Graduate Student Handbook

2018-2019 Academic Year
Department of Journalism and Digital Communication
University of South Florida St. Petersburg
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Important dates
Please see www.usfsp.edu/journalism/calendar for important dates related to the program.
More general dates related to the university can be found on the university academic calendar: http://www.usfsp.edu/academic-calendar/

Contacts and web resources
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The Department of Journalism and Digital Communication: http://usfsp.edu/journalism/

USFSP Graduate Studies: http://usfsp.edu/spgrad/

USF Graduate School: http://www.grad.usf.edu/

The Department on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/JMS.USFSP

The Department on Twitter: http://twitter.com/myjms/
Welcome

Dear Graduate Student,

As you may know, in the fall of 2018 we merged our two masters’ degrees. There is now only one: Digital Journalism and Design (DJD). The combined program is geared toward meeting our students’ diverse goals and professional and academic aspirations. Students can choose between an applied or more analytical approach to the study of media. All get a heavy dose of the digital technology that has redefined the field while learning critical thinking skills and the traditional journalistic values of accuracy, fairness, and balance. Our program had to change so that our overarching goal need not: to produce journalists well-equipped with both the technical and intellectual skills to excel in the world of journalism and digital communication at large.

Our students come from a wide range of professional and cultural backgrounds. Some students enter the program with extensive professional experience. We challenge them to look at issues from different perspectives they may have missed in their professional work. Other students have no journalistic background. They must complete coursework in reporting and editing to participate fully in our professionally oriented seminars. Our student diversity complements the varied professional and educational backgrounds of faculty. The mix makes for lively, provocative encounters for all of us.

Our coursework demonstrates the responsibility of media professionals to be sensitive to factors and practices that have traditionally excluded those who have suffered discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation.

Our Neighborhood News Bureau opened an off-campus office in September 2006 in Midtown, St. Petersburg. A working newsroom, it provides journalistic outlets for our faculty and students while producing stories, features, and announcements that focus on a historically underserved portion of our community.

Our graduate students are challenged and changed by the interactive, individually focused programs they pursue. Let us know how we can add to your adventure.

Regards,

Mark J. Walters, Director of Graduate Programs
Department of Journalism and Digital Communication
Faculty
Like our students, our faculty also come from a wide range of professional and academic backgrounds. The careers of some have emphasized academic studies, while others have focused on the practice of journalism. All are committed to combining the two by offering would-be journalists a rigorous theoretical foundation while ensuring those who wish to follow a more academic track in their careers are steeped in the skills of the craft. You will find faculty profiles at:

http://www.usfsp.edu/journalism/about/faculty-staff/

Faculty advisers and advisees
Every graduate student is assigned to a full-time graduate faculty member for advising purposes. Advisers/advisees assignments are published periodically via email and a current list of advisors and their advisees is posted on the department’s website. Be sure to ask if you don’t know who your adviser is.

Succeeding in Journalism and Media Studies program (pre fall 2018)

This section applies to students admitted to the original Journalism and Media Studies graduate program prior to fall 2018. Students admitted in or after fall 2018 should refer to the Digital Journalism and Design section of this handbook.

Graduate school will differ from your undergraduate experience. This section offers some pointers on how to succeed in the master’s degree program and offers some advice from past students.

Go to class! At the graduate level, even one unexcused absence is noticed. Since many classes meet only once a week, missing even a single session is significant.
Also, to remain in the program and be eligible for graduation, you must maintain a 3.0 grade-point average, which can be difficult if you miss class.

Go to class well-prepared. Reading assignments, especially in the core courses, might take several hours each week to complete. Don’t leave assignments until the last minute.

You will be expected to produce research papers in your three core courses—Media Theory/Research Methods, Media Ethics, and Media Law. Other classes might require academic papers as well. A graduate-level research paper resembles a published academic journal article rather than the term papers most undergraduates write. Familiarize yourself with the typical format of academic papers.

Understand the difference between quantitative and qualitative research; be familiar with different types of research, including methods of content analysis; and be able to recognize and write each of the sections of an academic paper, such as an abstract, problem statement, literature review, etc. You will also need to learn the proper format for citing the works you reference. Our department uses the American Psychological Association (APA) format, since many academic journals in mass communications use this format. You can find it online at many sites, but it is definitely worth investing in a copy of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. This guide covers citation format and also explains what each section of an academic paper must include, offers examples, and includes a grammar guide.

Anyone planning to write an academic thesis is required to take the online Research Methods course. Several students who have taken this class recommend that all master’s students take it—as soon as possible! The course presents an overview of different types of research, teaches you how to write research objectives and hypotheses, and explains what the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is and when you might need IRB approval for your research. If taking the class is not feasible, you can familiarize yourself with academic research by reading several examples of articles that are similar to articles you might research and write, and by studying the examples in the APA Publication Manual.

Also, you’ll need to learn how to conduct academic research. Your academic papers will cite other academic articles in addition to books and articles from the mainstream media. The Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, located on the USFSP campus, offers a large selection of online journals and databases. Reference librarians there can guide you through your first searches to find the most relevant articles. Journalism and Media Studies graduate students are also permitted to use the Poynter
Institute’s Eugene Patterson Library for research. The Patterson Library contains an outstanding collection of media and journalism resources.

Succeeding in graduate study requires more than just going to class and getting good grades. Check into other opportunities like Independent Study, Directed Research or the Practicum. Students have prepared themselves for careers in broadcast, print and new media through their practicum experience.

Graduate students are sometimes permitted to take seminars at the Poynter Institute for credit. These are a great way to meet and network with outstanding instructors and professionals. Talk to your adviser about these and other opportunities available to graduate students.

Completing your JMS degree
Whether you have just completed undergraduate work or have been out in the workforce for many years, graduate work will be new and different. You will be expected to produce professional quality work on deadline. Most classes are taught in a seminar style with the assumption that you have completed all reading, homework, or other prep work; and that you come to class ready to engage in a lively and thoughtful discussion about the concept at hand. Relatively few assignments (sometimes only one paper and one exam) will be evaluated in determining your course grades. Graduate students must maintain an overall average of 3.0 (B) and a 3.0 (B) or better in core courses. Course grades of C- or below will not be accepted toward a graduate degree.

Credits Required to Graduate
Students seeking the Journalism & Media Studies M.A. need 36 credits to graduate. At least 20 of those credits must be taken in formal, regularly scheduled classes. While most of those credits come from courses that you take within the department, you may also receive credits from:

- Transfer credits from approved graduate courses at other institutions or nondegree coursework: up to nine credits
- Courses taken outside of the department: up to 12 credits
- 4000-level undergraduate courses (Note that financial aid won’t pay for undergrad courses): up to six credits
- Seminars offered by The Poynter Institute: up to three credits
- Practicum: up to six credits
- Directed reading or Independent study: up to three credits
- Applied research project: three credits or Thesis: six credits
Each of these is described in this handbook; all are subject to departmental approval and other limitations. You should register for classes as soon as registration opens because classes fill up, even those that are limited to our graduate student majors. Class size is kept small to allow for a high degree of interactivity among students and with the instructor.

**Core Curriculum (nine credits required)**

Regardless of how our M.A. recipients use their degrees, they leave the program with an in-depth knowledge of media ethics, media theory, and media law. These areas serve as the foundation for an understanding of journalistic practice. Each of these courses (MMC 6206 Media Ethics, MMC 6400 Media Theory, and MMC 6612 Media Law) requires students to demonstrate knowledge of the area and competency in writing in academic style. Media theory and media ethics are both offered in the fall semester; media law is offered in the spring semester only.

Students must achieve a B or better in all three core courses. We recommend that you take only one core course at a time, and that you take them in consecutive semesters, as that is the best preparation for comprehensive exams. If you cannot achieve a B in a core class, you probably do not have sufficient understanding of the material to pass comprehensive exams.

**Preparatory Courses (up to six credits)**

Students who lack substantial previous journalistic experience should enroll in JOU 6114 Multimedia Reporting in their first semester of study. Along with providing an introduction to the basics of gathering, writing, and editing the news, this course ensures that graduate students have the necessary journalistic vocabulary to participate in professionally oriented seminars.

Students who are not familiar with reading academic journal articles or writing in the academic style should enroll in MMC 6421 Research Methods in Mass Communications early in their graduate studies. This course is required for students who pursue the thesis option.

**Other Departmental Course Offerings**

Each semester’s course offerings are chosen from a list that can be found online. Meet with your adviser every semester to review progress toward your degree and to plan future semesters to best meet your needs and ambitions.
Courses External to the Department (up to 12 credits)

Up to 12 credits from classes in other departments at USFSP or on other USF campuses may be counted toward your degree if those courses relate to the study objectives for the degree. Your adviser and the Graduate Director are the final decision-makers as to the appropriateness of courses outside of the department.

4000-Level Undergraduate Courses (up to six credits)

Occasionally, graduate students will find upper-level undergraduate courses that complement their area of study. While graduate students are discouraged from taking undergraduate-level courses, with permission, students may register for up to six credits of undergraduate level study, within the department or in other departments at USF, if those courses relate to the study objectives for this degree, and if an equivalent graduate-level course is not offered. Your adviser and the Graduate Director decide the appropriateness of undergraduate courses prior to registration. The course instructor is expected to provide graduate-level goals, activities, and assessment and will, therefore, need to provide special permission as well. In addition, be advised that financial aid may not cover the costs of an undergraduate course.

Digital Journalism and Design Courses

In general, students enrolled in the face-to-face JMS program should only elect courses offered within the JMS curriculum and related to the study objectives for the JMS degree. Should JMS students wish to take DJD courses, permits must be granted by students’ adviser and the Graduate Director based on the appropriateness and availability of the DJD courses. Students will not be permitted to take more than one DJD course per semester.

Seminars Offered by The Poynter Institute (up to three credits)

A unique aspect of graduate study in the Department of Journalism and Digital Communication at USFSP is our geographical and professional connection with The Poynter Institute for Media Studies. The Poynter Institute offers a range of professional seminars for journalism professionals and professors. Interested graduate students may be accepted as participants in these seminars. Students must have the recommendation of their adviser to apply. Poynter faculty review students’ applications based on availability and competitive factors. Students may receive up to three credits for participating in a Poynter seminar and preparing and presenting a report based on the experience. Students should begin
seeking approval as early as possible, but no later than one semester prior to the seminar that they wish to take. Upon receiving approval, register for MMC 6936 Professional Colloquium.

**Practicum (up to six credits)**

Internships are called “practicas” at the graduate level. Students must first complete 12 credits toward their degree. Eligibility will be determined by the student’s adviser and practicum supervisor based on:

- A full description of the duties and the skills that the student expects to either learn or improve as a result of the practicum;
- Full contact information, including name, title, phone number and e-mail address of the student’s on-site supervisor;
- Verification that the number of required hours for the practicum (120 hours) will be met and a tentative schedule of days and hours.
- Students’ job sites are not appropriate practicum settings. Further details can be found on the journalism department website. Graduate students should register for MMC 6945 Professional Practicum.

**Two-year program**

While graduate students may take up to five years to complete the JMS degree, the program in Journalism and Media Studies is designed so that students can complete all requirements within two years and still manage to have a life. This is easiest if you begin in Fall or Summer term. (Keep in mind that the final semester in which students can enter the JMS degree will be spring of 2018. Thereafter, all graduate students will enter the new graduate program in digital journalism and design.)

**Year One**

Before beginning classes, meet with your adviser to review your plan for your first year. If you have previous academic work, taken AFTER completing your bachelor’s degree, you may bring in up to nine hours of transfer credit if they relate to your program of study (departmental approval required) and are taken at the graduate level of study completed with a grade of B or better.

The following is a hypothetical schedule. Course offerings may vary from semester to semester. Completion of “core” classes—ethics, law and theory—is essential and it is recommended that you take those courses when they are offered and complete them in any order in your first three semesters to be prepared to take comprehensive exams in your fourth semester.
**Semester 1:**

- MMC 6206 Media Ethics or MMC 6400 Media Theory or MMC 6612 Media Law: three credits.
- JOU 6114 Multimedia Reporting (Required for anyone who lacks substantial journalism experience.): three credits.
- Or, in addition to Media Ethics, Media Theory, or Media Law, take other classes (with adviser approval) for a total of nine credits for the semester: three credits.

**Semester 2:**

- MMC 6206 Media Ethics or MMC 6400 Media Theory or MMC 6612 Media Law (Do not take more than one in the same semester.): three credits.
- MMC 6421 Research Methods (Required if you plan to write a thesis. Recommended if reading/writing scholarly literature is new to you.): three credits.
- Take one or two more courses: three-six credits.

**Summer:**

Take one or two courses or do one course and a practicum: three–six credits.

**Year Two**

**Semester 1:**

- MMC 6206 Media Ethics or MMC 6400 Media Theory or MMC 6612 Media Law (Do not take more than one in the same semester.): three credits.
- Take two more courses: six credits.
- Invite a faculty member in the department to serve as the committee chair for your thesis or applied research project. With that person’s advice, add committee members as appropriate. Complete thesis or applied research proposal forms. Get prospectus or proposal approved no later than the start of registration for the next term.

**Semester 2:**

- Take comprehensive exams.
- MMC 6971 Thesis: six credits or MMC 6950 Applied Research Project: three credits. (You may register for additional ARP credits, but only three credits count toward the required 36 hours.
- Take additional courses if needed to complete the 36-hour requirement and graduate.

**If you don’t finish in two years...**

Remember that you must enroll for 2 credits the semester that you graduate and must be enrolled for 6 credits over three consecutive semesters to meet the “continuous enrollment” requirement. Continuous enrollment is defined as completing, with grades assigned, a minimum of six hours of graduate credit every three continuous semesters. Summer counts as a consecutive semester.
Succeeding in the Digital Journalism and Design program

An online or hybrid graduate-school experience differs from a face-to-face one. Each format has advantages and limitations.

Because of the asynchronous nature of DJD courses, you have to manage your time well. DJD courses may vary in the ways they are taught, but almost all of them rely on modules that must be completed by certain dates and times. Although your professors will be in contact, you should log in to each course daily so you can be prepared for any changes in coursework or due-dates.

In addition to completing multimedia reporting projects and other deliverables, you might be required to write academic papers in some courses. A graduate-level research paper resembles a published academic journal article rather than the term papers most undergraduates write.

You will need to understand the difference between quantitative and qualitative research; be familiar with different types of qualitative research, including methods of content analysis; and be able to recognize and write each of the sections of an academic paper, such as an abstract, problem statement, literature review, etc. You will also need to learn the proper format for citing references. Our department uses the American Psychological Association (APA) format. You can find it online, but it is worth investing in a copy of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. This guide covers citation format and also explains what each section of an academic paper must include, offers examples, and includes a grammar guide.

Completing your DJD degree

Whether you have just completed undergraduate work or have been out in the workforce for many years, graduate work will be new and different. You will be expected to produce professional quality work on deadline. Graduate students must maintain an overall average of 3.0 (B). Course grades of C- or below will not be accepted toward a graduate degree.

Required Digital Journalism and Design Curriculum

The M.A. in Digital Journalism and Design requires 33 to 39 hours of academic credit. A realistic program for a full-time student involves a nine-hour load in the fall and spring terms, stretching out over two academic years. Summer courses including internships are also available.
Students in our program complete a thesis, with six hours counting toward the degree, or an applied research project, with three credit hours counting toward the degree.

At least 16 of the hours must be at the 6000 level, and 20 hours or more must be taken in regularly scheduled course work. With permission from an adviser, USF graduate students may take up to two 4000 level courses, which are upper-level undergraduate courses, with adviser approval. However, graduate students are usually discouraged from taking undergraduate courses. Financial aid for graduate students usually will not cover the cost of an undergraduate course.

**Required Core (15-18 credits, depending on project or thesis)**

- JOU 6114: Multimedia Reporting / Storytelling (3) [offered in fall and spring semesters]
- MMC 6206: Mass Communications Ethics (3) [offered in fall and spring semesters]
- MMC 6400: Mass Communications Theory [with Research Methods] (3) [offered in fall semester]
- MMC 6612: Law and Mass Media (3) [offered in fall semester]
- MMC 6950: Applied Research Project (3) or MMC 6971: Thesis (6) [offered every semester]

**Electives (15-18 credits, depending on project or thesis)**

- JOU 6135: Video Storytelling 1 (3)
- JOU 6360: Digital Media Technology (3)
- MMC 5146: Web Publishing (3)
- MMC 6936: Data Visualization (3)
- MMC 6936: Telling Stories with Data (3)
- MMC 6936: Multimedia Production (3)
- GEB 6118: Business Enterprise (3)
- MMC 6936: Food Writing (3)
- MMC 6936: International Communication Seminar (3)
- MMC 6936: Journalists in the Movies (3)
- MMC 6936: Magazine Design & Production (3)
- MMC 6936: Media and Elections (3)
- MMC 6936: Neighborhood News Bureau (3)
- MMC 6936: Photojournalism 2
- MMC 6936: Sizzling Images (3)
- MMC 6936: Social Media (3)
- MMC 6936: Sports Journalism (3)
- MMC 6936: Video Storytelling 2 (3)
- MMC 6936: Virtual Reality and Alternative Storytelling (3)
- PGY 5619: Photojournalism 1 (3)
- RTV 5416: Race, Gender and Class in Media (3)
- VIC 6007: Visual Communication Theory and Design (3)

*Italics = Online courses for distance learners to complete program with digital focus.*

This total number of credits will vary based upon several factors. Students undertaking the thesis option will receive 6 credits. Students undertaking the ARP option will receive 3 credits. Students who do the ARP (3 credits) will leave the program with a total of 33 credits. Students who elect to do the
thesis option (6 credits) will leave the program with 36 credit-hours. Students may elect to take one additional course for a total of 39 hours.

* Courses are sequenced with the sequences dependent upon the semester in which the student is first enrolled and whether the program will be taken full time or part time. Students should check with the program adviser to map out an individual course of study.

**Area of specialization:**
Students may take up to 12 hours in an area of specialization through other departments within the University of South Florida. Some areas of specialization include business, criminology, education, environmental studies, Florida studies, health communication, philosophy, and urban anthropology.

An academic adviser, chosen from among departmental faculty, helps each student decide on elective courses, and make progress toward their degrees.

**Core Course Descriptions:**

For details about core and elective courses within the DJD program, please visit http://www.usfsp.edu/digital-journalism-and-design/courses/

**Registering for Classes**

With the assistance of the department's Administrative Specialist, DJD students are granted permits for each course they wish to take every semester. This is done to ensure that only DJD students have the first opportunity to claim seats in these attendance-limited courses. After consulting the offerings each semester, students should contact the AS and inform with regard to which courses they wish to take. After permits are granted, students self-enroll via OASIS, accessible via my.usf.edu. Each course has a unique course reference number (CRN) that will be provided by the APS when notified of permits being granted.

The DJD Course Plan on the following page may be useful in structuring your studies. Copies of these forms are available in the JDC Faculty Office, second floor, Peter Rudy Wallace Florida Center for Teachers.
While USF St. Petersburg’s Digital Journalism and Design master’s degree program was designed to be completed over three semesters (in one year), we also recognize that many people prefer to complete the program on a part-time basis over up to six semesters (two years).

We’ve designed eight “tracks” for completing the program in three, four, five and six semesters, depending on term of entry. Use the chart to the right to determine which track is best for you.

Not all DJD core and elective courses run in fall and spring semesters. Below, find out what your options are and plan your path of study.

### Online Core
- **JOU 6114** Multimedia Reporting (3 cr)
- **MMC 6206** Mass Comm. Ethics (3 cr)
- **MMC 6400** Mass Comm. Theory (3 cr)
- **MMC 6612** Law & Mass Media (3 cr)
- **MMC 6950** Applied Research Project (3 cr) or
- **MMC 6971** Thesis (6 cr)

### Electives
- **GEB 6118** Business Enterprise (3 cr)
- **JOU 6360** Digital Media Technology (3 cr)
- **MMC 5146** Web Publishing (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Data Visualization (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Food Writing (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** International Comm. Seminar (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Journalists in the Movies (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Magazine Design & Production (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Media Management Seminar (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Multimedia Production (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Neighborhood News Bureau (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Photojournalism 2 (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Sizzling Images (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Social Media (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Sports Journalism (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Telling Stories with Data (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** Video Storytelling 2 (3 cr)
- **MMC 6936** VR & Alternative Storytelling (3 cr)
- **PGY 5619** Photojournalism I (3 cr)
- **RTV 5416** Race, Gender & Class in Media (3 cr)
- **VIC 6007** Viscomm Design & Theory (3 cr)

**NOTE:** Elective courses may change from semester to semester depending on student demand. The semesters and course formats listed here are subject to change. Contact the Department of Journalism and Digital Communications (jms@usfsp.edu) prior to registration to ensure course availability.

**Remember:** If you are relying on financial aid to pay for the program, you must carry at least five (5) graduate level credits each semester. Contact the USFSP Office of Financial Aid for more information: usfsp.edu/finaid

*These elective offerings may be taken during any semester but are listed here as an example. If you know that one semester will be better than another to take on an extra course, please discuss with your faculty adviser.*
Culminating projects

Graduate students may elect to write a thesis or complete an applied research project (ARP) for the culminating work in the Department of Journalism and Digital Communication. Concentrated work to complete the thesis or ARP may not begin until the student has successfully passed all three comprehensive exams.

For the ARP, students will receive 3 credits toward the degree. For the thesis, students will receive 6 credits toward the degree. Students who are writing theses may take more than 6 hours of thesis credit, but only 6 count toward the 36 hours required for the degree; students who are doing ARPs may take up to 6 hours for continuing registration purposes, but only 3 count toward the degree.

Culminating projects often take students longer to complete than they initially plan. As students are required to have continuing registration and must be enrolled for at least two credit hours the semester of graduation, it is not unusual to take additional credits to see the project to completion. It is best if students have a semester to put into the culminating project in which students are finished with coursework or have no more than one class to complete. The two-year plan includes three semesters of nine credits each plus two classes in the summer, leaving the final semester for ARP or thesis.

DJD Final Project

Throughout your time in the program, you’ll be working in select classes to develop your final project. In MMC 6950: Applied Research Project, which MUST be taken in the final semester of the program for 3 credits, you will produce your finished project and have it vetted by DJD faculty. By default, Final Project evaluator committees are comprised of two DJD faculty – but students can request other faculty members from within the department or from another department at USFSP if the chair of the committee is DJD faculty member.

There are two flavors of Final Projects:

**Reporting-based Projects** - Most student projects will involve reporting and producing an original piece of multimedia journalism. Depending on the student’s goals, these projects might emphasize one platform or seek to blend many delivery formats. In general, three reporting-based projects can be pursued:

- A long-form video project (30+ minutes total, but could involve multi-part installments);
- A long-form audio project (60+ minutes total, but could involve multi-part installments);
• A full multimedia package (combining three or more media, e.g., text, photos and audio)

Development-based Projects—Students with experience (or a strong interest) in the more technical or entrepreneurial aspects of digital journalism, may pursue one of three development-based projects:

• An original news or information website;
• A news app for the desktop and/or a mobile device;
• A tool, service or platform that enhances the delivery of news or information.

For development-based projects, a prototype may be sufficient, depending on the scope of the proposed idea.

Like all other DJD courses, a permit is required for students to register for Final Project credit hours. Only after the department’s Administrative Specialist has final project paperwork in hand, signed by the overseeing faculty member, will this permit be issued.

Applied Research Project
An Applied Research Project is a significant piece of work intended for publication for a lay, trade, or scholarly audience.

Topic: The subject may be a topic within the fields of journalism or media studies or may be a journalistic exploration of the student’s topic of choice.

Methodology: The project may be presented through still photography, video, audio, design, or may be solely text.

Length: If solely text, the project should be between 2500–5000 words. Projects presented in other media must be the equivalent, as determined by the Committee Chair. An ARP that is visual or web-based must consult with the library to choose the best format for archive. Along with the visual or web-based project, a seven page or longer text document must be presented to provide the project’s executive summary, background, approaches, reflections and contributions. References, presented in APA style, are separate from the word limit.

Committee: Two members, chaired by a full time faculty member in the department. An additional member from the department (regular or adjunct) should serve as the second member. Committee members may ask the student to provide the name and contact information for an expert in the subject area who can attest to the quality of a completed project.

Examples of ARP: blog, website, or other interactive presentation; audio or video documentary; in-depth photo essay, case presentation with analysis of ethical or legal cases; feature or in-depth writing; comprehensive review of literature on a particular topic; explorations of mass communication theories. You may log on to the campus Digital Archive (http://dspace.nelson.usf.edu) to sample some ARPs from the past.
Process to Complete ARP

Students planning to do an ARP are responsible for following these steps:

**Step 1.** Select a full-time, graduate faculty member in the department to be your ARP adviser. The choice of adviser is usually based on your research interest and the faculty’s expertise. A mutual agreement between students and advisers on the topic, approach, format, and work style will ensure the quality and success of your work.

**Step 2.** Develop an ARP topic/idea, based on which student and adviser decide on the ARP committee chair (who may or may not be the student’s faculty adviser). The additional member, chosen by the chair in consultation with the student and adviser, may be an adjunct or courtesy appointment.

**Step 3.** Prepare an ARP proposal to submit to the committee for approval and schedule a committee meeting for discussion and approval of the proposal.

**Step 4.** Complete the “Applied Research Project Form” and have committee members sign approval at the proposal meeting.

**Step 5.** Register for ARP hours.

**Step 6.** Consult with committee chair on deadlines and plans to complete the ARP.

**Step 7.** Work with the committee, mainly the chair, to complete the ARP draft and submit it to the committee for review.

**Step 8.** Arrange a committee meeting to approve the ARP.

**Step 9.** Revise & finalize. Submit one copy of the final ARP to the USFSP library’s Digital Archive.

**Step 10.** Present the approved ARP at a public presentation held at the end of the semester.

ARP Proposal Requirements

The ARP requires a proposal, usually no more than 3 or 4 pages, that includes a description of the project, a justification for the project, summary or outline of the literature review, and methodology and justification brief.

- **Project Description:** A concise summary on what the proposed project hopes to accomplish.

- **Project justification:** What is the significance of the project in advancing knowledge or performance in journalism or mass communications studies?

- **Literature review:** Provide context for the work and help justify the project.

- **Method and justification:** What approaches will be used to accomplish project objectives? How will the information be collected and how will it be analyzed or interpreted? (Every project must be accompanied by an statement explanation of its purpose and significance, why you chose the topic, and why you collected and dealt with data in the way you did.)

- **Outline and Summary:** Provide an outline of the project, summarizing its contents.

- **Sources:** Cite sources, including interviewees, if any.
Thesis
A thesis is an original piece of academic research of sufficient heft and quality for possible publication in a scholarly venue.

Topic: Journalism or Media Studies.

Methodology: Historical, philosophical, ethnographic, qualitative, or quantitative. (An Institutional Review Board (IRB) application is required for almost every study involving human participants. Students who plan to interview, survey, or observe humans as part of their research, should see graduate program coordinator while writing the proposal to determine if IRB review will be required).

Length: 30-50 pages with the following sections: Abstract, Introduction, Problem Statement, Research Objective/Questions and/or Hypotheses, Literature Review, Methodology and Justification for Methodology, Findings or Case Presentation, Discussion or Analysis, and Conclusion. References, in APA style, are separate from the 30-50-page limit.

A final copy of the thesis, with title page with chair and committee signatures, must be submitted to the department in a white binder with the student’s name and thesis title on the binder.

Committee: Three members, chaired by a regular faculty member in the department. Students may choose a member from outside of the department based on particular expertise.

Process to Complete Thesis
Students should consult their adviser and follow these steps:

Step 1. Go to the USFSP Graduate Studies website and view USFSP's thesis and dissertation guidelines. The student is responsible for knowing and following all USFSP procedures and deadlines regarding the thesis.

Step 2. Select a full-time, graduate faculty member in the department to be your thesis adviser. The choice of adviser is usually based on your research interest and the faculty’s expertise. A mutual agreement between students and advisers on the research topic, methodology, and work style will ensure the quality and success of your work.

Step 3. Develop a research topic, based on which student and adviser decide on the thesis committee. The committee comprises the chair and at least two additional faculty members. The adviser serves as the chair of the committee, and one of two additional members may be from another department at USF. Poynter Institute faculty may serve on a thesis committee that has three USF faculty members. Adjunct faculty members in the Department of Journalism and Digital Communication may not serve on a student's thesis committee.

Step 4. Prepare a thesis prospectus to submit to the chair and committee members. Schedule a prospectus meeting for approval of the prospectus.
Step 5. Complete the “Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Form” and have committee members sign approval at the prospectus meeting.

Step 6. Register for thesis hours.

Step 7. Consult with committee chair plans to complete the thesis following the schedule set by the USFSP Graduate Studies. Complete and submit a Thesis Student Information Request Form to the USFSP Graduate Studies.

Step 8. Work with the committee, mainly the chair, to complete the thesis draft and submit it to the committee for review.

Step 9. Arrange a public thesis defense and orally defend the completed thesis. A public announcement must be posted two weeks prior to the thesis defense.

Step 10. Revise and finalize the thesis and submit it to the USFSP Graduate Studies. In addition, submit one copy to the USFSP library’s Digital Archive.

Thesis Proposal Requirements

A thesis requires a 4- or 5-page proposal, including research objectives, problem statement, literature review, research questions or hypotheses, and research method, depending on your research approach. These are often the first three chapters of the thesis.

Research objectives: A concise explanation of what the proposed research aims to accomplish.

Problem statement: Define and justify the research problem. What is the significance of the thesis in advancing knowledge in journalism or mass communications studies? How is it theoretically relevant?

Review of literature: Put your proposed study into a theoretical framework by giving a survey the relevant research, both published and unpublished.

Research questions or hypotheses: Under the theoretical framework built in literature review, specify hypotheses or/and a set of research questions to be explored and answered. A hypothesis is a clear statement of conjecture about a problem, expressing a relationship between variables. The problem may also be stated as a series of connected research questions that explore the full range of the issue or topic.

Research method: Specify what will be done to solve or explore the thesis problem. Explain how information or data will be collected (observation, questionnaire, survey, content analysis, etc.) and then, how the data will be analyzed and interpreted.

Definition of Terms: Define words or terms that have a meaning special to the thesis.

Outline and chapter summary: Propose chapter names (or topics) and sub-heads (if used), and a summary of what each chapter hopes accomplish. This may change in your actual thesis. Be as comprehensive as you can in your proposal.

Bibliography: Provide a preliminary list of sources.
This chart compares the Thesis and ARP processes.

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<th>ARP</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final submission deadline</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>2 members, both from department with a regular faculty member as chair; other member may have adjunct or courtesy appointment</td>
<td>3 members, which may include one member outside of department but within USF system (or with grad school approval for outsider)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>3 of MMC 6950</td>
<td>6 of MMC 6971 (and MMC 6421)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Trade, professional or lay audience, journalistic research; may require IRB approval</td>
<td>Academic, includes scholarly research; may require IRB approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required steps</td>
<td>Proposal approved by committee, product approved by committee, public presentation</td>
<td>Proposal approved by committee, manuscript approved by committee, public defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final product</td>
<td>2500-5000 words (or equivalent) suitable for publication or display in appropriate venue; if visual or broadcast product, must include a 7–10 page justification for project</td>
<td>30-50 page academic paper suitable for publication in a scholarly journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>May benefit a future professional career</td>
<td>May benefit a future academic career</td>
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Succeeding in the Food Writing and Photography Graduate Certificate Program (FWP)

Whether you choose to complete the certificate completely online or as a hybrid, this program will create a solid foundation on which you can continue to build your brand and reputation as a food writer or photographer.

By completing four courses worth 12 total credits, you can obtain a Food Writing and Photography Graduate Certificate from the University of South Florida St. Petersburg. Students may take more than 12 credits to pursue their interests, but 12 are required for the completion of the certification. Of these 12 credits, six are earned in required courses (MMC 6936: Food Writing, MMC 6936: Food in Communication), and six are earned by completing two electives of your choosing.

Academic integrity and disruption of academic process

Academic Integrity assumes that students complete and present work that represents their own efforts and that they represent the efforts of others accurately and fairly. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, forgery, obstruction, multiple submissions, complicity, and other misconduct in research and creative endeavors including computer misuse and misuse of intellectual property will not be tolerated.

These expectations are fundamental to the credibility of working journalists and are explicit and firm requirements for all work produced by our graduate and undergraduate majors. Definitions of these acts can be found under USF Regulation Number USF3.027.

Depending upon the seriousness of infraction and level of intent, graduate students who violate academic integrity requirements can expect the following: an “F” or “Zero” grade on the subject paper or assignment; an “F” in the relevant course; an “FF” in the course, which leads to expulsion from the University; academic dismissal from the program; revocation of the degree if academic dishonesty is discovered after the degree is conferred. Students are required to know what counts as a violation of academic integrity. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse.

Disruption of the academic process occurs when student language or conduct “directs attention away from the academic matters at hand,” or “presents a danger to the health, safety, or well-being of self or other persons,” in the view of the instructor. Disruption may result in exclusion, dismissal, or academic sanction. Full information can be found under USF Regulation Number USF3.025.
General information

**Accessing Classes**

The University of South Florida uses the Canvas learning management system for all distance learning. Students should log in on the first day of classes each semester to be counted as “present.” Your instructor may have additional tasks for you to complete to be counted “present.”

**Applying To Graduate**

In a student’s final semester in the graduate program, it is the student’s responsibility to apply for graduation. This can be done online via OASIS. Applying to graduate is required and is NOT the same as registering for commencement. Students can register for commencement at [http://www.usfsp.edu/commencement/](http://www.usfsp.edu/commencement/).

Students graduating in the fall, spring or summer semesters have the optional opportunity to walk in USF St. Petersburg’s commencement ceremony.

**Assistantships**

The Department of Journalism and Digital Communication distributes limited funds to outstanding graduate students through tuition waivers or/and stipends based on the student’s potential or demonstration of talent and commitment. All students are expected to work for the department in exchange for the departmental support, regardless of the source of funding. While students are each assigned to a faculty supervisor, students may be called on to assist in activities throughout the department. All supported students will be referred to as graduate assistants and will work, at least, 10 hours per week in support of the department throughout each semester.

Online graduate students may be eligible for assistantships. If a DJD student is local he or she may maintain a physical presence in the department of journalism and media studies. Outstanding distance learning candidates may be considered based on proven ability to communicate digitally and the existence of research tasks that can be completed asynchronously and online.

**Eligibility for Support**

Minimally, applicants to the department must have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or above, a score on an admissions test that places them in the 75th percentile or above, and demonstration of accomplishment in previous work or academic environments. Current students must have a current GPA
of 3.0 or above and have demonstrated their commitment to the department or the field. All support is awarded on a competitive basis. There are always more qualified candidates than supported positions.

**Types of Support**

*Tuition Waiver:* The Department provides support at the level of one semester’s in-state tuition. This is deposited directly into the student’s university account.

*Stipend:* The Department provides support at a set amount paid out over a semester that is generally equivalent to a semester’s tuition waiver.

*Hourly pay:* depending on the source of funding, the Department may pay a student a set hourly rate that is determined in consultation with Human Resources.

**Sources of Funding**

*College of Arts & Sciences Graduate Assistant Funding:* the amount that the Department receives each semester in this funding line varies and may be directed support, in that it limits student services to a particular function, such as online course support.

*Poynter-Jamison Foundation Scholar:* the Poynter Jamison Chair in Media Ethics and Press Policy may select a student with an outstanding academic background who has also demonstrated an interest in ethics or responsible media practices. This scholar will provide teaching and/or research assistance to the Poynter Jamison Chair.

*Tampa Bay Times Fellow:* the Tampa Bay Times may be used to support eligible students who bring strong interest or professional experience in media presentations of those who have traditionally been underserved by traditional media. The Tampa Bay Times Fellows often work as teaching or editorial assistants for the departmentally supported Neighborhood News Bureau.

**Directed Reading/Independent Study (Up To Three Credits)**

Students may pursue semester-long individual research related to their study objectives for their degree and get up to three credits. Students invite an appropriate instructor to supervise the study and write a “study contract” that includes a one-page description of the planned study including learning goals, activities planned to achieve those goals, and a process by which the student will demonstrate that the learning goals were achieved. Students should request the appropriate form from the department’s Administrative Specialist. After the contract is completed by student and instructors, a permit can be granted. Students then may register for MMC 6900 Directed Readings in Mass Communications or MMC 6910 Individual Research in Mass Communications. Note that MMC 6900 and MMC 6910 are graded as S/U and do not contribute to a student’s overall GPA.
Incompletes
The grade of “Incomplete” is not given for the convenience of the student, but rather signifies that the student has 1) completed a majority of the semester’s work, and 2) the student is unable to complete course requirements due to illness or other circumstances beyond his or her control. Instructor and student agree to a written contract that stipulates when and how the course will be completed and both sign the required form. All missing work must be completed within one semester. If the student fails to meet contracted terms, the course grade reverts to the grade that the student would have received in the class if s/he had received a zero on the missing assignment(s). A copy of the contract is kept in the student file and in the graduate student office.

Institutional Review Board
The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a Federally-mandated, University-wide committee that examines academic research proposals that involve “human subjects.” The purpose of IRB review is to make sure that people who are being used in the conduct of research are not being subjected to harm and that they have an opportunity to understand the purpose of the research and to voluntarily give their consent to participate.

IRB approval is not required for journalistic research, but it is required for academic research that evaluates human participation as subjects of journalistic research or as intended to contribute to generalized knowledge. Academic research is intended for publication in academic journals or for presentation at an academic conference. For example, news story or magazine story about women at USFSP who have been victims of domestic violence that is based on interviews with the women is journalistic research; however, interviews with victims of domestic violence to see how they feel about being named in newspaper articles, conducted with the intent of publishing an article in Journalism Quarterly, is academic research.

This distinction is important because academic research that includes interviews or surveys or other interaction with people must be reviewed by the IRB before research is begun. In most cases of academic research about media, the chairperson of the IRB will determine that there is no risk or minimal risk to people who agree to participate in your research, but the IRB must make that determination.

There are exceptions. One exception to the need for IRB review is research that includes interviews to produce a specific case study where no generalizations will be drawn from the gathered material.
Another exception is conducting interviews with public officials regarding their professional duties. Projects produced as a classroom exercise with no wider audience than classmates and instructor are also excluded from review. However, if a student decides, after conducting interviews or surveys for a classroom exercise, that s/he would like to use the data for a project with a wider audience, it is likely that IRB will not allow the use of that data.

This policy is consistent with the Federal Office of Research Integrity requirements and the University of South Florida requirements for human subject’s protection.

Any questions should be directed to the department’s Graduate Program Director.

Non-Degree-Seeking Students
Non-degree-seeking students who are enrolled in graduate-level courses in our department fit one of three descriptions. First, professionals or members of the community who have undergraduate degrees may wish to take courses with no plans to seek a graduate degree. Next, students from other institutions may wish to enroll in our courses and transfer those credits to their home institutions. Or, the department may allow a student who has an application for enrollment in the graduate program pending or partially completed to enroll in courses. Enrollment in this latter case will be allowed based on the following criteria: progress that the student is making on his or her application and a grade of B or better in all previous classes taken as a non-degree seeking student. Up to nine credits may be transferred into the JMS program from courses taken non-degree, but students who successfully complete nine credits with non-degree-seeking status will not necessarily be admitted to the graduate program.

In all cases, non-degree-seeking students will be allowed to register with permission of the course instructor, based on availability and the instructor’s judgment of the suitability of the class for the student.
Robert W. Dardenne Chapter of Kappa Tau Alpha

Kappa Tau Alpha is a college honor society that recognizes academic excellence and promotes scholarship in journalism and mass communication. Membership must be earned by excellence in academic work at one of the colleges and universities that have chapters. Selection for membership is a mark of highest distinction and honor.

The University of South Florida St. Petersburg Chapter of Kappa Tau Alpha was established in 2012. The top 10 percent of the class are inducted into Kappa Tau Alpha each year.

The seventh oldest national honor society, Kappa Tau Alpha was founded at the University of Missouri in 1910 at the world's first school of journalism. The Society has 95 chapters and has inducted nearly 60,000 outstanding students since its founding in 1910. It is one of 67 members of the Association of College Honor Societies.

The emblem of Kappa Tau Alpha is the key, the oldest symbol of knowledge and communication. The Greek letters mean "The Truth Will Prevail." The letters also suggest three English words: knowledge, truth and accuracy. The Society's colors are light blue, significant of truth, and gold, emblematic of worth and high standards.

Submitting Projects to Digital Archive

The campus Digital Archive (http://dspace.nelson.usf.edu) is a database for scholarly output, supporting materials, and official archives created by members of the USFSP community. The Department of Journalism and Digital Communication became a contributor to the archive in 2011. Our graduate students are required to submit their ARPs, theses and final projects to the Digital Archive’s “Journalism and Media Studies Graduate Student Culminating Work Collection.” The library can assist our students with loading files into the collection. If you need help, please contact the library at digcol@nelson.usf.edu

Acceptable File Types: For text, machine-readable PDF files are preferred. The library recommends that MS Word or other document files be converted to PDF for preservation purposes. Any other file type such as JPG, PPT, PPTX, XLS, GIF, etc. are acceptable, too.

File Names: Naming your file(s) appropriately will help ensure better access to your work. Use short descriptive names and connect elements with an underscore. Use the appropriate file extension (.pdf, xls, ppt, etc.). For example: Smith_John_biology.pdf, conf_presentation.ppt, and precipitation_data.xls.
Time Limitations
Though most JMS and DJD students aim to finish in two years or fewer, all requirements for the M.A. degree must be completed within five calendar years from the student’s date of admission. Students may request an extension using the Time Limit Extension Request Form or may submit a Leave of Absence Request.

Transfer Credits (Up To Nine Credits)
You may count up to nine credits from graduate-level work at other institutions toward your degree if those courses relate to your study objectives for the degree. You must have completed any course considered for transfer with the grade of B or better. You may need to provide a syllabus or other evidence to demonstrate the relevance of the course to your study. Courses that have been used to complete another degree are not eligible for transfer. Your adviser and the Graduate Director are the final decision-makers as to the appropriateness of transfer of credits.