

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
THE MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION

REGISTERING FOR COM 7100/7120/7000/7150

7000-LEVEL COURSES

For 7000-level courses, a student is required to complete—before the first registration—the **Form A: Application for Permission to Elect** form for thesis, for an independent study, or for a field experience internship. Those registering for COM 7150 credits will prepare form **XII: Application for Permission to Enroll in COM 7150**. The form requests a description of the work to be completed in each election, and it must be signed by (a) the student; (b) the faculty sponsor; (c) the department chairperson; and (d) for enrollments in 7000 (master's thesis), a representative of The Graduate College.

Registration for COM 7000, 7100, 7120, and 7150 must be completed in a timely manner, especially for those who hold a graduate assistantship. It is strongly recommended that students complete the necessary paperwork during their assigned registration period or at the latest by July 1 for fall term, by November 1 for spring term, and by March 1 for summer I/II. If a GA is under-enrolled (less than six credit hours without the appropriate permission) at the time that financial aid awards are posted, the GA's stipend and salary will not be released.

Graduate students in the School of Communication may include a maximum of six credit hours of COM 7100/7120 in their Permanent Program of Study. Students, in consultation with their permanent advisor, may petition the Director of Graduate Studies for permission to exceed the six credit hour limit.

INDEPENDENT STUDY (COM 7100)

The Graduate College Policy Statement on Independent Study follows:

Independent Study refers to enrollment in an appropriately designated, variable-credit course for a specific plan of study, authorized and supervised by a designated, consenting faculty member. Independent Study is not a substitute for regular courses, but an enrichment opportunity. Normally, it is a project designed to allow students to investigate an area of interest not within the scope of a regular course, to probe more in depth than is possible in a regular course, or to obtain educational experience outside that normally offered by a regular course.

Since individual Independent Study projects are normally reviewed through the usual department and University review processes, it is essential that the academic adequacy of such projects be assured by some other means applied consistently throughout the University. The following policy guidelines are intended to serve that function.

PROPOSALS FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY:

Independent Study requires an adequate description of the work to be undertaken, requiring planning in advance of the registration period. Sufficient time, therefore, must be allowed for such planning and for obtaining the necessary faculty and administrative approval. While the Independent Study project is often student-initiated, early interaction with faculty is essential in the development of a mutually acceptable project description. At a minimum, such a description should contain an outline of the study topic, specification of the work to be done and the materials to be read, the credit to be given, the type and frequency of faculty-student contacts, and a statement of the evaluation criteria to be used by the faculty member. The student and the faculty member should include a statement regarding the plan for meeting HSIRB requirements, if applicable to the project.

APPROVAL PROCESS:

The faculty member must accept and approve the student and the project, and then submit the agreed upon proposal on the Permission to Elect Form (**Form A**) to the Director of the school for approval. If the Director approves, information copies of the form must be submitted to the Dean and Registrar.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITY:

A student functions independently in a COM 7100 in that it involves no class meetings or formal lectures. The faculty member is the responsible custodian of the project, obliged to provide guidance, assistance, criticism, suggestion, and evaluation, and shall be the instructor of record who is responsible for assigning the grade.

REGISTRATION AND GRADE REPORTS IN THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION:

The approved proposal and completed form is then submitted to the school administrative assistant who assigns the call number and registers the student in COM 7100. A copy of the completed Permission to Elect form (**Form A**) with the registration date is returned to the faculty advisor of the Independent Study. A COM 7100 is graded on a Credit/No Credit basis. At the end of the semester, the faculty member advising the student will submit the final grade.

PROFESSIONAL FIELD EXPERIENCE (COM 7120)

COM 7120 is designed to enable field experiences or internships for graduate students. Its primary function is to provide the advanced student in communication with an opportunity to put particular skills in communication into practice. The primary question to be considered in the proposed internship is: Does the proposed internship further the student's personal and professional objectives? The proposal is always to be

judged in terms of a learning experience. Both the sponsoring faculty member and the interning organization are careful that the student's talents and skills are used in a meaningful way. While functioning in the field, the intern must be provided the opportunity for direction, guidance and feedback from both the field supervisor and the faculty sponsor.

PROPOSALS FOR PROFESSIONAL FIELD EXPERIENCE:

The sponsoring faculty member and the student must complete the Permission to Elect Form (**Form A**) to enroll in a COM 7120. The proposal for a COM 7120 must include a description of the professional experience (e.g., duties and responsibilities of the student, special projects, etc.) and the names of both the interning organization and the organization supervisor. Typically, internships are for three (3) credit hours and generally, one (1) credit hour is equivalent to 50 clock hours, which may also include assigned readings. The student and the faculty member should include a statement regarding the plan for meeting HSIRB requirements, if applicable to the internship, e.g. the student will collect data that will then be used to prepare a research paper for submission to a conference or a publication.

APPROVAL PROCESS:

A faculty member must accept and agree to sponsor the student and field experience, and then submit the agreed-upon outline of the field experience and its outcomes on the Permission to Elect Form (**Form A**) to the Director of the School for approval.

REGISTRATION AND GRADE REPORTS IN THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION:

The approved field experience proposal and completed form is then submitted to the School administrative assistant who assigns the call number and registers the student in COM 7120. A copy of the completed Permission to Elect form (**Form A**) with the registration date is returned to the faculty advisor of the Professional Field Experience. A COM 7120 is graded on a Credit/No Credit basis. At the end of the semester, the faculty member advising the student will submit the final grade.

THESIS CREDIT HOURS (COM 7000)

Prior to registration in COM 7000 thesis credit hours, the student must have secured the service of his/her thesis committee chair and other committee members. A thesis committee appointment form (**Form IV**) with the appropriate signatures and permissions of School of Communication personnel must be filed with the Graduate College where the membership of the committee will be reviewed.

Students selecting the thesis option must have Graduate College approval of the thesis committee before the student may register for thesis hours (COM 7000). All thesis committee members must hold graduate faculty status. Occasionally a student will select a committee member who currently is not a member of the graduate faculty. In this case the School of Communication will seek a temporary graduate faculty appointment for this individual, i.e., more paperwork. Students and advisors are

reminded that all of this paperwork takes time to process through the bureaucracy. Again, be mindful of timing for registration when these additional forms must be filed prior to registration.

The course COM 7000 Master's Thesis is six (6) credit hours and may be registered for in increments of one to six credits. Thesis students in the School of Communication typically register for three credits in one semester and three credits in the following semester. Following a student's first enrollment in COM 7000, the student must have continuous enrollment in COM 7000 (see definition of continuous enrollment as it applies to summer enrollments in this Handbook or the Graduate College Catalog) until all thesis requirements are completed satisfactorily and approved by the appropriate bodies. A student unable to complete the thesis in six credit hours will be required to continue to enroll in one credit hour of COM 7000 per semester until the thesis is completed and meets graduation requirements; however, only six credit hours will count toward meeting program requirements. A student must be enrolled in thesis credit in the semester of his/her graduation.

REGISTRATION AND GRADE REPORTS IN THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION:

When approval of the committee is received, a student may register for 1-6 thesis credits using the Permission to Elect Form (**Form A**). (See complete thesis guidelines in this Handbook.) The approved thesis committee and the completed Permission to Elect form is submitted to the School administrative assistant who assigns the call number and registers the student in COM 7000. A copy of the completed Permission to Elect form/Thesis Committee Approval with the registration date is returned to the faculty advisor of the thesis. A thesis is graded on a Credit/No credit basis. At the end of each enrollment period, the faculty member advising the student will submit a letter grade.

A student must complete a **Form A** Permission to Elect each semester of thesis enrollment.

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT CREDIT HOURS (COM 7150)

Prior to registration in COM 7150 professional project credit hours, the student must have secured the service of his/her professional project chair and other committee members. A committee approval form (**Form V**) with the appropriate signatures and permissions of School of Communication personnel must be filed with the School in the semester prior to registration in COM 7150.

All professional project committee members must hold graduate faculty status. Occasionally a student will select a committee member who currently is not a member of the graduate faculty. In this case the School of Communication will seek a temporary graduate faculty appointment for this individual, i.e., more paperwork. Students and advisors are reminded that all of this paperwork takes time to process through the

bureaucracy. Again, be mindful of timing for registration when these additional forms must be filed prior to registration.

Students will complete **FORM XII** to register for COM 7150.

The course COM 7150 Professional Project is three (3) credit hours. Students are reminded that a completed project proposal must be defended and approved before enrollment in COM 7150 is permitted. Typically the student would enroll in COM 7150 during the semester in which she/he plans to defend the completed project. Further, a student must be enrolled during the semester he/she plans to graduate. A student unable to complete the professional project in the COM 7150 enrolled semester may be required to continue to enroll in one credit hour of COM 7100 per semester until the project is completed and meets graduation requirements; however, only the three credit hours of COM 7150 will count toward meeting program requirements.