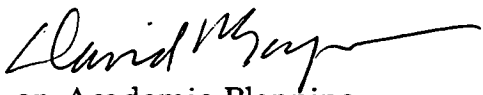


SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: D. Gagan, Chair 
Senate Committee on Academic Planning

Subject: School of Communication -
Graduate Curriculum Revisions

(SGSC Meeting Feb. 17, 1997)
(SCAP Reference: SCAP 97-13)

Date: March 14, 1997

Action undertaken by the Senate Graduate Studies Committee and the Senate Committee on Academic Planning gives rise to the following motion:

Motion:

"that Senate approve and recommend approval to the Board of Governors as set forth in S.97 - 35 , the curriculum revisions in the School of Communication."

**SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
CHANGES FOR 1997 - 1998 CALENDAR**

1. Replace the current calendar description of the field of communication studies (see page 283 of 1996/97 Calendar):

Present Calendar description:

The study of communication has recently emerged as an identified academic discipline. At the same time, a number of the traditional disciplines in the social sciences, the humanities, and the natural sciences employ communicational approaches in various areas. Communicational perspectives are also becoming prominent in the professions, notably in law, medicine, counseling, business, labor, education, trade, diplomacy, advertising, broadcasting, etc. As a social science, communication is distinctively trans-disciplinary.

The school has drawn on a number of perspectives, but is most readily distinguished by the fact that it treats communication as a humanistic social science, and is concerned with the contexts within which information, in all its diverse forms, is created, coded, communicated, and controlled. This approach provides students with wide opportunities to explore both communication theory and communication practice, as well as the relationship between the two. It encourages the concrete application of theory and research to modern society--its historical origins, its dominant values, its institutions and policies, its present structure, its current problems and its potential for change

The School of Communication offers graduate programs leading to an MA or PhD.

Rationale: This is a more tightly written and accurate description of the field and the perspectives reflected in the graduate program.

Proposed Calendar description:

Communication is a comparatively new discipline that builds on more traditional disciplines in the social sciences. It focuses on the analysis of the context and means in which information in all its diverse forms is created, packaged, circulated, interpreted, and controlled. As an applied science the study of communication has become important in the creation and critical evaluation of legal and public policies in broadcasting, telecommunications, and community and international development. The study of communication has also become prominent in the professions, notably in law, education, community medicine, counselling, and mental health, as well as in the fields of business administration, advertising, and broadcasting.

The School draws on a variety of perspectives, but it is most readily distinguished by the fact that it treats communication as a humanistic social science with both theoretical and applied dimensions. Students are given wide opportunities to explore communication theory and practice and are encouraged to apply research and theory to issues and problems in contemporary societies and cultures.

The School of Communication offers graduate programs leading to an MA degree or PhD degree.

2. In the list of Fields of Study and Research, change the line entry “Media analysis, popular culture, cultural policy” to two separate line entries: “Media and cultural studies” and “Cultural policy and cultural politics.” (see page 283)

Present Calendar description:

Fields of Study and Research

Present faculty resources provide for graduate studies in the following general areas of interest. Students may wish to specialize in one or more of these general areas, or to select related aspects from two or more.

Theoretical foundations in communication studies
Communication in history
Broadcasting and telecommunication regulation, policy and practice
Communication, development and environment
The information society/economy
Computer mediated networks and virtual environments
Publishing
International communication, inter-cultural communication
Science and technology policy, technology-transfer, communication of science
Media analysis, popular culture, cultural policy
Acoustic environments and communication
Management of technology
Telework, tele-learning, distance education
Political communication
Communication in conflict and intervention
Crisis/emergency communication

Proposed Calendar description:

Fields of Study and Research

Present faculty expertise provide for graduate studies in the following general areas of interest. Students may wish to specialize in one or more of these general areas, or to select related aspects from two or more.

Theoretical foundations in communication studies
Communication in history
Broadcasting and telecommunication regulation, policy and practice
Communication, development and environment
The information society/economy
Computer mediated networks and virtual environments
Publishing
International communication, inter-cultural communication
Science and technology policy, technology-transfer, communication of science
Media and cultural studies
Cultural policy and cultural politics
Acoustic environments and communication
Management of technology
Telework, tele-learning, distance education
Political communication
Communication in conflict and intervention
Crisis/emergency communication

Rationale: These are two related but analytically distinct aspects of the program.

3. With respect to the current list of Research and Training Facilities, add: Virtual Analysis Lab and the following changes:

Present Calendar description:

Research and Training Facilities

Sonic Research Studio and Soundscape Archives
Documentation Centre
Virtual Media Lab (network and multi-media studies)
Media Analysis Laboratory
Telematics Laboratory

Proposed Calendar description:

Research and Training Facilities

Sonic Research Studio and Soundscape Archives
Graduate Resource Centre
Interactive Media Lab (network and multi-media studies)
Media Analysis Laboratory
Telematics Laboratory

Rationale: Lab/Centre name has changed.

4. In the section on "Admission" under the MA Program, add to the list of what should be included with the application (see page 284):

Present Calendar description:

**MA Program
Admission**

All applications should be directed to the Graduate Studies Committee and, in addition to general university requirements, should include the following.

- a succinct statement of interests and goals, together with an account of relevant academic and personal background.
- two samples of scholarly and/or other written work relevant to the applicant's objectives. In addition, any tapes, films, etc. the applicant considers relevant.

Proposed Calendar description:

**MA Program
Admission**

All applications should be directed to the Graduate Studies Committee and, in addition to general university requirements, should include the following.

- a succinct statement of interests and goals, together with an account of relevant academic and personal background.
- two samples of scholarly and/or other written work relevant to the applicant's objectives. In addition, any tapes, films, etc. the applicant considers relevant.
- references from three persons, at least two of whom should be familiar with the applicant's academic work.

Rationale: References are currently required and should be reflected in the calendar description.

5. The final paragraph of the section on Admission to the MA Program currently reads as follows (see page 284):

Present Calendar description:

**MA Program
Admission**

In the Graduate General Regulations section, see 1.3.4. Admission under Special Arrangements, 1.3.5. Admission as a Qualifying Student and 1.3.6. Admission as a Special Student. Students will normally enter the program in the Fall semester. The annual deadline for applications is February 1. The committee will announce its decisions to applicants in April.

Proposed Calendar description:

**MA Program
Admission**

The annual deadline for applications is February 1. The committee will announce its decisions to applicants before the last week of April. Students will normally enter the program in the Fall semester.

Rationale: We already have a very large number of requests for admission as special or qualifying students and do not wish to encourage this trend. Other departments and schools do not draw attention to this option in their program descriptions, therefore we wish to drop this sentence. We recently moved up the deadline to Feb. 1 to enable the School's GSC to inform applicants of results in a timely manner so as to reduce the likelihood of losing good applicants offered admission elsewhere. The calendar should reflect the change in School policy.

- 6 . A further paragraph should follow the last paragraph in section on Admission to the MA Program. It would read as follows (see page 284):

Proposed Calendar description:

The School recognizes the special needs of individuals now working who wish to upgrade their qualifications. The graduate program in Communication has been approved for part-time students; however, University regulations require all MA students to complete their studies within twelve full-time equivalent semesters or six years, whichever is shorter.

Rationale: *We currently receive many enquiries concerning the possibility of part-time enrollment in the graduate program. This would help to clarify the situation. Something comparable appears in calendar entries for other programs approved for part-time study.*

- 7 . With regard to the section on Advising and Supervision under the MA Program, change on page 284:

Present Calendar description:

Advising and Supervision

Students are advised to read the Graduate General Regulations and the school's terms of reference for supervisory committee.

Proposed Calendar description:

Advising and Supervision

Each new student is assigned an interim advisor upon admission to the program. The student is expected to select a Senior Supervisor and in consultation with this faculty member to select one or two other faculty to serve on a Supervisory Committee by the beginning of the student's third semester. Although the GSC will endeavor to provide interim advisors with expertise in the student's stated area of research interest, there is no obligation to select the interim advisor as Senior Supervisor.

Rationale: *This statement is needed to clarify current practice since the introduction of interim advisors several years ago.*

8. With regard to Degree Requirements for the MA Program, change on page 284:

Present Calendar description:

Degree Requirements

Candidates for the Masters degree must normally satisfy the following:

- Course work consisting of at least six courses at the graduate level (normally completed before beginning a thesis, a project, or extended essays) which must include the following.
 - one of CMNS 800-5, 801-5 or 802-5
 - CMNS 860-2 (graduate colloquium)
- Four additional courses, at least two of which are to be selected from within the school and may include courses shown in the first point above. A maximum of two courses may be directed studies. No more than one course of directed studies or special topics may be completed with the same instructor except by permission of the Director of the School.
- an original thesis or
 - an original project which, because of content or method, does not conform to the usual definition of a thesis; or
- extended essays: at least two extended essays in the form of research papers to be submitted and defended orally. These papers will be bound and deposited in the University Library. Procedures used in the supervision and examination of extended essays are the same as those used for theses.
- supervision
 - a supervisory committee should be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee at the beginning of the third semester.
- formal review: graduate degree candidates will have an annual formal review of their academic progress by the Graduate Studies Committee.

Proposed Calendar description:

Degree Requirements

Graduate courses are organized into six groups. Group 1 contains survey courses that define and map the field in addition to exposing students to faculty interests and programs of research. Group 2 contains courses in research methods and methodology designed to help students with research projects in the field. Group 3 contains courses in the various research areas available in the School. Group 4 courses provide the opportunities for students to do fieldwork or to work and study in a professional setting. Group 5 courses allow students the opportunity to carry out research and/or reading under the direct supervision of a faculty member. Group 6 refers to the course designations for work on theses, projects, extended essays, or dissertations in process, for colloquia where students present such work, and for comprehensive examinations.

Candidates for the Masters degree must normally satisfy the following:

Course Work

At least six courses at the graduate level (normally completed before beginning a thesis, a project, or two extended essays) which must include the following.

- one course from Group 1
- one course from Group 2
- CMNS 860-2 (graduate colloquium)
- three additional courses at least one of which is to be selected from within the School and may include other courses from Groups 1 and 2. A maximum of two courses may be taken from Groups 4 and 5. No more than one Group 4 or 5 course may be taken with the same instructor, except by permission of the Graduate Studies Committee.
- an original thesis or
 - an original project which, because of content or method, does not conform to the usual definition of a thesis; or
- extended essays: at least two extended essays in the form of research papers to be submitted and defended orally. These papers will be bound and deposited in the University Library. Procedures used in the supervision and examination of extended essays are the same as those used for theses.
- supervision
 - a supervisory committee should be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee at the beginning of the third semester.
- formal review: graduate degree candidates will have an annual formal review of their academic progress by the Graduate Studies Committee.

Group 1 Courses: Surveys of History and Theory
CMNS 800-5, 802-5, 804-5

Group 2 Courses: Research Design and Methods
CMNS 801-5, 805-5

Group 3 Courses: Research Area Courses
CMNS 815-5, 830-5, 840-5, 845-5, 855-5, 856-5, 859-5,
870-5, 871-4, 872-4

Group 4 Courses: Research Internship and Fieldwork
CMNS 881-5, 882-5

Group 5 Courses: Directed Readings and Studies
CMNS 850-5, 851-5, 880-5

**Group 6 Courses: Colloquia, Theses and
Comprehensives**
CMNS 860-2, 895, 898, 899

***Rationale:** The new text reflects a new way of thinking about the grouping of courses and strengthens requirements to ensure MA candidates take at least one course in research design and methods.*

9 . With regard to the text on the PhD program, the two sections entitled “Critical Analysis of Media” and “Social Implications of Communications” should be deleted as well as the final words of the introductory paragraph which reads: “among which are two foci.”(see page 284)

Present Calendar description:

PhD Program

The school will offer PhD students the opportunity to choose from the fields of study and research listed above in context with faculty interests, among which are two foci:

Proposed Calendar description:

PhD Program

The school will offer PhD students the opportunity to choose from the fields of study and research listed above under Faculty and Areas of Research and Fields of Study and Research (see page 283).

Critical Analysis of Media

Delete

The nature, role, import, and function of mass media constitute essential concerns of the critical analysis area of communication studies. From a social scientific perspective, critical analysis explores relationships between mass media and larger sociocultural, behavioral, political, and economic systems. From a technical perspective, the media are analyzed in terms of actual practice; that is, how technology operates and is utilized to particular ends. Both areas provide a comprehensive and detailed description of the processes, and a conceptual framework for analysis of contemporary mass media.

Social Implications of Communications

Delete

The major areas of study in this field are communications policy, regulatory issues, and the social consequences of information technologies ("the information society").

The study of communication policy encompasses broadcasting, film and telecommunication. The emphasis is on the institutional, social, economic, and political factors that shape the specific policies applied in each area. Regulation of media, and the application of new technologies to cultural development, or for service to rural or remote areas, in a focus of concern.

Delete

The study of information technology from a social scientific perspective is concerned with: the social context in which communication and information technology are being developed; what the technology is, what it does, what resources it requires, how it meshes and conflicts with existing social structures, and how it changes and is changed by those same structures. The relation between a society, the social goals of its members, and its media of communication is the primary theoretical focus of this area.

Delete

Rationale: *The doctoral program has evolved to encompass faculty teaching and student research across a wider set of faculty interests without confinement to the two areas emphasized by the calendar text.*

10. Under the category "Admission" to the PhD program, the fourth item applicants are asked to provide reads as follows (see page 284):

Present Calendar description:

Proposed Calendar description:

Admission

- the names of three persons qualified to assess the student's potential; (at least two should be from academic sources).

Admission

- references from three persons, (at least two of whom should be familiar with the applicant's academic work).

Rationale: *This is a more accurate description of current requirements.*

11. The final paragraph under “Admission” to the PhD program reads as follows (see page 284):

Present Calendar description:

Students will normally be expected to enter the program in the Fall semester. The annual deadline for applications is February 1. The committee will announce its decisions to applicants in April.

Proposed Calendar description:

Students will normally be expected to enter the program in the Fall semester. The annual deadline for applications is February 1. The committee will announce its decisions to applicants before the last week of April.

Rationale: This is in line with current School policy.

12. Under the section on “Degree Requirements” delete the section on the “Language Requirement” (see page 284).

Present Calendar description:

Language Requirement

To graduate with a PhD, students will normally be required to demonstrate a reading ability in one language other than English that is acceptable to the student’s Supervisory Committee. Ability is determined by a time-limited examination of the translation into English of a passage from an appropriate Communication document or text. A dictionary is permitted. A waiver of this requirement requires permission of the Graduate Studies Committee.

Proposed Calendar description:

Delete

Rationale: We have found that the majority of our students already speak two or more languages at a proficiency level we require. If additional linguistic expertise is required due to the nature of a student’s dissertation topic, the Student’s Supervisory Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee will determine appropriate strategies for acquiring increased proficiency (see the statement under “Course Work” below).

13. Change preliminary paragraph under “Course Work” to read as follows (see page 284):

Present Calendar description:

Course Work

• nine graduate courses (not including CMNS 860) are required for those entering with a Bachelors degree, or six graduate courses (not including CMNS 860) for students who have completed a Masters degree. A student’s Supervisory Committee may require additional courses relevant to the dissertation. These are normally completed before taking the Comprehensive Examination, or beginning a dissertation, and will include the following:

Proposed Calendar description:

Course Work

• Course work consisting of a minimum of nine courses at the graduate level for those students entering with a Bachelors degree (including CMNS 860-2) or five graduate courses for students who have completed a Masters degree. The Graduate Studies Committee may require additional courses depending upon a student’s background and dissertation project. These courses are normally completed before taking the Comprehensive Examinations, or beginning a dissertation, and will include the following:

Rationale: There is an inconsistency in the existing Calendar description of PhD course loads. The current description describes the requirement as nine courses for students entering with a Bachelors degree and six for students entering with a Masters degree, excluding the required two credit Colloquium courses for MA and PhD students. But further down under the list of courses, the totals include the Colloquium. In practice the School has always included the Colloquium in the totals of nine and six courses. Because we are making the PhD Colloquium optional (see below) the requirement drops to five courses for students entering with an MA. We have decided to leave the required course total at nine for students entering from a BA and will require them to take the Colloquium.

14. Under "Course Work" required to qualify for the PhD, the list of courses is changed as follows (see page 284):

Present Calendar description:

Course Work

- two of group I courses
- Research Methods (CMNS 805)
- PhD Colloquium (CMNS 885)
- For those entering with a Bachelors degree, five additional courses. At least three of these courses must be taken from courses offered by the school. For those entering with a Masters degree, they must take two additional courses. A maximum of two courses may be group V courses; and no more than one course of directed studies or selected topics may be taken with the same instructor except by permission of the Director of the School.
- Students will be required by the Communications Graduate Studies Committee to demonstrate adequate command of any language essential to the completion of their dissertation.

Proposed Calendar description:

Course Work

- two courses from Group 1
- one course from Group 2
- a minimum of two additional five-credit courses for students entering with a Master's degree at least one of which is to be selected from within the School and may include other courses from Groups 1 and 2. A minimum of five additional courses will be required of students admitted to the PhD Program who have not first obtained a Masters degree. CMNS 860-2, the Graduate Colloquium is required for students entering with a Bachelors degree and may be included as one of the six required courses. A minimum of four of these courses must be taken from course offerings within the School. For all students a maximum of 2 courses may be taken from Groups 4 and 5. No more than 2 of Group 4 or 5 course may be taken with the same instructor, except by permission of the Graduate Studies Committee.
- Students will be required by the Communication Graduate Studies Committee to demonstrate adequate command of any language deemed essential to the completion of their dissertations.

14 a).The list of course groupings is changed as follows (see page 284):

Group 1 Courses
CMNS 800, 801, 802

Group II Courses
CMNS 805 Research Methods

Group III Courses
CMNS 810, 815, 830, 840, 845, 856, 859, 882

Group IV Courses
CMNS 860, 885

Group V Courses
CMNS 850, 851, 855, 880, 881

Group VI Courses
CMNS 898, 899

Group 1 Courses: Surveys of History and Theory
CMNS 800-5, 802-5, 804-5

Group 2 Courses: Research Design and Methods
CMNS 801-5, 805-5

Group 3 Courses: Research Area Courses
CMNS 815-5, 830-5, 840-5, 845-5, 855-5, 856-5, 859-5, 870-5, 871-4, 872-4

Group 4 Courses: Research Internship and Fieldwork
CMNS 881-5, 882-5

Group 5 Courses: Directed Readings and Studies
CMNS 850-5, 851-5, 880-5

Group 6 Courses: Colloquia, Theses and Comprehensives
CMNS 860-2, 895, 898, 899

Rationale: The new text reflects the new groupings of courses. Students are still obliged to take 3 courses in theory and research methods. In Group 2 Students now have the option, however, of taking CMNS 801-5, Design and Methodology in Communication Research, or CMNS 805-5, Communication Research Methods and Techniques. Because the Colloquium is now being used to assist students to grasp the essentials of writing and defending a thesis, the School feels its no longer necessary for PhD students who already have had experience of writing and defending a Masters Thesis to take the course.

15. With reference to the section on “Advising and Supervision” under the PhD program, change on page 285:

Present Calendar description:

Students are advised to read section 6 of the *General Regulations* and the Communication Terms of reference for supervisory committees.

At the time of admission, in consultation with the graduate student, the Graduate Program Committee will appoint a senior supervisor. Upon his/her recommendation, a supervisory committee will be formed and approved no later than the end of the second semester in residence. This committee will normally consist of at least three faculty members, two of whom must be student's field of specialization (e.g., Sociology, Psychology, Linguistics). The committee's responsibilities are detailed in 6.4 of the *Graduate General Regulations*.

Students have the right to discuss their programs and their status with the Communications Graduate Studies at any stage. They also have the right to ask for a review of any recommendation or grade, and the right to appeal any decision of any committee, supervisor or faculty.

Rationale: The revised text reflects current policy in the School.

Proposed Calendar description:

Students are advised to read Section 6 of the *General Regulations* and School's *Guidelines for Supervisory Committees*.

Each new student is assigned an interim advisor upon admission to the program. The student is expected to select a Senior Supervisor and in consultation with this faculty member to select two or three other faculty to serve on a Supervisory Committee by the beginning of the student's third semester. Although the GSC will endeavor to select interim advisors with expertise in the student's stated area of research interest, there is no obligation to choose the interim advisor to be Senior Supervisor.

Students have the right to discuss their programs and their status with the Communications Graduate Studies at any stage. They also have the right to ask for a review of any recommendation or grade, and the right to appeal any decision of any committee, supervisor or faculty.

16. The following are proposed changes for “Graduate Courses” descriptions as listed on page 285:

Present Calendar description:

CMNS 801-5 Design and Methodology in Communication Research

Problems and methods of communication research. Theoretical assumptions of communication methodology. Examination of research studies and field studies as case study examples. Students may design a research project in a selected area.

CMNS 802-5 History of Communication Theory

An historical analysis of classic works in communication theory.

CMNS 810-5 Advanced Communication Theory

Seminar on contemporary theories of communication and review of applications

Rationale: The change in number is desirable to designate this course as one of the low even numbered survey courses of which every student must take at least one.

CMNS 830-5 Communication Media: Research and Development

An Analysis of specific problems centered on the sociological and politico-economic complexities associated with the rapid expansion of communications technologies and systems. Particular attention will be paid to the relation of communications policy to social and economic development in Canada and in the Third World countries.

Proposed Calendar description:

CMNS 801-5 Design and Methodology in Communication Research

An examination of problems, methods and theoretical assumptions in communication research using case studies of research design and methods. Students may design a research project and conduct a small pilot study in a selected area.

CMNS 802-5 History of Communication Theory

A survey of classic works, issues, and debates in communication theory.

CMNS 804-5 Seminar in Communication Theory

CMNS 830-5 Communication Media: Research and Theory

An analysis of recent research, issues, and debates centred on the social, cultural, and politico-economic dimensions of contemporary media and cultural industries in Canada and globally.

CMNS 855-5 Selected Topics
Concentrated studies in areas of specialization.

CMNS 855-5 Selected Topics in Communication Studies

Specialized one-time graduate course offerings on topics related to the current research of School faculty or visiting professors.

CMNS 860-2 Graduate Colloquium
Critical discussion of selected problems in communication. MA students must complete this course once before graduation; S/U standing only.

CMNS 860-2 Graduate Colloquium
Discussion of essentials of researching, writing, and defending a thesis. Presentation by students of thesis-related research plans or results, thesis architecture, or finished chapters for critical review by faculty and students. MA students must complete this course once before proceeding to a thesis defense. S/U standing only.

CMNS 885-2 PhD Colloquium

Delete

CMNS 895 Comprehensive Examination
Examination of three areas of which one must be on the theoretical or methodological framework/procedures indicated by the proposed dissertation. S/U standing only. The exam may be retaken once in the event of unsatisfactory performance.

***Rationale:** CMNS 895 Comprehensive Examination. This new number is to distinguish between students preparing for Comprehensive Exams, and students who have completed their exams. Both are currently registering under CMNS 899 (Thesis).*