



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

ARTS, HUMANITIES
& SOCIAL SCIENCES

Department of Media,
Film & Journalism Studies

We are pleased to share with you the news about exciting changes to our graduate programs. These changes will take effect in fall 2016. Following is a memo from professor and MFJS department chair Lynn Schofield Clark, with more information about the new graduate program, as well as the impact on current students and alumni.

New MFJS graduate degree program

The first big change you will notice is that we are changing the names of our MFJS graduate degree programs. Students we are recruiting now for the fall of 2016 will be entering one of two degree programs: either the unchanged M.A. in International and Intercultural Communication (IIC), our joint degree with the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, or the newly developed M.A. in Media and Public Communication.

Students entering the M.A. in Media and Public Communication program can choose between two areas of emphasis: Strategic Communication or Media and Globalization. This new M.A. degree offers greater flexibility than our existing MFJS degrees so that students can complete them with either an internship or a thesis (or both). Students in this program can also opt to take a sequence of three classes in film and video production provided they audit the undergraduate Introduction to Film Criticism course if they are entering graduate work with no background in film or video.

How will this impact current students?

This should have minimal, if any, impact on current graduate students. All of our degree programs will remain available until all currently enrolled students graduate. Right now we offer three programs: M.A. in IIC, M.S. in Strategic Communication, and M.A. in Media, Film, and Journalism Studies, with emphases in either Student Designed (thesis option) or Video Production.

The IIC degree remains unchanged and we are putting plans in place to begin offering the new M.A. in Media and Public Communication in fall of 2016. Starting in fall 2016, we will no longer admit students into the currently existing MFJS degree programs. Students entering in fall of 2015 have the option of pursuing either the new or the current degrees. Beginning in fall 2016, the addition of new courses to our graduate programs will be a benefit to all of our graduate students.

How does this impact alumni?

This should have minimal, if any, impact on our alumni. We hope to continue to engage with you as we continue to build our MFJS and IIC community. We are always glad to have a conversation about how our department can meet needs and shape exciting future directions for our students, our society, and our collective media landscape.

Why are we making these changes?

We believe that the term *public communication* signals our sense of the responsibility that media and communication professionals hold within society. In other words, we do not view communication and technologies that support communication merely as neutral tools to be used best by those who are able to pay the most. Rather, we believe that embedded in communication is a particular history of social relationships that require examination and understanding for the sake of our public good.

As media and communication professionals, creators, and scholars we believe we have a responsibility to consider the larger context in which messages are constructed, conveyed, and interpreted, and we want our students and alumni to be prepared to anticipate the possibilities and consequences of messages for the widest possible range of stakeholders. For this reason, we prefer “public” to many other possible descriptors such as “mass” or “social” media.

So what difference will all of this make?

In practical terms, we believe that these changes to our graduate programs will mean:

- Greater marketability for students who wish to pursue a thesis and explore research careers or further graduate studies;
- A better fit between student career interests and our course offerings, as well as a broader range of graduate courses (e.g., the opportunity to pursue coursework in health communication, branding, film, or international/intercultural communication in relation to the expanding professional paths within strategic communication and media and globalization)
- A graduate education experience which builds on our department’s strengths in the not-for-profit and international aspects of communication and gives students a competitive advantage in professions where social responsibility and multicultural awareness are increasingly in demand

If you have questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us. We are more than happy to discuss these updates with you, and encourage your feedback during the transition period. We also encourage you to stay connected and follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

We hope that you’ll join us this year as we envision our future in graduate study and as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of our M.A. program in International and Intercultural Communication. We will let you know more about the celebration as plans unfold, and we welcome you to be in contact, to sign up to volunteer or to share your insights as we continue to build on our strong foundation for graduate study in the future.

Sincerely,

Lynn Schofield Clark, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
Department of Media, Film and Journalism Studies