capstone Project or Comprehensive Exam

Students complete JCM 597 during the final semester. Students should contact the graduate adviser long before signing up. Students must be enrolled in JCM 597 the semester they graduate.

Students can take comprehensive exams instead of completing a project in order to earn JCM 597 credit hours.

JCM and Select Mass Communication Courses

JCM 500 (1 credit hour): *Orientation to Graduate Studies*: This course introduces students to graduate study and sets the stage for the remainder of their coursework. Students learn about research in journalism and mass communication, and they become familiar with the department **faculty's** interests and expertise. The course is also a place to share questions and concerns about the program.

JCM 501 (3) *Media Production Tools*: Instruction in and critical analysis of communication technologies used in the production of community journalism.

JCM 502 (3) *Producing Community Journalism*: This course focuses on gathering, writing, editing, and presenting of news and information across media platforms.

JCM 511 (3): *Depth Reporting*: This course entails reporting and writing in-depth news and feature stories for publication in print and online. Students learn advanced techniques in information gathering and non-fiction writing. Deadline reporting and writing skills are addressed, as well.

JCM 512 (3) *Seminar in American Cinema*: The analysis of American cinema--focusing on three critical methods: genre study, authorship (the auteur theory), and the star system.

JCM 517 (3) *Advanced Sports Writing & Reporting*: Advanced techniques in reporting and writing for sports media, as well as ethical and societal implications of sports journalism.
ONLINE ONLY

JCM 520 (3) *Media Effects*: Theoretical study of individual and societal effects of media, including the impact and influence on attitudes and cultural beliefs.

JCM 528 (3) *Editorial Analysis and Opinion*: The art and practice of writing editorials, columns and other persuasive forms for print and online.

JCM 533 (3) *Journalism and Emergent Media*: This course examines how emerging media have and are evolving the relationship between journalism/mass media and society. From primarily a social scientific perspective, this course addresses key theories and issues relevant to **journalism's** ongoing shift to the digital world. ONLINE ONLY

JCM 536 (3) *Teaching of Journalism*: This service learning course provides an overview of journalism and the process of producing school publications. The course focuses on hands-on

journalism projects that acquaint students with the software applications used to generate news products. Students also spend time in classrooms learning about school publications.

JCM 542 (3) *Advanced Magazine Writing*: This course focuses on writing and editing of long-form articles for publication in print and online depth magazines. Students learn advanced narrative non-fiction writing techniques and how to gather information for longer feature stories.

JCM 544 (3) *Data Journalism*: The course will teach students to tell stories using data and visualization techniques. The course will cover a variety of topics in pursuit of this goal, including data collection, data cleaning and manipulation, basic statistics, and data visualization.

JCM 545 (3) *Feature Writing in the Digital Age*: Advanced techniques in writing and editing feature articles for publication across media outlets. Students will learn nonfiction writing techniques and apply them to a variety of feature article forms, with an emphasis on storytelling for digital audiences. Students will study top-notch published work to observe these techniques in action, and then sharpen their own skills through several short and lengthier, in-depth feature articles. ONLINE ONLY.

JCM 548 (3) *News Analysis*: Historical and critical study of electronic-media news in the United States.

JCM 551 (3) *News Media Management*: Development of leadership skills for managing media organizations in the global environment. Students will analyze media industries and media data, review case studies and try to resolve media challenges. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the impact of a digitized media world.

MC 550 (3) *Research Methods*: A survey of qualitative and quantitative methods in communication research.

MC 551 (3) *Seminar in Communication Theory*: A study of the development of selected theories of communication as they pertain to interpersonal, public, and mass communication.

JCM 552 (3) *Journalism Theory and Research*: Exploration of theory and an overview of research approaches as they relate to the study of news media and their role in communities.

JCM 553 (3) *Making Media Innovation*: Covers the methods by which journalists and marketing professionals monitor the interests and activities of readers, viewers, and users of content.

JCM 555 (3) *Entrepreneurial Journalism*: Practices, ethics and theory of entrepreneurship in the journalism field.

JCM 561 *JCM Special Topics*: Course content varies to explore current topics relevant to journalism and creative media. Repeatable for up to 6 credits if the topics are different.

JCM 563 (3) *History of Journalism and Media*: This course focuses on the study of the origin and development of journalism, its major practices (e.g., news reporting), important ideas (e.g., objectivity), and the individuals who made notable contributions to the field. The history and philosophy of freedom of the press and the First Amendment receives particular attention.

JCM 571 (3) *Practice of Community Journalism*: An immersion in a community and in the news organization that covers it, and an introduction to the daily practice of professional journalism at the community level.

JCM 572 (3) *Seminar in Professional Journalism*: Studies in selected aspects of the practice of journalism. May be repeated.

JCM 573 (3) *Documenting Justice I*: Documenting Justice I is an interdisciplinary course in documentary filmmaking. Harnessing a variety of perspectives drawn from disciplines across the humanities, students use film to document and analyze the many dimensions of culture and social experience at issue when focusing on a story of justice or injustice in Alabama. The course involves study of documentary history and theory as well as the ethics of cinematic non-fiction.

JCM 574 (3): *Documenting Justice II*: Documenting Justice II is an interdisciplinary course in documentary filmmaking. Harnessing a variety of perspectives drawn from disciplines across the humanities, students use film to document and analyze the many dimensions of culture and social experience at issue when focusing on a story of justice or injustice in Alabama. The course involves study of documentary history and theory as well as the ethics of cinematic non-fiction.

JCM 575 (3): *Anatomy of a Trial I*: Anatomy of a Trial is an interdisciplinary service-learning course in narrative nonfiction, focusing on audio storytelling. Students learn to develop their own personal voice and style while also learning practical skills about the emerging podcast landscape. Students are introduced to professional audio techniques, including recording, editing and sound design. The course involves study of radio journalism history and theory as well as the ethics of narrative nonfiction.

JCM 576 (3) *Anatomy of a Trial II*: This is an interdisciplinary service-learning course in narrative nonfiction, focusing on audio storytelling. Students learn to develop their own personal voice and style while also learning practical skills about the emerging podcast landscape. Students are introduced to professional audio techniques, including recording, editing and sound design. The course involves study of radio journalism history and theory as well as the ethics of narrative nonfiction.

JCM 590 (1-3): *Directed Research in JCM*: Independent study as arranged.

JCM 597 (1-3) *Master's Project*: Students produce a professional-level project or complete **comprehensive exams**.

JCM 599 (1-6): *Thesis Research*: Students develop and complete independent research project under faculty supervision.