

MA THESIS AND MA CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES

MA in Corporate Communication

Communication Studies Department

Baruch College, The City University of New York

2018 - 2020

COM 9991 MA THESIS IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

3 credits; 3 hours

The MA Thesis is a significant work of scholarship—incorporating a literature review, methodology, analytical procedures, and findings—that integrates the range of corporate communication theory, practice, and management presented throughout the program. The Thesis enables the student to: conduct extensive research in a subject of interest in the field; apply his or her knowledge of corporate communication; demonstrate professional capabilities acquired during the program; and display an ability to undertake further scholarly work beyond the master’s level in the academic field of communication studies or a related discipline. The students will also have an opportunity to report the results of his or her research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way to an appropriate audience.

COM 9992 MA CAPSTONE PROJECT IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

3 credits; 3 hours

The MA Capstone Project is a research based work—such as a case-study, article-length paper, or sample corporate communication strategy—that integrates the range of corporate communication theory, practice, and management presented throughout the program and enables the degree candidate to: conduct research in a subject of interest in the field; apply knowledge of corporate communication acquired in the program; and demonstrate professional capabilities acquired during the program. The MA Capstone Project also requires the student to present the results of his or her research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way to the university and professional communities at a colloquium.

MA THESIS AND CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES
MA in Corporate Communication
Communication Studies Department
Baruch College, The City University of New York
2013 -- 2014

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Guidelines for the Thesis or Capstone Project Requirement

1) Overview of the Thesis and Capstone Project Process and Sample Schedule

The final requirement for the completion of the MA in Corporate Communication is either

COM 9991 MA THESIS IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION,

or,

COM 9992 MA CAPSTONE PROJECT IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION.

The MA Thesis or the MA Capstone Project is an independent research study in corporate communication that may:

- develop a strategy for solving a specific corporate communication problem;
- analyze a corporate communication environment;
- investigate theoretical or experimental issues;
- test a specified hypothesis;
- develop a case study of a corporation or an organization.

The research can be focused on either or both the environment known to, or experienced by, the degree candidate; or a traditional research investigation of a particular aspect of corporate communication. Both the thesis and the capstone project may be a combination of the two.

The thesis or capstone project should:

- present the results of the investigation or analysis of the issue, topic, or problem
- indicate the significance of the findings to the profession, and to the larger professional community
- discuss the work in the context of the relevant literature
- present a clearly defined method for analyzing the problem or issue, answering or exploring the question of interest
- present specific conclusions, observations, evaluations, or recommendations.

The length of the document depends on the scope of the subject and the range of literature on the topic, however 20 to 50 pages -- plus appendices such as tables, charts, questionnaires, interview schedules, drawings, and photographs -- is appropriate.

Documentation and the bibliography must meet the standards of academic research set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA) or the Modern Language Association (MLA). Citations and bibliography should be consistent and follow APA or MLA style guidelines.

Time Limit The MA candidate must complete the MA Thesis within 5 years of the date of beginning the MA program.

1.a.) Sample Schedule for an MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project

Before registering for an MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project:

- Discuss possible research topics with members of the faculty
- Select an Advisor for an MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project
- Become acquainted with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process
- Conduct a preliminary literature review to be able to formulate the research question, methods, and organization, in order to prepare a formal project proposal for an MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project
- Submit an MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project proposal for approval to the Advisor, and then to the Program Director

After Approval of MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project Proposal:

- Obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) certification, if appropriate, before conducting research. Discuss with Advisor and reader(s).
- Conduct a Literature Review. Discuss with Advisor and reader(s).
- Conduct Secondary and Primary Research, both quantitative and qualitative, if appropriate. Discuss with Advisor and reader(s)
- Analyze Research
- Draft the Thesis or Capstone Project.
- Discuss Draft with Advisor and Reader(s)
- Prepare Revisions to the Draft. Discuss with Advisor and reader(s)
- Submit the completed MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project for approval to the Advisor and Reader(s), and then to the Program Director

After Approval of MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project:

- Schedule the Colloquium During the Week of Final Exams in December or May. The completed MA Thesis is presented at a Colloquium open to the university and business communities.
- Submit Final Copies of the completed Thesis or Capstone Project to Advisor, Reader(s) and Program Director for Approval
- Submit Approved MA Thesis or Capstone Project Copies to the Graduate Office

Time Limit The MA candidate must complete the MA Thesis within 5 years of the date of beginning the MA program.

1.b) MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project Orientation

MA THESIS AND CAPSTONE PROJECT ORIENTATION: CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MA THESIS & CAPSTONE PROJECT

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The MA Thesis and Capstone Project Orientation is designed to prepare students for the MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project. See the descriptions for COM 9991 Masters Thesis and for COM 9992 MA Capstone Project below.

The **MA Thesis** in Corporate Communication is designed for students who are seeking an intensive and rigorous scholarly experience at the highest level of master's degree work. The Masters Thesis is a significant work of scholarship—incorporating a literature review, methodology, analytical procedures, and findings—that integrates the range of corporate communication theory, practice, and management presented throughout the program. The Thesis enables the student to: conduct extensive research in a subject of interest in the field; apply his or her knowledge of corporate communication; demonstrate professional capabilities acquired during the program; and display an ability to undertake further scholarly work beyond the master's level in the academic field of communication studies or a related discipline. The students will also have an opportunity to report the results of his or her research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way to an appropriate audience.

The **MA Capstone Project** is a research based work—such as a case-study, article-length paper, or sample corporate communication strategy—that integrates the range of corporate communication theory, practice, and management presented throughout the program and enables the student to: conduct research in a subject of interest in the field; apply knowledge of corporate communication acquired in the program; and demonstrate professional capabilities acquired during the program. The MA Capstone Project also requires the candidate to present the results of his or her research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way to the university and professional communities at a colloquium.

MA Thesis or Capstone Project Procedure

The corporate communication discipline fosters collaborative efforts. In that spirit, the Advisor acts as mentor, participating actively throughout the phases of the process. The Advisor is expected to guide, challenge, support, and question the degree candidate's work, and to actively provide strategic and effective communication in order to bring the student's effort to successful completion and possible publication. Both the thesis and capstone are aimed at making an original contribution to the field of corporate communication, and must demonstrate the student's expertise in reporting the results of research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way.

The process can be broken down in this way:

Before taking COM 9991 or COM 9992–

- a. Complete MA Thesis and Capstone Project Orientation to discuss Advisor selection and develop the Thesis's research question, methods, organization, and schedule
- b. Submit an MA Thesis Proposal for approval by the MA Program Director

Complete COM 9991 or COM 9992

2) Description -- COM 9991 MA Thesis in Corporate Communication

COM 9991 MA THESIS IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

3 credits; 3 hours

The MA Thesis is a significant work of scholarship—incorporating a literature review, methodology, analytical procedures, and findings—that integrates the range of corporate communication theory, practice, and management presented throughout the program. The Thesis enables the student to: conduct extensive research in a subject of interest in the field; apply his or her knowledge of corporate communication; demonstrate professional capabilities acquired during the program; and display an ability to undertake further scholarly work beyond the master’s level in the academic field of communication studies or a related discipline. The students will also have an opportunity to report the results of his or her research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way to an appropriate audience.

The thesis project can:

- Investigate an observation, concept, principle, or theory
- Test a hypothesis
- Conduct an experiment
- Analyze a corporate culture or environment
- Develop a strategy for solving a corporate communication problem
- Analyze and interpret a case study

MA Thesis Procedure

The corporate communication discipline fosters collaborative efforts. In that spirit, the MA Thesis Advisor acts as mentor, participating actively throughout the phases of the MA Thesis. The MA Thesis Advisor is expected to guide, challenge, support, and question the degree candidate’s work, and to actively provide strategic and effective communication in order to bring the student’s effort to successful completion and possible publication. The MA Thesis is aimed at making an original contribution to the field of corporate communication, and must demonstrate the student's expertise in reporting the results of research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way.

The process for the MA Thesis can be broken down in this way:

Before taking COM 9991 –

- c. Complete MA Thesis and Capstone Project Orientation to discuss Advisor selection and develop the Thesis’s research question, methods, organization, and schedule
- d. Submit an MA Thesis Proposal for approval by the MA Program Director

Complete COM 9991 -- presentation of MA Thesis at Department Colloquium

3) Description -- COM 9992 MA Capstone Project in Corporate Communication

COM 9992 MA CAPSTONE PROJECT IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

3 credits; 3 hours

The MA Capstone Project is a research based work—such as a case-study, article-length paper, or sample corporate communication strategy—that integrates the range of corporate communication theory, practice, and management presented throughout the program and enables the degree candidate to: conduct research in a subject of interest in the field; apply knowledge of corporate communication acquired in the program; and demonstrate professional capabilities acquired during the program. The MA Capstone Project also requires the student to present the results of his or her research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way to the university and professional communities at a colloquium.

The Capstone Project can:

- Present a case study
- Develop a corporate communication campaign
- Create a communication plan for an organization
- Investigate an area of interest such as:
 - Communicating through crisis and change management
 - Corporate communication policy and strategy
 - Corporate governance, policy, and practice
 - Corporate social responsibility and ethics
 - Cross cultural communication and stakeholder relations
 - Government relations
 - Image, identity, and reputation management
 - Integrated advertising and marketing
 - Internal corporate communication
 - Social media and Internet/intranet practices
 - Investor relations and sustainability reporting
 - Issues in corporate communication management
 - Issues management
 - Old and new media relations
 - Performance measures; research methodologies for corporate communication
 - Public diplomacy and business
 - Strategic public relations
 - Sustainability and corporate communication
 - Transparency and disclosure in corporate reporting

MA Capstone Project Procedure

The corporate communication discipline fosters collaborative efforts. In that spirit, the MA Capstone Project Advisor acts as mentor, participating actively throughout the phases of the MA Capstone Project. The MA Capstone Project Advisor is expected to guide, challenge, support, and question the degree candidate's work, and to actively provide strategic and effective communication in order to bring the student's effort to successful completion and possible publication.

The process for the MA Capstone Project can be broken down in this way:

Semester before taking COM 9992—

- a. Attend an MA Thesis and Capstone Project Orientation to discuss Advisor selection and develop the Capstone Project's research question, methods, organization, and schedule
- b. Submit an MA Capstone Project Proposal for approval by the MA Program Director

Complete COM 9992; presentation of MA Capstone Project at Department Colloquium

4) Ethical Research and the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Ethical Research and the Baruch Institutional Review Board (IRB)

<http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/irb/>

Professional ethics requires protection of research participants, and in addition federal law mandates that researchers working with human subjects acquire approval of an institutional review board. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) <http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/irb/> is a Baruch body consisting of faculty and one community member which must approve in advance all human subjects research involving Baruch personnel. The mission of the Baruch IRB is to facilitate quality research, with quality in this context emphasizing balancing risks and benefits for subjects.

A researcher at Baruch must complete computer based training and prior to each new research study submit an application to the Baruch Institutional Review Board. In brief, the application asks for concise descriptions of a study's purposes, design and procedures. Important criteria for IRB approval include voluntary participation, confidentiality, informed consent, and limited risk.

5) Thesis and Capstone Project Advisors and Readers

MA Thesis Advisor and Reader Students begin their MA Thesis or Capstone Project by petitioning the MA Program Director to approve the selection of a Thesis Advisor and Reader, as well as the MA Thesis topic. In consultation with the MA Thesis Advisor, the degree candidate submits an MA Thesis Proposal to the MA Program Director before enrolling in COM 9991 or COM 9992. The proposal describes the value of the selected topic, outlines the major thesis to be advanced, provides an overview of major relevant research literature, defines the methodology to be used, and presents a schedule for completion of the project. The student, in consultation with the MA Thesis Advisor, invites another faculty member with research interests related to the student's project to serve as a Reader. An optional third reader may be from outside the communication program.

MA Capstone Project Advisor and Reader After completing all other course requirements, students begin their MA Capstone Project by petitioning the MA Program Director to approve the selection of a Capstone Project Advisor and Reader, as well as the MA Capstone Project topic. In consultation with the MA Capstone Project Advisor, the degree candidate submits an MA Capstone Project Proposal to the MA Program Director before enrolling in COM 9992. The proposal describes the value of the selected topic, outlines the major thesis to be advanced, provides an overview of major relevant research literature, defines the methodology to be used, and presents a schedule for completion of the project. The student, in consultation with the MA Capstone Project Advisor, invites another faculty member with research interests related to the student's project to serve on the MA Project committee. The student can select an optional third reader.

The MA Capstone Project is aimed at making a contribution to the field of corporate communication, and must demonstrate the student's expertise in reporting the results of research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way. Examples of MA Capstone Project topic areas include: crisis communication, corporate reputation, corporate identity, issues management, employee communication, media relations, investor relations, executive speeches, corporate citizenship, sustainability, and transparency.

6) Colloquium

MA Thesis Colloquium The completed MA Thesis is presented at a Colloquium open to the university and business communities. Approved copies of the MA Thesis are submitted to the Department, the university, University Microfilms, and the Library of Congress.

MA Capstone Project Colloquium The completed MA Capstone Project is presented at a Colloquium open to the university and business communities. Approved copies of the MA Capstone Project are submitted to the Department and the university.

7) Approval and Submission

Submit a final draft of the thesis or capstone project for approval to your advisor and reader at least **two weeks** before the last day of classes.

Upon approval of the final draft prepare three copies of your MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project. Each copy must have an approval page -- with room for the approval signatures of your advisor, reader, and the program director -- as well as the copyright page.

Submit three clean copies of the approved thesis or capstone project to the MA Program no later than the last day of final examinations for any given semester. The Program Director will provide additional information regarding the costs related to the binding of the thesis project.

The Library Process for New Theses for Deposit

Students finishing their MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project hand in a copy to the library for cataloging.

The procedure is:

- complete the "Thesis Request Form"
- pay a \$15.00 thesis fee at the Bursar Office
- get a copy of the form with Bursar fee-paid stamp
- send it to cataloging (Janey Chao) with the form.

Questions can be directed to Ms. Cathy Levkolic from Graduate Studies (646-312-4493) at the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences or Prof. Janey Chao (646-312-1698) at The Newman Library.

8) Seminar Outline for COM 9991 MA Thesis in Corporate Communication

COM 9991 MASTERS THESIS IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

3 credits; 3 hours

LEARNING GOALS:

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate intellectual competency in the field for further academic study and research
- Exhibit ethical understanding and awareness
- Apply effective and appropriate research tools and techniques
- Integrate the range of corporate communication theory and practice presented throughout the program
- Display competence in the strategic integration of knowledge
- Report the results of research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way

PREREQUISITE(S): Students must successfully complete all other required courses. The semester before this course, the student must attend an MA Thesis and Capstone Project Orientation to discuss the selection of an Advisor and formulate the project's research question, methods, and organization, in order to prepare a formal project proposal.

BULLETIN DESCRIPTION:

The MA Thesis in Corporate Communication is designed for students who are seeking an intensive and rigorous scholarly experience at the highest level of master's degree work. The MA Thesis is a significant work of scholarship—incorporating a literature review, methodology, analytical procedures, and findings—that integrates the range of corporate communication theory, practice, and management presented throughout the program. The Thesis enables the student to: conduct extensive research in a subject of interest in the field; apply his or her knowledge of corporate communication; demonstrate professional capabilities acquired during the program; and display an ability to undertake further scholarly work beyond the master's level in the academic field of communication studies or a related discipline. The students will also have an opportunity to report the results of his or her research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way to an appropriate audience.

MA Thesis Procedure

See "Overview of the Thesis and Capstone Project Process" above on page 3.

9) Seminar Outline for COM 9992 MA Capstone Project in Corporate Communication

COM 9992 MA CAPSTONE PROJECT IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

3 credits; 3 hours

LEARNING GOALS OF COURSE:

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate intellectual competence in the field of corporate communication through a research-based Capstone Project
- Integrate the range of corporate communication theory and practice presented throughout the program
- Apply effective and appropriate research tools and techniques to conduct research in a subject of interest in the field
- Exhibit ethical understanding and awareness
- Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information to facilitate effective decision-making
- Report the results of research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way

PREREQUISITE(S): Students must successfully complete all other required courses. The semester before this course, the student must attend an MA Thesis and Capstone Project Orientation to discuss the selection of an Advisor and formulate the project's research question, methods, and organization, in order to prepare a formal project proposal.

BULLETIN DESCRIPTION

The MA Capstone Project is a research based work—such as a case-study, article-length paper, or sample corporate communication strategy—that integrates the range of corporate communication theory, practice, and management presented throughout the program and enables the degree candidate to: conduct research in a subject of interest in the field; apply knowledge of corporate communication acquired in the program; and demonstrate professional capabilities acquired during the program. The MA Capstone Project also requires the student to present the results of his or her research in a clear, professional, and comprehensive way to the university and professional communities at a colloquium.

MA Capstone Project Procedure

See “Overview of the Thesis and Capstone Project Process” above on page 3.

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a. Thesis or Capstone Project Advisor Approval.....	15
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c. Proposal timeline (Gantt chart or schedule).....	16
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h. Signature page.....	20
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j. Colloquium.....	22

a. Thesis or Capstone Project Advisor Approval

MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project Advisor and Reader(s)

CIRCLE ONE: MA THESIS MA CAPSTONE

The faculty members listed below have agreed to serve on your thesis committee. This committee consists of an advisor and a reader. A second reader is optional and may be from outside the Communication Studies Department. This form represents a commitment from the faculty to work with you during the proposal process and, if the proposal is approved, during the research and writing of your thesis or capstone project, and chair the colloquium. This form does not imply that the proposal is approved.

[Graduate student's name] _____ [Date]

TITLE OF THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT [Centered and Bold]

Description of the thesis or capstone project:

Approved:

Professor [name of advisor], Advisor _____ [Date]

Professor [name of reader], Reader _____ [Date]

Professor [name of advisor], Program Director _____ [Date]

b. Proposal

MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project Proposal	
CIRCLE ONE: MA THESIS MA CAPSTONE	
TITLE OF THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT [Centered and Bold]	
[Graduate student's name]	[Date]
Executive Overview of the project:	
Description of the research topic:	
Preliminary Literature review:	
Research Method:	
Discussion:	
Research Schedule:	

c. Proposal timeline (Gantt chart or schedule)

MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project Proposal	
CIRCLE ONE: MA THESIS MA CAPSTONE	
TITLE OF THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT [Centered and Bold]	
[Graduate student's name]	[Date]
Literature Review	
IRB Certification	
Research Design	
Data Collection – Surveys; Interviews; observations; focus groups	
Analysis	
Draft	
Review & Revisions	
Colloquium	
Approval & Submission	

d. Proposal approval

MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project Proposal

CIRCLE ONE: MA THESIS MA CAPSTONE

The faculty members listed below have approved the proposal. The student may register for COM 9991 MA Thesis in Corporate Communication, or COM 9992 MA Capstone Project in Corporate Communication.

TITLE OF THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT [Centered and Bold]

[Graduate student's name] _____ [Date]

Approved:

Professor [name of advisor], Advisor [Date]

Professor [name of reader], Reader [Date]

Professor [name of MA Director], Program Director [Date]

e. IRB Certification

MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project IRB Certification	
CIRCLE ONE: MA THESIS MA CAPSTONE	
TITLE OF THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT [Centered and Bold]	
[Graduate student's name]	[Date]
This research project has obtained IRB Certification. Letter attached:	
Date:	
Professor [name of advisor], Advisor [Date]	
Professor [name of reader], Reader [Date]	
Professor [name of MA Director], Program Director [Date]	

f. Outline

Provide a brief outline of your thesis or capstone project. For example:

- 1.0 Executive Summary (Abstract)
- 2.0 Introduction
- 3.0 Synopsis of Literature Review and Research Method
- 4.0 Draft Manuscript
- 5.0 Findings or Conclusions
- 6.0 References, List of Works Cited, or Sources

7.0 Title page

TITLE OF THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT [Centered and Bold]

A Thesis [Capstone Project] Presented to the Faculty of the

Weissman School of Arts and Sciences

Baruch College, The City University of New York

In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

By

[Graduate Student's name]

[Date]

8.0 Signature page

TITLE OF THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT [Centered and Bold]

A Thesis [Capstone Project] Presented to the Faculty of the
Weissman School of Arts and Sciences
Baruch College, The City University of New York
In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS
In
CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**

By

[Graduate Student's name]

[Date]

Under the guidance and approval of the committee,
and approved by all its members, this thesis [capstone project] has been
accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in Corporate Communication.

Approved:

Professor [name of advisor], Advisor [Date]

Professor [name of reader], Reader [Date]

Professor [name of MA Director], Program Director [Date]

8.1 Copyright page

TITLE OF THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT [Centered and Bold]

Copyright By
[Graduate Student's name]
[Date]

j. Colloquium

The completed MA Thesis is presented at a Colloquium open to the university and business communities. Approved copies of the MA Thesis are submitted to the Department, the university, University Microfilms, and the Library of Congress.

MA Thesis or MA Capstone Project Proposal

The faculty members listed below have approved the MA Thesis of MA Capstone Project . The student may schedule a Colloquium.

A Colloquium for

TITLE OF THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT [Centered and Bold]

[Graduate student’s name] [Date]

Will be held at

[location of the Colloquium]

On

[Date and time]

Approved:

Professor [name of advisor], Advisor [Date]

Professor [name of reader], Reader [Date]

Professor [name of MA Director], Program Director [Date]