

The Professional Project for the MMC

The capstone experience for Option B MMC graduates is the professional project that showcases what you have learned in the program.

Overview

MMC Option B requires 32 credits (typically 10 three-credit classes) and, at the end of the program, a two-credit professional project.

For the project, you identify a problem or ask an important question, solve the problem/find an answer, or complete a creative project. The project is practical, assisting students in their current position or enhancing their career aspirations.

The project must be written for a specific audience.

For advertising, marketing and public relations projects, the target audience is your client. For journalism projects, the audience is your readership – either the general public or a specific niche audience like that of a particular magazine. If your project is an educational project, your audience is those who will decide to offer the class and/or teach it. Some topics, such as social media, are technology-driven, but they are still directed to a specific audience or client.

The sequence of required courses gives you the tools you will need from start to finish. In MCOM 705: Introduction to the Masters in Mass Communication, you learn what others have done and begin to consider project topics. In MCOM 710: Cross-Platform Storytelling, you can develop a potential topic further.

In MCOM 786: Conducting Professional Research, you obtain additional useful skills. Then, toward the end of your program, you'll enroll for MCOM 788 — Masters Research Problem/Project credits and work on the project with your adviser until it's time to schedule a defense.

Five types of projects

Generally, projects fall into one of five main categories, but they all:

- Start with a question, a problem, something that needs to be done, something that could be done better, and so forth.
- Search for what others have written or done related to the topic or issue.
- Use some type of research (literature search, interviews, surveys, a focus group, etc.)
- Create a final “product” that explains how you answered the question, solved the problem, made something better, etc.

Type 1 = Project for the public sector

Laurel Meyenberg worked with Roxanne Lucchesi, SDSU advertising professor, on a project the South Dakota Department of Health (SDDOH) funded.

Laurel helped conduct and then report on a study of the attitudes and behavior of individuals who called the South Dakota Tobacco QuitLine. The SDDOH, then, used the results to assess its tobacco cessation efforts.

Type 2 = Project for a client or employer

Rachel Eggebo, supervisor of marketing/member relations for an electric and telephone cooperative, wanted to find out how members interpret social media efforts on behalf of the cooperative and to examine members' perceptions of the cooperative's website and their expectations for it.

She conducted a quantitative survey and qualitative focus group sessions of coop members to better understand their needs.

Type 3 = An education-related project

At the time of his hire, at age 24, James Curry was one of the youngest producers CNN had ever hired. He produces CNN International's flagship news program "CNN Newsroom," but he never took a producing class.

After finding out that few journalism schools offer a line producing class, including SDSU, he created one for his project, which includes a syllabus, textbook suggestions, and assignment details.

Note: Recently, we've steered some students away from this option because graduates designed classes that in the intervening years have not been taught. We prefer topics that are immediately useful.

Type 4 = A longform journalism project

Sometimes called narrative journalism or creative nonfiction, a print project may be a book, or an in-depth newspaper or magazine article. Longform broadcast journalism packages fit here as well.

Charles David Thompson, a long-time newspaper man and editor of the Georgia Southern alumni magazine, wanted to publish a book on the history of his church, which has interesting historical ties to that university.

After scouring through stacks of historical records and interviewing numerous sources, Thompson wrote one sample chapter, showed what the typeset book would look like, and outlined his plans to publish "A Charge to Keep: A History of Pittman Park United Methodist Church."

Kain Klinkhamer, an assistant principal at an international school in Cairo, Egypt, wanted to share his experience teaching overseas. For his project, Kain wrote a series of magazine articles, which he planned to market for publication.

Jamie Gebel researched and wrote a series of newspaper articles on the history of railroads in South Dakota.

Type 5 = A video/film project, website, etc.

Nicole Hussey wanted to offer a culturally aware perspective of stories in the mass media, so she created a web site, Thatcouldbe.com, for her project.

Nate Soules provided an improved web site for his clients for the Travel Advice Show in the Salt Lake City area. (Note that Nate's project also fits category 2, a project for a client.)

In "Telling the Good Stories of Rosebud: The Development of *Sicangu Scribe*," Viola Waln created a web site for Lakota journalists to tell their stories.

The oral defense

An oral defense is a standard part of graduate programs. When you finish your course-work and project, you and your adviser will schedule a two-hour oral defense before a committee (two SDSU MCOM faculty) and a Graduate Faculty representative outside the department whose role is as a "referee" and "quality control."

Some online students live close enough to Brookings for a face-to-face defense but for most this takes place via Skype with audio and video.

For the first hour, you'll present your project and answer questions about it. For the second hour, you'll answer questions about your coursework. A "pass" from the committee means you have completed your MMC degree!

After the defense, you'll submit the final version of your project and complete an exit survey.

Documents for the defense

The documents on the next three pages are samples of materials prepared for the defense. They include a plan of study assessment and forms that must be completed at the end of the defense.

**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL PLAN OF
STUDY ASSESSMENT**

The Final Oral Examination is Scheduled for: **Typical Student**

Date/Time/Place: **8/21/13; 1:00pm; SYE 226**

Degree: **Master of Mass Communication**

Degree Program Major: **Mass Communication**

Bachelor's Degree Earned: **BA, BS, Arizona State, 1995**

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE:

Committee Chair: **Dr. Lyle Olson**

Committee Member: **Dr. Mary Arnold**

Graduate Faculty Representative: **Dr. Linda Burdette**

DEPT	CRN	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT	GRADE	YEAR
<u>MAJOR:</u>					
MCOM	786	CONDUCTING PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH	3	A	SP 12
MCOM	710	CROSS PLATFORM STORYTELLING	3	A	SP 12
MCOM	692	TP-VIDEO PRODUCTION	3	A	SU 12
MCOM	617	HISTORY OF JOURNALISM	3	A	SU 12
MCOM	705	INTRO TO MASTER OF MASS COMM	3	A	FA 12
MCOM	692	TP-PROFESSIONAL WRITING	3	A	FA 12
MCOM	746	CROSS-PLATFORM CAMPAIGNS	3	A	SP 13
MCOM	653	TEACHING METHODS	3	A	SP 13
MCOM	574	MEDIA ADMIN & MANAGEMENT	3	A	SU 13
MCOM	730	MEDIA LAW CASE STUDIES	3	A	SU 13
MCOM	788	RESEARCH	1	S	SU 13
MCOM	788	RESEARCH	1	--	-----

STUDENT: You have only registered for 1 credit of MCOM 788 and 2 are required for program completion. Make sure to register for 1 credit for MCOM 788 during Fall 2013.

ADVISOR/STUDENT PLEASE NOTE: **No further notices will be sent.** It is your responsibility to be sure everything pointed out on this form has been dealt with and corrected or clarified prior to **December 23, 2013**, when degree verification for graduation begins. Failure to do so will remove student's name from the graduation list and a new graduation application will be needed for a subsequent semester

ATTENTION STUDENT/ADVISOR—TO BE CERTIFIED FOR FALL 2013 GRADUATION:

1. Submit a Graduation Application to the Graduate School prior to **SEPTEMBER 13, 2013.**
2. Submit your final, corrected thesis/dissertation to the Graduate School prior to **DECEMBER 2, 2013.** Format check should be done prior to this date (design papers and DNP projects submitted to department).
3. Be sure all **PREVIOUS SEMESTER** incompletes listed on the Plan of Study are completed and a Change of Grade form submitted to the Registrar's Office by **December 23, 2013.**
4. Be sure all **CURRENT SEMESTER** coursework listed on the Plan of Study – including thesis/design paper/dissertation -- is graded by **December 23, 2013.**

GRADUATE SCHOOL

CERTIFICATION AND NOTIFICATION OF ACTION

STUDENT NAME: TYPICAL STUDENT	STUDENT NUMBER: 1111111
ADDRESS: ANY STREET, ANY CITY AND ZIP	DEGREE: MASTER OF MASS COMMUNICATION
MAJOR: COMMUNICATION STUDIES & JOURNALISM	EMPHASIS: SPECIALIZATION: JOURNALISM
UNDERGRAD DEGREE: BA, BS, ARIZONA STATE, 1995	DEGREE(S):

This is notification of the Advisory Committee's result of examinations listed below.

I. MASTERS DEGREE (Specify date(s) of exam(s))

1. Comprehensive Written Examination _____
2. Final Oral Examination _____
3. Other (Describe) _____
4. Result: Pass _____ Fail _____
 Comments (Basis for Action if Fail) _____

MMC Student Information

II. **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE (Specify dates) of exam(s)**

1. Interim Evaluation _____
2. Comprehensive Written Examination _____
3. Comprehensive Oral Examination _____
4. Final Oral Examination _____
5. Other (Describe) _____
6. Result: Pass _____ Fail _____
Comments (Basis for Action if Fail) _____

Major Advisor _____ Date _____ Date

Committee Member _____ Date _____ Date

Committee Member _____ Date _____ Graduate Faculty Representative
Date

Graduate School Dean _____ Date

(ADVISOR: Please send to the Graduate School within 48 hours of examination.)

South Dakota State University

Graduate School Graduate Faculty Representative Assignment

SAD 130, Box 2201
 Brookings, SD 57007
 (605) 688-4181

Return to Student Services Coordinator:
 Melissa.ochsner@sdsstate.edu

Please note: Graduate Faculty Representatives are now being assigned in accordance with our new process. This process assigns the GFR on a random basis without seeking initial approval from the faculty member. Should questions arise please review the [policy](#) and file a Request for Release if warranted.

Date:	November 8, 2013
Student:	[REDACTED]
Program:	MS Communication Studies & Journalism
Specialization:	Journalism

Listed below are the approved committee members for the above listed student.

Advisor:	Dr. Lyle Olson
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Committee Members:

Dr. Mary Arnold	

Graduate Faculty Representative Assignment

GFR:	Dr. Rebecca Randall – Assistant Professor of Undergraduate Nursing
Email:	Becky.Randall@sdsstate.edu
Phone:	(605) 688-4106

Student

³⁵₁₇ You should contact the Graduate Faculty Representative as soon as possible upon receiving this notification.

- o You should discuss your plans for upcoming committee meetings and exams.
- o You are responsible to ensure that the Graduate Faculty Representative, as any committee member, is available for all committee meetings.
- o Please give the GFR at least 30 days notice for any committee commitments.

CC:

Dr. Lyle Olson
Dr. Mary Arnold
Dr. Rebecca Randall
[REDACTED]