

**Undergraduate Academic Advising Syllabus**  
**School of Communication**  
**Western Michigan University**

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[www.wmich.edu/communication](http://www.wmich.edu/communication)

**Advising Hours:** by appointment & walk-in (see below)

*“Good advising  
may be the  
single most  
underestimated  
characteristic of  
a successful  
college  
experience.”*

*- Richard Light*

**Academic Advising**

Academic advising is an educational process that, by intention and design, facilitates students’ understanding of the meaning and purpose of higher education and fosters their intellectual and personal development toward academic success and lifelong learning (National Academic Advising Association, 2004)

**Advising Learning Outcomes for Students**

***Personal growth: Develop communication, decision-making, and problem-solving skills***

- ✚ Define your short-term and long-term goals after reflecting on your values, interests, strengths, and challenges
- ✚ Articulate your goals during advising sessions
- ✚ Describe the connection between your goals and your values, interests, strengths, and challenges
- ✚ Discuss problems you face by assessing what caused them, what can be done to resolve them, and how to avoid them in the future

***Resource identification: Develop skills in locating and effectively using information and resources that help you achieve your goals***

- ✚ Identify campus offices, Websites, faculty or staff that you can contact when you have problems
- ✚ Use information from university resources to assess progress towards achieving goals (e.g., major, minor, co-curricular planning guides, academic success one semester at a time, BroncoJobs, GoWMU, information from faculty and staff)

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**Curriculum integration: Understand the relationship between your classroom experiences and your academic, career, and personal goals**

- ✚ Explain how your major helps you achieve your goals
- ✚ Describe how general education requirements help you achieve your goals
- ✚ Schedule courses so you graduate in a timely manner based on your educational plan and your compact with Western Michigan University
- ✚ Connect your educational plan to your career goals
- ✚ Articulate personal strengths and weaknesses and be prepared for life after college

**Experiential learning: Understand the importance of including experiences outside of the classroom in your educational plan**

- ✚ Introduce yourself and have a conversation with at least one faculty member each year you are enrolled
- ✚ Participate in undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad, and/or internships
- ✚ Participate in student and professional organizations related to your career goals
- ✚ Discuss how participating in these activities helps you achieve your goals

**When should you have contact with your adviser?**

- ✚ If you are an athlete and need to do so to comply with NCAA requirements
- ✚ If you are a re-entry student and advising is required as part of your re-admission plan
- ✚ When you need to discuss possible majors or minors
- ✚ If you need help with your schedule for the up-coming semester
- ✚ When you need to complete your graduation audit
- ✚ If you have graduation audit questions
- ✚ When you need study abroad credits approved
- ✚ When you are finalizing internship details
- ✚ When you need a referral to university resources and offices
- ✚ When you have academic concerns or questions about university policies, procedures, and expectations
- ✚ When you need to declare your major and/or minor

*“Academic advising is the only structured activity on the campus in which all students have the opportunity for ongoing, one-to-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution.”*

*- Wes Habley,  
ACT*

**Which adviser should I see?**

Students in the College of Arts and Sciences have at least 3 advisers:

- ✚ A curriculum adviser, who assists you with general education requirements, completes your graduation pre-audit, writes up your Western Edge graduation

compact, and helps you with re-admission after academic dismissal. They are also able to interpret and answer questions regarding the “Progress toward Degree” program on GoWMU.

- ✚ Your major adviser(s) who assists you in planning your major courses, internships, independent studies, study abroad course approval and referrals to other campus resources. Your major adviser also helps you declare your major and provides basic advising and counseling. If you have multiple majors you will see each major adviser to coordinate the details of each major.
- ✚ Your minor adviser(s) who will help you plan your minor courses, help declare your minor, and provide information about internships and independent studies allowed in your minor.
- ✚ If you are a member of the Lee’s Honor’s College, you will have an Honor’s College adviser.
- ✚ If you are an intercollegiate athlete, you will have an Athletic Department adviser
- ✚ If you have self-identified with the university as having a disability, you will work with your adviser in Disabled Student Services and Resources for schedule planning and registration assistance.

### ***How should you contact your adviser in the School of Communication?***

#### **By scheduled appointment**

- ✚ When you need to spend some time with your adviser to discuss course scheduling, career plans, internships, study abroad
  - Appointments usually last 15 minutes
  - Appointments are scheduled in advance
  - You can schedule more than one appointment with your adviser if necessary

#### **Appointment etiquette**

##### **To schedule an appointment in the School of Communication:**

- ✚ Log on to: <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~kritzman>
- ✚ Click on “Schedule an advising appointment” on the left hand side of the page
- ✚ Follow the prompts and/or refer to the detailed scheduling information at the end of this document
- ✚ **The appointment scheduler takes you to the first available appointment.** During the busy times of registration the first appointment may be several days away. **Note the date of your appointment.**
- ✚ A reminder e-mail will be sent to your preferred email address 24 hours in advance

##### **Cancel your appointment if you can’t make it.**

- ✚ Log on to the School of Communication appointment scheduler and cancel your appointment.

- ✚ If you do not have your user name and I.D., call the School of Communication to cancel your appointment (269) 387-3130.
- ✚ Make your appointment well in advance of your first day to register

### **Prepare for the meeting:**

- ✚ Write down a list of topics/questions you want to discuss
- ✚ Prepare a list of courses you are considering
- ✚ Keep all your advising information organized in a folder or the “yellow advising envelope” provided by the College of Arts and Sciences Advising Office.

Advising poses “challenges and forces students to think about the relationship of their academic work to their personal lives.”

*Richard Light, 2001*

### **Arrive promptly for your appointment:**

- ✚ Bring your advising folder, with paperwork from previous advising appointments
- ✚ Bring paper and pen to take notes
- ✚ Turn off your cell phone before you walk into your adviser’s office
- ✚ Bring a copy of your major/minor worksheet from the lobby (by the elevators) with you to your appointment

### **By e-mail:**

When you have a short, one-line question that requires a short, one-line answer

#### ***E-mail etiquette:***

- ✚ Use your WMU account
- ✚ Use a clear subject line such as “Question about internship”
- ✚ Include your full name with middle initial in the signature of your email
- ✚ Don’t be too casual with your faculty adviser when using e-mail. Proof-read and spell check!
- ✚ Keep the question short and to the point
- ✚ Expect a reply, but not an immediate one (Allow 48 hours for a response, excluding weekends and holidays).

### **By walk-in advising:**

- ✚ When you need an answer to a quick question or a referral; meetings last less than 10 minutes
- ✚ **Walk-in hours will be conducted first-come, first-serve during posted hours**
- ✚ Please be in line by the time walk-in advising ends and I will see you before I close the advising session

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While we make every effort to never cancel advising hours, sometimes an unexpected absence will occur and we will have to cancel hours without advance notice. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience. We do not want you to make a needless trip, so please call **387-3197** before you come over for current hours. **If you need us to call you for any reason, please leave a local phone number.**

### **By telephone:**

- ✚ When you need to know advising hours, or another very quick question, that requires a brief/quick answer
- ✚ If I am meeting with a student, your phone call will go into voicemail. Please leave your name, phone number (including area code) repeated twice. Speak slowly and clearly.
- ✚ Expect a reply, but not an immediate one (Allow 48 hours for a response, excluding weekends and holidays).
- ✚ If you need to schedule an appointment, please log on to the on-line appointment scheduler.

### **How Should You Contact Your Other Advisers?**

Every advising office has its own protocol regarding advising appointments. You should talk with your other advisers and find out how they handle their advising schedules, phone calls and e-mail correspondence.

“Intrusive advising” is based upon the philosophy that we should not wait for students to get into trouble before reaching out to them.”

### **Adviser and Advisee Responsibilities**

You will have the best possible outcome from our advising meetings if we both do our part. We both have important roles in the advising process.

### **As your faculty adviser, I will do my best to:**

- ✚ Understand and effectively communicate School of Communication major and minor requirements, internship program and independent study guidelines, interpret and explain university policies, processes, and campus resources, and help you create a workable plan to complete your major/minor in four years or less.
- ✚ Listen to your concerns and respect your individual values and choices
- ✚ Assist you in defining your academic, career, and personal goals, as well as assist you in creating an academic plan consistent with those goals
- ✚ Be available to answer your questions, either in person, via e-mail or by phone

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- ✚ Provide you information regarding educational and co-curricular activities and events outside the classroom
- ✚ Work with you to assess your academic performance and areas of strength to ensure they are consistent with your plans
- ✚ Provide a respectful, supportive atmosphere during advising sessions
- ✚ Communicate honestly and with care when your short-comings are interfering with your academic success. This communication will include suggestions to improve your short-comings.
- ✚ Assist you in scheduling classes at Western and transferring credits into Western Michigan University. Understand and communicate the graduation auditing process
- ✚ Keep my advising homepage current
- ✚ Continue to seek and approve new and varied internship experiences for you
- ✚ Continue to find ways to improve the advising process and how I communicate information to you
- ✚ Refer you to other campus offices as appropriate

**As one of my student advisees, I encourage you to:**

- ✚ Schedule and attend advising appointments once per semester as a first year student (either freshman or transfer)
- ✚ Schedule and attend advising appointments once per year as an established student (after your freshman or first year as a transfer student)
- ✚ Bring a list of questions and relevant materials to appointments. Ask questions if you do not understand a topic we discuss at our advising meeting
- ✚ Keep all your advising paperwork together in a folder, notebook, or envelope. Bring this material to each advising session.
- ✚ Become involved in the advising process by being prepared to discuss your goals and plans during our advising sessions
- ✚ Become familiar with the material on my advising homepage: (<http://homepages.wmich.edu/~kritzman>)
- ✚ Utilize the “Academic Success One Semester at a Time” (on my homepage) to help ensure the greatest possible academic success
- ✚ Review and incorporate “Academic and Co-curricular Planning Guide” (on my homepage) to help plan your academic and career path
- ✚ Review your major/minor requirements each semester and track your progress toward completing your graduation requirements
- ✚ Always register for your first classes the very first day you are able to do so.
- ✚ Accept responsibility and accountability for your successes and failures
- ✚ Be open and willing to consider advice from faculty, advisers and other mentors
- ✚ Execute an academic plan directed toward completing your degree at Western Michigan University
- ✚ Commit to and participate in the Western Edge
- ✚ Check and read your WMU email regularly

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- ✚ Become knowledgeable of university policies, offices, and resources which support student success at Western Michigan University
- ✚ Check my homepage at least once a month for updates and new information
- ✚ Become a regular patron of Career and Student Employment Services. Participate in career path development, resume writing workshops, etiquette dinners, career fairs, practice interviews, job search services and register with BroncoJobs
- ✚ Take primary and increasing responsibility for making your own academic and career decisions based on available information and advice
- ✚ Communicate clearly problems or concerns you are having with professors and other WMU professionals. If you are unsure who to contact, I will help you determine the correct contact and refer you when I can.
- ✚ Enjoy your college experience at Western Michigan University

### **Catalog year**

When you first arrived at Western you were assigned a catalog year. The information contained in that undergraduate catalog is Western Michigan University's agreement with you regarding your academic program. This means we agree to provide the courses you need to complete your declared major and minor, or provide appropriate substitutions to allow you to complete your degree in a timely manner. **However, over time, we may make changes to majors, minors and possibly curriculum requirements.** You always have the choice to declare a new catalog year. Please realize that if you change your catalog in order to declare a new major, then you also follow the new catalog for **ALL** your curriculum requirements, your additional major(s) or minor(s). Many times, this is to your advantage. However, we urge you to check this out before you make any changes in order to prevent needless delays toward graduation.

### **Changes in major/minor requirements**

From time to time, the School's faculty may change the requirements for majors and/or minors. Often times, these changes are transparent and the end result is greater flexibility toward degree completion and course options. Very rarely a change will occur that affects your progress toward graduation (such as reducing the number of credits a course is worth). If that occurs I will need to work with you individually to make sure your graduation is not impacted. I will do my best to assist you. Please remember that I am responsible to work with you to help you meet your graduation requirements, even though I am not be responsible for decisions and changes that adversely affect your major or minor.

### **Course Prerequisites**

Prerequisite classes must be completed with a grade of “C” or better before enrolling in classes that require the prerequisite – they may not be taken at the same time. The registration system allows you to register for classes, even if you do not meet the prerequisites. However, at the first class session, each professor will review the class list and will drop students who have not successfully met the prerequisites.

### **Minimum grade point average**

In order to declare any Communication major you must have a minimum over-all grade point average of 2.5.

### **Priority Registration**

The only registration priority WMU gives you as you near graduation is that you are able to register earlier than other students. It is critical that you take advantage of this priority. If you give up your priority registration, and classes fill, the School of Communication cannot drop students who have enrolled to make room for you. The class schedule is planned to make sure that you can make appropriate progress toward your degree, but only if you take advantage of your registration priority.

Communication classes tend to fill quickly and even a one day delay in registering may mean a class is closed. We do not over-enroll a class. The department does not keep waiting lists. **Please do not contact professors before the first day of class to ask for permission to be enrolled in their class.** If we are able to add new sections of classes, we place announcements on our web site and post notices around the school – please make it a habit to watch for these announcements.

### **Majors and Minors**

In order to graduate from Western Michigan University, you must have at least one major and one minor, or two majors. In order to ensure you have a well-rounded college education, you must select your second major or minor(s) from another department at the University.

### **Repeat Policy**

The School of Communication prohibits you from taking a class more than twice for credit. This includes enrollments with grades of “W” or “X”.

### **Graduation Audit**

You must apply for your graduation audit three full semesters before your anticipated graduation date. If you miss your graduation audit deadline, your graduation will be delayed to the next semester’s ceremony. Check the Registrar’s website for details: [www.wmich.edu/registrar](http://www.wmich.edu/registrar)

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### **Disabilities**

Students with documented disabilities and who require accommodations should register with the Department of Disabled Students and Resource Services [(269) 387-2116] and inform their professor.

### **Academic Integrity**

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate (pp. 274-276) Catalog that pertains to Academic Honesty.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Western Michigan University prohibits discrimination or harassment which violates the law or which constitutes inappropriate or unprofessional limitation of employment opportunity, University facility access, or participation in University activities, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, protected disability, veteran status, height, weight, or marital status.

*According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2005), communication skills, interpersonal skills, teamwork skills, a strong work ethic, and being detail-oriented, motivated, and flexible are among the top ten qualities/skills sought by employers. These qualities and skills are facilitated by the advising process and learned through both in-class and out-of-class experiences.*

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