



Virginia State University
 Department of Mass Communications

MA in Media Management Curriculum Description

Revised October 8, 2018

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The MA Media Management program is designed to provide media professionals with the skills necessary to become managers in the industry. While the curriculum was written for that purpose, it also recognizes the needs of recent Mass Communications graduates who may be outstanding candidates for the program.

This degree prepares media managers to lead diverse teams of professionals in pursuit of a common goal, to hone skills in their area of specialization, to apply analytical and critical thinking skills to practical workplace situations, to be knowledgeable about economic, legal, and ethical issues in the communication field, to meet the technological challenges of media convergence, and to balance First Amendment freedoms with the inherent responsibilities of mass media operating in a democratic society.

Admission to the Program

1. The on-line application for graduate studies is found at:

<http://www.vsu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate-apply/index.php>

2. Undergraduate GPA of 2.750 or higher (4.0 scale)
3. Two samples of your media-related writing.
4. Three references from persons able to judge your ability to handle graduate-level studies.
5. The MA in Media Management does *not* require the Graduate Record Exam.
6. International Students must have a TOEFL band score of 5.0 or higher.
We also recognize the CEFR exam, and require a composite score of 5.0 B1 or higher.

Degree Audit / Progress Checklist

	<u>Semester Taken</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Master's Core Courses – 12 hours			
MCOM-500 – Academic Writing Workshop	_____	_____	3
MCOM-501 – Media Management and Leadership	_____	_____	3
MCOM-503 – Media Research Methods	_____	_____	3
MCOM-505 – Media Convergence	_____	_____	3
Professional Development Courses – 21 hours			
MCOM-606 – Entertainment Law (recommended)	_____	_____	3
MCOM-elective _____	_____	_____	3
MCOM-elective _____	_____	_____	3
MCOM-elective _____	_____	_____	3
MCOM-elective _____	_____	_____	3
MCOM-elective _____	_____	_____	3
MCOM-690 Readings and Research (taken semester before capstone)	_____	_____	3
Master's Capstone Course – 3 hours			
MCOM-699 – Thesis			
<i>or</i>			
MCOM-695 – Professional Project (with supporting academic paper)	_____	_____	3
<i>or</i>			
MCOM-696 – Comprehensive Exam			

Typical Program of Study

Students progress through our program in 36 semester hours – typically at least four semesters.

Students pursuing a master’s thesis often need at least one additional semester to fully complete the research, writing and thesis defense.

Most students start in the Fall Semester, which begins in mid-August. We also accept students to begin in January for the spring semester. Here is a typical program of study, assuming a beginning in the fall.

First academic year

Fall Semester

MCOM-500 Academic Writing Workshop	3
MCOM-501 Media Management & Leadership.....	3
MCOM-503 Media Research Methods.....	3

Spring Semester

MCOM-505 Media Convergence	3
MCOM – elective	3
MCOM – elective	3

Second academic year

Fall Semester

MCOM – elective	3
MCOM – elective	3
MCOM-690 Readings and Research in Media	3
(MCOM-690 is preparation for the Thesis or Project)	

Spring Semester

MCOM-606 Entertainment Law.....	3
MCOM – elective	3
MCOM-699 Master’s Thesis.....	3
or MCOM-695 Professional Project	
or MCOM-696 Comprehensive Exam	

Typical electives

Fall Semester

MCOM-504 Communication Theory	3
MCOM-522 History of Electronic Media	3
MCOM-532 Public Relations Campaigns	3
MCOM-533 Crisis Communication	3

Spring Semester

MCOM-523 Broadcast Management.....	3
MCOM-528 Children Adolescents & Media.....	3
MCOM-531 Contemporary Public Relations	3
MCOM-606 Entertainment Law.....	3

Any semester *after* first year – with prior approval of your written proposal

MCOM-675 Independent Study	3
MCOM-681 Graduate Internship in Media	3

Normal Class Load

Graduate-level studies require much more concentration and initiative from a student, compared to undergraduate courses. We *strongly recommend* that first-semester students take only the three core required courses in the first semester: MCOM-500, MCOM-501 and MCOM-503. After that, students who show sufficient academic strength at the graduate level may consider taking four courses in fall and spring terms. University policy limits graduate students to no more than four courses in a semester.

We do not normally offer classes in the summer, but if you want to do so, discuss this with your academic advisor. Special arrangements may be possible, if faculty are available.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

About two-thirds of our students complete the program in two calendar years (four semesters). But Thesis and Professional Project are both labor-intensive, and it is commonplace for a student to need more time to complete these capstone requirements. It's best to start early – one semester is not nearly enough to complete the Thesis or Professional Project.

Grades should be A's and B's. A student's cumulative grade point average should remain at 3.0 or higher. A graduate student is allowed no more than two C-level grades in a 36-hour program. Grades of D or F are not accepted for graduation requirements.

All degree requirements must be met within six calendar years of beginning the program.

Course Descriptions

The code F, Sp, Su means “may be offered Fall, Spring, Summer.”

Not all courses are offered every term.

Inactive courses are shown in gray. They appear at the end of the course descriptions.

MCOM-500 – Academic Writing Workshop

F, Sp, Su

A course designed to strengthen the writing and verbal skills of those students working toward a graduate degree in Media Management. Emphasis will be placed on following appropriate style guides, such as MLA, APA, and Associated Press. Students will be given various activities and writing assignments to aid in their verbal and written expression for academic and professional contexts.

MCOM 501 – Media Management and Leadership – 3 semester hours, F, Sp, Su (The full course title is: Media Management and Leadership in a Multicultural Society)

This seminar is designed to introduce students to the broad range of issues that face media managers. It specifically addresses management and leadership topics related to cultural diversity. The course will include introductory material on media economics, research, theory and criticism. It will also address current management issues and those related to emerging technologies.

MCOM 503 – Media Research Methods - 3 semester hours

F, Sp, Su

This seminar is an introduction to research for media professionals. Various methods of data collection -- including experiments, survey methods, qualitative research, historical and legal methodology -- will be introduced. Students will also learn to analyze and interpret the results of mass media research as well as develop their own media research proposals.

MCOM 504 – Communication Theory and Criticism, 3 semester hours

F, Sp, Su

This seminar is designed to investigate theoretical and critical approaches to the study of mass media. Students will explore theories about the impact of media on society as well as the variety of critical methodologies that can be used to address the relationship between media and culture.

MCOM 505 – Media Convergence, 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

This course examines global implications of media convergence, the challenges media outlets face in a converging media universe, new technologies in news gathering and news reporting and how they will affect audiences.

MCOM 506 – Media Law, 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

This course examines the various laws that affect media professions, including the First Amendment, the Freedom of Information Act, libel, copyright, privacy telecommunication regulations and obscenity laws. This course is designed to introduce students to legal concepts pertinent to the communication industries. It will investigate the dynamic nature of the First Amendment through the evaluation of precedence and legal proceedings.

MCOM 522 – History of Electronic Media. 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

A study of the history and technological advancements in electronic media in the United States.

MCOM 523 – Broadcast Management, 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

This course examines how media companies function today and provides a study of the concepts and principles of broadcast management.

MCOM-527 – Documentary Production, 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

This course is a hands-on workshop that takes advanced graduate students through the entire process of producing a short video documentary. It assumes previous training in video or film production. As students work through the preproduction, production and postproduction stages, they will explore topics such as budget development, topic research and fact checking, screenwriting, interview preparation, equipment requirements, and editing. The course will emphasize effective crew communication, teamwork, individual responsibility, and other intangibles that go into producing a documentary work.

Prerequisites: Graduate student status and previous coursework or training.

MCOM-528 – Children, Adolescents and the Media, 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

An introduction to the major debates and effects of the media on children and adolescents. It will also examine how various age groups process and make sense of media content. Students will discuss complex issues, theories and find solutions via research.

MCOM 531 – Contemporary Public Relations, 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

An overview of the practice of public relations, ethics of the public relations profession, and the history of public relations in the United States.

MCOM 532 – Public Relations Campaigns, 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

This seminar enables students to research and design complete public relations campaigns. Emphasis is on strategic planning based on research.

MCOM 533 – Crisis Communication, 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

This course examines case studies of organizations' communication needs and dilemmas in emergencies and crises. Students will look at the role of the public relations practitioner in preventing and managing such problems as scandals, natural disasters and negative public image. Students will examine case studies such as the Tylenol and Pepsi tampering cases and the Denny's and Texaco discrimination cases.

MCOM-606 – Entertainment Law – 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

Entertainment and popular culture are two major facets of Mass Communications. Students will examine the specialized legal and regulatory framework relevant to mass media entertainment, including legal regulation and limitations on content, intellectual property rights, talent contracts, and other related media law topics.

MCOM-670 Special Topics in Media – 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

This seminar allows an instructor to guide students through specific issues related to mass communications and media management. Can be repeated once for credit if the special topic has changed.

Prerequisite: Taken only by permission of the graduate program academic advisor.

MCOM-675 Independent Study in Media – 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

A media management student may work independently to investigate a problem or topic in his or her area of professional interest. The student must prepare a written proposal prior to taking the course, and a full and detailed academic paper is expected as the outcome.

Prerequisite: Taken only by permission of the graduate program academic advisor, and only if a supervising faculty member has agreed to supervise the work.

MCOM-681 Graduate Media Internship 1 – 3 semester hours**F, Sp, Su**

This is a placement in a professional setting for students to gain advanced-level experience in media production and management. An internship typically requires 120 contact hours on the job site. Students are expected to report weekly to the graduate academic advisor or graduate internship faculty person, detailing activities and accomplishments. The student will produce a professional portfolio documenting work samples and explaining what the student did to produce them. The job site supervisor will also evaluate the student's performance and recommend a grade for the course.

Prerequisites: Graduate status and permission of the Media Management academic advisor.

MCOM-690 Readings and Research in Media – 3 semester hours **F, Sp, Su**

Students preparing for either MCOM-699 Thesis or MCOM-696 Professional Project are strongly encouraged to conduct extensive readings of scholarly and professional literature in support of their capstone experience. The student will write and defend a formal research proposal. If the student is proposing to conduct research on human subjects, the research proposal must take the form of an Institutional Review Board proposal, which must be successfully defended and approved before the VSU IRB panel. This course is recommended for the semester *before* the thesis or professional project.

Prerequisite: Must have completed at least 18 hours in the graduate program.

MCOM-695 Professional Project – 3 semester hours **F, Sp, Su**

The professional project must be taken during the final semester. It includes an academic paper similar to a thesis, and the student also produces a significant creative work. It may consist of a film, video, screenplay or television script, a book, a major public relations campaign or press kit package, or an exhibition portfolio of photographs, audio or video productions or other project. Students who plan to do a professional project should begin planning **early** in the master's program. The project must be arranged in advance, incorporating the sponsorship of a faculty member with appropriate expertise to oversee the project, and with the permission of the master's program coordinator. The department will retain a copy of the project and supporting paper in its archives. Students doing a professional project should expect to defend it before a review committee. Students may not take both MCOM-695 Professional Project and MCOM-699 Master's Thesis.

Prerequisites: Must be enrolled for the final semester of master's studies.

MCOM-696 Comprehensive Exam – 3 semester hours **F, Sp, Su**

A closed-book essay exam, scheduled shortly after mid-term during the student's final semester. The exam will cover a broad spectrum of courses covered by the student, with special attention to the student's area of research and production.

Prerequisites: Must be enrolled for the final semester of master's studies.

MCOM-699 – Master's Thesis – 3 semester hours **F, Sp, Su**

Taken in final semester only. The thesis is a major research paper. Students anticipating doing a thesis should begin planning early, such as the first semester of the master's program. A thesis must be arranged in advance, incorporating the sponsorship of a faculty member with appropriate expertise to oversee the project, and with the permission of the master's program coordinator. Depending on the nature of the research, it may also need to go before the VSU Institutional Review Board during the semester before the student enrolls in MCOM-699 Master's Thesis. That means someone graduating in the spring semester needs IRB approval during the fall term before. The department will retain a copy of the thesis in its archives. Students doing a thesis will defend it before a committee of faculty members.

Prerequisites: Must be enrolled in MCOM-699 for the final semester of master's studies.

The courses listed on the following pages are not offered currently. They may become available in the future as faculty become available.

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MCOM 502 – Media Economics - 3 semester hours

F, Sp, Su

This seminar surveys the economic environment in which media operate and discusses the forces that shape media, market and consumer behavior. Topics covered will include the economic structure and performance of mass media industries; media ownership; impact of new technologies on the media industry and media firms; the use of economic analysis to explain/predict media and industry behaviors; and historical trends in competition, concentration and convergence.

MCOM 507 – Media Ethics, 3 semester hours

F, Sp, Su

This course investigates the conflicting responsibilities facing communication professionals. Using a case study approach, this course will focus on the craft of ethical decision-making within current media guidelines. Topics of discussion will include the historical roots of limitations on the media, changing social expectations for information dissemination, and editorial leadership. Cases involving conflicts of value in print, broadcasting, advertising, and public relations will be analyzed.

MCOM 508 – Process and Effects of Mass Communications, 3 semester hours

F, Sp, Su

A study of the major areas of mass communications research literature, emphasizing mass communications' effects on research.

MCOM 511 – History of Print Media and Technological Development, 3 sem. Hrs. F, Sp, Su

This course will survey the history of the American print media from the colonial era to the present. It will include key moments, movements and people, as well as the growth of African American and other minority-owned media organizations. The course will trace the history of media ownership, the advent of broadcasting and the growth of the internet.

MCOM 512 – International Journalism, 3 semester hours

F, Sp, Su

This course is a cross-cultural study of journalism and communication in the “global village.” It compares media practices in democracies and under state-run media. It will look at how the news media and communication professions are affected by technology such as the internet and satellite transmissions that allow the flow of uncensored information across national borders. It will look at the effects of the new “information world-order” on cultures, politics and economics.

MCOM 513 – Newspaper Management, 3 semester hours,

This course prepares students for future management positions with newspapers through the study of how newspapers function today and through the application of management principles.

MCOM 521 – Broadcast Journalism, 3 semester hours

F, Sp, Su

An overview of the broadcast media, with emphasis on news gathering, preparation, writing and delivery techniques, as well as the rules and regulations that apply to broadcast journalism.

MCOM-631 Public Relations and Media Events – 3 semester hours **F, Sp, Su**

This course pairs a student with one or more mentors, with the primary goal of planning and producing a significant media event for the public. Students will be expected to plan, refine and execute a treatment or proposal describing the event, including preparation of a detailed budget outlining income and expenses, staffing and crew, materials, furnishings and supplies, permissions and clearances, safety considerations, and an appropriate venue. This may be the preparation phase for the student's Professional Project

MCOM-682 Graduate Media Internship 2 – 3 semester hours **F, Sp, Su**

This entails the same requirements as the first internship (MCOM-681), but the student is expected to break new ground, assume a different set of responsibilities, or perform at significantly more advanced levels of responsibility compared to the first internship.

Prerequisite: Graduate status and permission of the Media Management academic advisor.