COMMUNICATION AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

The discipline of communication focuses on how humans use verbal and nonverbal messages to create meaning in various contexts (from two person groups to mass audiences) across cultures using a variety of channels and media. The discipline is especially interested in the impact of those messages on human behavior.

Communication as a discipline includes the study of communication in interpersonal relationships, groups, organizations, and across cultures; rhetorical theory and criticism; performance studies; argumentation and persuasion; technologically mediated communication; and popular culture.

Areas of Concentration in the Communication Discipline

The study of communication can focus on a wide array of sub-disciplines. While areas of emphasis differ from one educational institution school to another, some of the most common include:

- **Applied Communication:** The study of processes used to analyze communication needs of organizations and social interaction, including the design of training to improve communication between supervisors and employees.
- **Classroom and Training Communication:** The study of communication in the classroom and other pedagogical contexts.
- **Communication Theory:** The study of principles that account for the impact of communication in human social interaction.
- **Electronic Media:** The study of radio, television, media technology, and web design with streaming audio and video.
- **Family Communication:** The study of communication unique to family systems.
- **Gender Communication:** The study of gender and sex differences and similarities in communication and the unique characteristics of male-female communication.
- **Health Communication:** The study of communication as it relates to health professionals and health education, including the study of provider-client interaction as well as the diffusion of health information through public health campaigns.
- **International and Intercultural Communication:** The study of communication among individuals of different cultural backgrounds, including the study of similarities and differences across cultures.
- **Interpersonal Communication:** The study of communication behaviors in pairs and the impact it has on personal relationships.
- **Language and Social Interaction:** The study of the structure of verbal and nonverbal behaviors occurring in social interaction.

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Legal Communication: The study of the role of communication as it relates to the legal system.
Mass Communication and Media Literacy: The study of the uses, processes, and effects of mediated communication.
Mediation and Dispute Resolution: The study of understanding, management, and resolution of conflict within intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup situations.
Organizational Communication: The study of processes used to analyze communication needs of organizations and social interaction, including the design of training to improve communication between supervisors and employees.
Performance Studies: The study of how performer(s), text, audience, and context interact to create a performance.
Political Communication: The study of the role communication plays in political systems.
Public Address: The study of speakers and speeches, including the historical and social context of platforms, campaigns, and movements.
Public Relations: The study of the management of communication between an organization and its audiences.
Rhetorical Criticism: The study of principles that account for the impact of human communication between speaker and audience.
Risk and Crisis Communication: The study of how government agencies and organizations assess and manage risk and crisis situations, and how they communicate the nature of a crisis to stakeholders and members of the public.
Small Group Communication: The study of communication systems among three or more individuals who interact around a common purpose and who influence one another.
Visual Communication: The study of how visual data, such as architecture, photography, web, visual art, and the images of advertising, film, and television have an impact on audiences.