Master’s Degree
Journalism and Media Studies
2016-2017

Graduate Studies in Journalism and Media Studies
The Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies offers a traditional Master of Arts degree focusing on research methods and theory. The program is committed to the proposition that enhancing society requires an innovative, interdisciplinary, and rigorous understanding of its media. As media continue to change and evolve, continuous observation and interpretation are necessary elements in our scholarly and pedagogical missions. The Journalism and Media Studies (JMS) program offers courses of study for students with a career orientation in diverse areas such as advertising, public relations, broadcast and print journalism, media management, media research, and teaching; and for students who aspire to continue their education in doctoral programs.

Master of Arts – Journalism & Media Studies
Program Information in Graduate College Catalogue

JMS Department Website

JMS Grad Coordinator: Julian Kilker
Office Ph: 702-895-3729
julian.kilker@unlv.edu

JMS Department Office: 2147 Greenspun Hall; Ph: 702-895-3325

Facilities
The School of Journalism and Media Studies is located on the first two floors of Greenspun Hall, housing staff and faculty offices as well as graduate assistant offices. Located on the corner of Maryland Parkway and University Drive, Greenspun Hall is the home of the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies and the College of Urban Affairs. The building features state-of-the-art classrooms and research facilities. Also for research is the 302,000-square-foot Lied Library, which offers comfortable seating, group study rooms, and food and coffee services. Lied is one of the most technically sophisticated university libraries in the United States, hosting hundreds of computer workstations, automated book storage and retrieval systems, and a media distribution system. Its Special Collections reservation/conservation laboratory is the only one of its kind in the state.
Financial Assistance
The Graduate College offers opportunities for graduate students to receive scholarships, fellowships, assistantships (see next section), and other monetary awards. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for a listing of programs available through the university. Also, check out the Greenspun College website for application procedure. In addition to these university-wide programs, there are opportunities within the school and department for which you may be eligible. These include:

*The Maury Stevens Memorial Scholarship.* This scholarship provides $1,000 for graduate students. Students apply for this scholarship during the general scholarship application period.

Assistantships
The School of Journalism and Media Studies offers several graduate assistantships. The stipend is $10,000 along with a tuition waiver and health insurance (the tuition waiver covers about 80% of student fees, and the Graduate College pays $1,000 toward the overall cost of their annual student health insurance, $500 per semester). Students teach, prep, and grade course material for about 20 hours of work per week. Applications for assistantships are submitted through the Graduate College and are due March 15 each year.

Graduate Admissions Procedures and Requirements
Applications for admission to the graduate program must include the following:

- Complete application form
- All transcripts
  
  Applicants with transcripts from institutions outside of the United States are required to provide a course-by-course evaluation of all foreign credentials from one of the external evaluating agencies listed on the Graduate College website.
- International applicants must provide proof of English proficiency
  Acceptable documents include: TOEFL; Michigan Test; IELTS

Submit these items to:

UNLV Graduate College University of Nevada, Las Vegas Box 451017  
4505 Maryland Parkway Las Vegas, NV 89154-1017

For more information, please see the UNLV admissions website, as well as the Admissions section of the Graduate Catalog.

The Graduate Application materials should be postmarked no later than March 15th for fall admission. Please Note: An applicant may be denied admission for reasons such as a low GPA, low GRE scores, inadequate undergraduate preparation, academic interests, and stated intentions do not coincide with the program, etc.
Overview of Degree Options: For the Graduate College’s listing of the different tracks a graduate student in Journalism and Media Studies might take and the requirements associated with each one, please see the Graduate College Catalogue. JMS offers two tracks a student may take to achieve a Master’s degree: the Thesis Track; and the Examination Track.

Thesis Track. The thesis track involves taking 31 credits of courses and writing a thesis (an additional 6 credits). The thesis is an original piece of research that the student writes under the guidance of a thesis advisor and thesis committee.

Non-traditional Forms. A non-traditional thesis must be consistent with the overall objectives of the program and be approved by the student’s thesis committee. The content may be written or take the form of a documentary, drama, public relations campaign, film, video, exhibit, script, website, or any combination approved by the student’s thesis committee. A written research component that follows department and Graduate College formatting guidelines is also required.* Regardless of the option selected, the entire thesis must be approved by the Graduate College for electronic and university library access purposes. An oral examination of the thesis is required.

* Available upon request from UNLV’s Graduate College. The Graduate College’s Guide to Preparing & Submitting a Thesis or Dissertation may serve as a guideline to the written part of the non-traditional thesis, but allowances may be made depending on the project’s scope. The Graduate College receives both the written and the non-written parts of the non-traditional thesis upon completion of the project.

Examination Track. The examination track involves taking 37 credits of courses, constructing a Graduate Education Portfolio (see below), and writing a comprehensive exam at the end of the program.

Degree Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Track:</th>
<th>Exam Track:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· A GPA of 3.0 must be maintained in order to graduate.</td>
<td>· A GPA of 3.0 must be maintained in order to graduate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· 31 hours of course work</td>
<td>· 37 hours of course work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· 6 hours of thesis</td>
<td>· Graduate Education Portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Completed thesis</td>
<td>· Written exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Oral defense of the thesis</td>
<td>· Oral defense of the exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Passing grade on thesis</td>
<td>· Passing grade on exam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades: The Graduate College determines a student’s grade point average (GPA), computed for all course work included on a student’s Proposed Degree Program form. Graduate courses taken at institutions other than UNLV prior to admission to Graduate College are not included in the graduate GPA computation. Graduate students only get credit for classes in which they receive a “B-” grade or higher. A “C” grade in a course means that that course does not count in the program of course work. Receiving two “C” grades is grounds for termination from the program.
Pass/Fail: Graduate courses are not normally offered on a pass/fail basis except for thesis, professional papers, or for non-credit courses.

“X” Grade: An X grade is used to identify unfinished thesis credits.

“I” Grade: If a student receives an Incomplete grade in a graduate-level course, the instructor may determine a period, not to exceed one year, for removal of the “I” from the student’s record. If after a year the student fails to complete the work, the Registrar automatically changes the grade to an “F.” The “I” grade is used when a student has failed to complete course requirements and the instructor judges the reason for non-completion to be satisfactory.

UNLV Policies require graduate students to have a minimum 3.0 degree program GPA to graduate.

Degree Requirements
The Prospectus: Before the student begins his or her thesis, or nontraditional project, he or she writes a prospectus, which is a plan for writing the thesis and/or creating the nontraditional project. The prospectus includes an introduction explaining your study’s purpose, how you will do it, and a timeline for completing the thesis. A prospectus meeting is held in which the student’s committee makes suggestions for doing the study.

Oral Defense: After the thesis or non-traditional thesis is completed, the student distributes it to committee members, giving them approximately two weeks to review it before scheduling a time for its defense. At the defense, the student discusses the thesis or nontraditional project with the committee in a spirit of cooperative good will, understanding that the faculty may question any aspect of the thesis and ask for further improvements. Make sure to follow deadlines from the Graduate College.

Defense Results: The defense of the thesis may result in any of three decisions: Pass; pass with revisions; or, no pass. The most common of these three results is to pass with revisions, with revisions ranging from simple editing of style, grammatical errors, and so forth, to substantial rewrites of entire sections of the thesis. The committee may decide to either “sign off” on the thesis or not at the time of this decision depending on the extent of the revisions. The committee may also want to see the final revisions or not. Signing off on the thesis means that the committee agrees to sign the appropriate forms for the completion of the thesis. Again, they may decide to do this either at the time of the defense or after revisions are completed. If the thesis passes outright, then the student will have no further revisions except those that the Graduate College may request. The committee signs off on the thesis at the time of the defense. In the rare event that the student’s thesis is not passed, the student will at that time be separated from the program and not granted a master’s degree.
Milestones & Required Forms: The Graduate College has required forms for the appointment of your advisory committee (and changes to your committee, if necessary), to outline your degree program requirements, to document your successful prospectus defense, and to document your final thesis defense and submission of your final document, as well as other forms to assist you as you progress through your program. All are available on the [Graduate College website Forms page](#).

Deadlines

**Thesis Distribution.** The completed thesis must be distributed to the committee members no less than two weeks before a desired defense date.

**Oral defense.** The oral defense must be scheduled at least three weeks before the end of the semester or by a deadline date set by the Graduate College. No oral defenses will occur in the summer.

### Example of a Two-Year Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall (1st Year)</td>
<td>JMS 708</td>
<td>JMS Colloquium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JMS 712</td>
<td>Quantitative Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JMS 730</td>
<td>Theories of Journalism and Media Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>Any graduate class of interest (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring (1st Year)</td>
<td>JMS XXX</td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JMS XXX</td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JMS XXX</td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer (1st Yr.)</td>
<td>JMS XXX</td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (or graduate class of interest), approved by an advisor.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL CREDITS AT THE END OF YOUR FIRST YEAR** 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall (2nd Year)</td>
<td>JMS 798</td>
<td>Thesis (Section 001)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JMS XXX</td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JMS XXX</td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring (2 Year)</td>
<td>JMS 798</td>
<td>Thesis (Section 002)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>Any graduate class of interest (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL CREDITS AT THE END OF YOUR SECOND YEAR** 37
Examination Track

Description
The examination track, or non-thesis option, is one of two tracks a graduate student may take to achieve a Master’s Degree. The 37 semester hour non-thesis option culminates in three activities: the satisfactory completion of written comprehensive exams, the submission of a Graduate Education Portfolio, and satisfactory completion of an oral examination. The student works with his/her faculty advisor (whom the student selects) to compose a Faculty Committee. The development and completion of the Graduate Education Portfolio is negotiated between the student and the faculty advisor (see guidelines below).

Exam Committee
Composition. The student’s examination committee consists of three members from the School of Journalism and Media Studies one of which is the exam advisor. A fourth member of the committee is from outside JMS and serves as the graduate college representative.

Duties. Each member of the committee (excluding the outside member) writes exam questions. The advisor then chooses from these questions to create the exam.

The Written Exam
Composition. The written exam consists of several questions that cover the depth and breadth of knowledge one should obtain in a master’s-level graduate program. The student will be asked to answer questions in detail in two 4-hour sessions over two consecutive days. Answers to the questions should be detailed, well-written, and show the student’s range of knowledge in the areas addressed. Questions will be tied to specific course material the student covered in their program of study with emphasis on core course material (712, 730). Theory, method, and various other research techniques may be assessed. Reference to specific scholars, theories, methods, research domains, and so forth are expected. Students should write about 20 type-written pages over the 8-hours of testing.

Format. The student uses a department laptop, or an office computer if available. Other ways to take the exam will be considered (e.g. typewriter, handwritten, etc.).

The Oral Defense
The oral defense of the examination must take place within one week of completing the written examination.

Exam Results
Three examination results are possible: Pass, Pass with Conditions (conditions must be specified), and Fail. In order to pass the Examination Committee must agree on the vote. The Graduate College Representative always has the right to challenge the fairness of the examination and its grading or question if the examination meets University graduate level standards. In these rare instances, the entire examination may be deemed null and void or some other corrective action taken under Graduate College policies.

The Examination Committee Advisor will notify the student and the School of Journalism and Media Studies Graduate Coordinator in writing of the final results normally within 7 work days after the examination (with exceptions for holidays). Student performance on the examination is considered strictly confidential. Only the Examination Committee Chair (i.e., no other faculty member) should reveal the outcome.
In the case where a student receives a Pass with Conditions involving a minor rewrite, these rewrites must be completed within two weeks of notification. Examination Committee members will again have the same time limits as specified above.

A student must retake a failed examination within one year and successfully pass it to receive his or her degree. A second failure on the examination automatically results in student termination from the program.

The Graduate Education Portfolio

Purpose. The “Graduate Education Portfolio” is a tool that summarizes and synthesizes your educational experience as a JMS Master's student.

Design and Binding. The portfolio should have a professional look to it. It needs to be bound. For example, you might use spiral binding with a plastic cover. Pages must be numbered consecutively. Copies must be made for each committee member.

Contents:
I. Title Page with your name and contact information
II. Table of Contents
III. Overview of Your Program of Study
IV. Course Materials
   A. Course Syllabi
   B. Critical Overview of Each Course
   C. Course Notes
   D. Summarized discussion of Course notes
   E. Major Paper and/or Other Important Written Assignments
   F. Assessment of the Written Assignments
V. Conclusions
   A. Strengths of the Program
   B. Limitations
   C. Other (if necessary)
VI. Curriculum Vita

Deadlines

Exam Times. All written exams should be scheduled either in mid-October or in mid-March at a time no later than three weeks before the end of the semester, or by the deadline the Graduate College determines. No examinations are given during the summer sessions. Specific days and times to take the exam are arranged by each student in cooperation with his or her faculty committee and with adequate advanced notice. The exam takes two days to complete with the student writing a minimum of four hours each day.

Oral Exam Times. The oral defense of the exam occurs within a week of the written exam and by the deadline set by the Graduate College. The student is responsible for scheduling the room for the defense and finding a time all the committee members can meet. At the defense the student discusses the exam and the Graduate Education Portfolio with the committee, understanding that the faculty may question any aspect of the exam or GEP and ask for further improvements. Improvements may involve more detailed answers to exam questions, refinement of the GEP, or other refinement and editing.

Portfolio Due Date. The Graduate Education Portfolio is due two weeks before the student takes the written exam.
### Example 2: Exam Track

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
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<th>Course Title</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JMS XXX</td>
<td>Any graduate class of interest (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring (1st Year)</td>
<td></td>
<td>A qualitative methods class approved by the JMS graduate coordinator</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JMS XXX</td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer (1st Yr.)</td>
<td>JMS XXX</td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (or graduate class of interest), approved by an advisor.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL CREDITS AT THE END OF YOUR FIRST YEAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall (2nd Year)</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (and approved by an advisor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>A JMS course of your choice (and approved by an advisor)</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL CREDITS AT THE END OF YOUR SECOND YEAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summer Sessions:** UNLV offers graduate courses in journalism and media studies during two of its three summer sessions (Sessions II and III). Summer sessions are five weeks long. Graduate students may take classes during these sessions, but only up to 12 semester hours of credit (four classes). No more than 6 credit hours may be earned in any one summer session. Summer is also a good time to seek classes outside the major.

**Taking non-JMS Courses:** Graduate students may take up to 6 graduate-level, approved credits from a department or school outside the JMS curriculum and have them count toward your degree. The student must discuss their program and courses with an advisor and receive approval on their Degree Program or Degree Audit companion form.
Transfer Credits: Students transferring from other graduate programs may transfer up to one-third of the total credits of the degree program excluding thesis credits. This translates to 10 credits that may be transferred from another program. All transfer credits must be approved by the graduate committee, graduate coordinator (or department chair), and the Graduate Dean. Students should be prepared to submit syllabi and major papers or other assignments from the courses they which to transfer for credit. Please review the Transfer Credit Policy under the “Credit Requirements” section of the Graduate Catalog for further policy information.

Forms & Due Dates: Once you have been admitted to the graduate program, you will need to fill out and have signed several forms at various times throughout your career as a master’s student. The due dates are approximations. For more information, view the Graduate Study Timeline on the Graduate College website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Degree Plan Requirements Form or Degree Audit Companion Form</td>
<td>Before completing more than 15 credits of course work (end of 2nd semester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Appointment of Examination Committee</td>
<td>Before completing 12-16 credit hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Prospectus Approval</td>
<td>After your prospectus meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Proposed Master’s Degree Program (Two Parts)</td>
<td>Before applying for graduation and no later than the first week of the semester in which you plan to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Oral Defense Results</td>
<td>After thesis defense (4th semester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Application For Graduation</td>
<td>Check Graduate College Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Graduate Program Evaluation Form</td>
<td>At the time you file for graduation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are required forms. You will need several others, filed on an as-needed basis. Most forms are available as downloads.

Advising and Your Advisor: From the moment you are admitted to the master’s program you have an advisor — the Graduate Coordinator. You may always contact or meet with the Graduate Coordinator for advisor, ideas, or other forms of academic counseling. Eventually you will want to work with a faculty member on your thesis. That person may or may not be the Graduate Coordinator. He or she becomes your thesis advisor. You as the graduate student always have the option to change advisors at any time with no penalty or repercussions whatsoever.

Annual Review Procedures: Each spring term, graduate students are required to complete the Graduate Student Annual Review survey. The review covers the prior calendar year.
**Graduate Courses Offered:** A listing of courses offered in the master’s program is listed in the current version of the [Graduate Catalog](#) under the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies.

**Graduate Faculty:** A listing of current JMS faculty and graduate faculty is available on the [Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies](#) website.

**FAQs:** Here are some of the questions graduate students and those interested in our graduate program frequently ask.

- **Do I have to be an undergraduate journalism or broadcasting major to be admitted to your graduate program?** No. It’s not required that you have an undergraduate degree in journalism, broadcasting, or media studies to apply to the graduate program. However, it is helpful if you have had at least a few courses in journalism, broadcasting, or related fields at the undergraduate level. You may be advised to take one or two undergraduate classes before full admission to the program is granted.

- **What are the minimum GRE scores I need for admission?** There are no minimum requirements for the GRE scores. However, it is still important to do as well as you can on the verbal and quantitative parts of the exam (the analytical part is not as important). As rough guide: Using the new scale, scoring a combined 300 in the quantitative and verbal portions (150 on the latter) is a reasonable expectation.

- **What can students do with a master’s degree?** Master’s students have gone into all sorts of careers: Teaching (elementary, secondary, and college); consulting; advertising; broadcasting; management; corporate communication; fundraising; sales; writing; public relations; event planning; human resources; lobbying; politics; advocacy; public affairs; training; and various careers in the non-profit sector. A number of JMS grads also gone on to earn Ph.Ds. at respected institutions across the United States, or they pursue law degrees.

- **What’s the emphasis of the program?** The best way to tell what any graduate program emphasizes is to look at the faculty, what they teach and their research interests (see the section above that describes faculty). In general, we emphasize research and theory, and conducting quality research and contributing to the knowledge of the journalism discipline and media studies.

- **Who should I seek out for advice; who is my advisor?** From the moment you are admitted to the master’s program, you have an advisor. That person is the Graduate Coordinator. You can always visit, call, or e-mail that person for advice about the graduate program. After you’ve been in the program for a semester or two, you may select a thesis advisor who will direct your thesis, but the graduate coordinator is still always available for consultation.

- **Who should be on my thesis committee? Who should direct it?** If you are doing the thesis track, you should select a committee based on what your thesis topic is. Ideally, you should choose a graduate faculty member to advise the thesis who has knowledge of the topic and the method you are going to use. Sometimes, however, you might have one member of your committee who is knowledgeable on the topic and another who will help you on the methods. You’ll also want a member who you believe is a good editor—who will help you with the technical aspects of the writing, i.e., APA or MLA styles, etc. Many times students find out who their thesis advisor and committee members are by taking the courses with a particular professor and finding out that they have similar interests. Of course, it’s also important to pick a committee who you can work with and who will challenge you to produce the best piece of research you possibly can. You can find a detailed description of
the composition of a graduate committee in the Graduate Catalogue.

**Who should I choose for the outside member of my committee?** Many times an outside member, also called the Graduate College Representative (see Thesis Track section above under committee composition for a description) is chosen based on a course you might take outside the School of Journalism and Media Studies (you can take up to 6 credits of course work outside The School). If you don’t take any classes from outside the School of Journalism and Media Studies, then your advisor might suggest someone. The best way to get that person on your committee is to ask them personally, providing them with background on your project, courses you’ve taken, and other pertinent information. Or you can list up to three potential outside members on the Appointment of Examination Committee form and the Graduate College will ask them if they will serve on your committee.

**What Is a Prospectus?** A prospectus is a detailed plan—a proposal—for conducting either a graduate-level research paper or (more commonly) a master’s thesis. Drafting a prospectus gives both you and your instructor/advisor a blueprint for developing findings and sound conclusions. With revision, a prospectus can also serve as the first chapter of your thesis. If you chose to do a non-traditional thesis, you will also be required to develop a prospectus (depending on your project, you might or might not use prospectus content directly in your final non-traditional thesis). It is important to consult with your individual instructor or thesis adviser on your prospectus, as each graduate faculty member approaches it in slightly different ways.

**How Long is It?** Prospectuses may be anywhere between 10 and 50 or more pages, depending on your topic and the instructions for either the paper or the thesis. (A prospectus for a thesis rooted in quantitative or social sciences, for example, may require as much as three chapters of development). The length may also depend on the amount of background the reader requires, literature on the topic, and the method you will use.

**Prospectus Format:** With some variation, include these sections in the following order.

*Title.* Pick a working title for your paper that uses key words and themes featured in your study. The title will, most likely, change several times before your final draft is due, so use a simple one to help frame your entire paper.

*Introduction.* The introduction should provide an overview of the study you propose. Explain what the general area of study and its purpose. Provide a justification for the study explaining why it is important, what it potentially adds to our understanding of the phenomenon you’re examining. In other words, why are you doing this project? If your study replicates another one, explain why this reexamination is necessary.

*Background.* A background section may be optional, and you may have more than one of these woven throughout the prospectus. In this section, include a narrative of the key concepts you’ll feature, supplying an overview of the history of your topic or specific ideas that have evolved over time—you’re supplying context for your study here without going into exact detail about other research on the subject.

*Thematic Statement.* The thematic statement provides an introduction to what you will address in your paper or thesis. Use the information you’ve gathered to describe the general scope of the paper, including the “who,” “what,” “where,” “when,” “why,” and “how?” You should refer directly to facts, people, places, and events, but at this point, you
should not have developed any conclusions.

**Significance of the Study.** Use this section to explain to the reader how your paper will be different from other papers or research on the subject. This section features a “so what?” It also explains the relevance of your paper relative to a larger body of scholarship. Answer the following questions, both implicitly and explicitly: Why should the reader care? Why is your research important? How does it contribute to a pool of knowledge on the subject? Be precise, and be sure to use appropriate scholarly style.

**Literature Review.** This section provides a description of your secondary sources. You may include references to the primary sources of your study, but the purpose here is to explain to the reader what has already been written about your subject. You should NOT include every book, journal article, or manuscript associated with your paper—only the ones that have the most relevant, direct tie to the study you are preparing. You are including this section so the reader will know both that you’ve done your homework and also so they’ll understand the significance of your study. There are no “magic numbers” (or a minimum number of sources) for a Lit. Review; however, do feature your best sources. In the Lit. Review, you may also provide definitions of key terms, or outline hypotheses you’d like to test (if you’re using statistical methods for an empirical study), or, you might outline several research questions you’d like to answer if your study is more exploratory.

**Methods.** Depending on your study, the methods section could be the most important part of the prospectus. It should be clear how you will go about conducting the research to develop your findings—the sampling procedures, methods used for analysis, and so forth. Clearly outline all the steps you will take whether your study is qualitative (interviews, focus groups, critical/cultural, ethnographic, visual, historiographic, etc.) or quantitative (content analysis, survey, quasi-experimental, etc.). Note: While qualitatively based studies may simply require an explanation of how you plan to locate primary sources, quantitatively based studies or those that rely on a scientific approach may require a more highly developed and explanatory methods section.

**Preliminary Outline.** Use this section to begin organizing the direction of your research. Your outline will change over time, and it is not meant to be part of your final paper, but you should use an outline to make sure you address the items appropriate for your study. The three major subcategories include: A. Introduction; B. Body; and C. Conclusion.

**Sources to be Consulted.** Organize by categories, including “Primary Sources,” “Secondary Sources,” “Books,” “Journal Articles,” etc. You do NOT need annotations in this section, but organizing by categories helps to understand the scope your sources.

**The Prospectus Process for a Thesis:** Generally, the prospectus is something that you want to complete early in your second year of graduate study. After working on the prospectus with your thesis advisor, and going through several drafts, you will distribute the thesis to your entire thesis committee. Do not give your prospectus to your committee without your advisor’s approval. Try to give your committee members at least a week, or two to read your prospectus before the prospectus meeting.
Thesis Track Requirements Checklist

___ Meet with the Graduate Coordinator at the start of your Master’s studies
___ File Degree Plan Requirements Form (before completing 15 credit hours)
___ Create a committee (file appropriate form with Graduate College)
___ Discuss thesis topics with your thesis advisor
___ Write a prospectus
___ Prospectus meeting (Approval Form must be signed)
___ Write the Thesis
___ File Proposed Masters Degree Program Form (before applying for graduation)
___ Apply online for graduation via MyUNLV
___ Schedule a defense date
___ Distribute Thesis to committee at least two weeks before defense date.
___ Oral Defense
___ Defense Results (pass, rewrites, fail)
___ Submit Thesis to the Graduate College for format check
___ After Thesis is approved, upload to ProQuest

Discipline Resources

Areas of Specialization

Bates: First Amendment law; political communication; privacy
Borchard: Journalism history; reporting; research methods
Burroughs: Digital, social, and streaming media; media industries; sports media
Kilker: Sociotechnical media innovation; visual media; research methods
Larson: Rhetorical constructions of self and community on the Internet
Traudt: Audience reception; global media; video criticism; advertising
Venger: Strategic communication; regulations; human trafficking; technology

Library Resources

Contact Info: Susie Skarl, Urban Affairs Librarian
UNLV Libraries
4505 Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89154
Ph: 702-895-2141
Journals: Faculty publications appear in the following journals, among others:
American Journalism
Communication & Critical/Cultural Studies
Communication Law and Policy
IEEE Technology and Society
Information Technology and Libraries
International Journal of Communication
Journal of Advertising
Journal of Advertising Education
Journal of Broadcast and Entertainment Media
Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising
Journal of Marketing Education
Journal of Media and Religion
Journalism & Communication Monographs
Journalism History
Management Communication Quarterly
Popular Culture Review
Science Communication
The Journal of Popular Culture
The Wilson Quarterly
Visual Communication Quarterly


Professional Organizations
American Academy of Advertising
American Journalism Historians Association (AJHA)
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)
Broadcast Education Association (BEA)
European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA)
Marketing Public Policy Conference
Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ)

Hank Greenspun: The School of Journalism and Media Studies is named after the media visionary Hank Greenspun who died in 1989 after a celebrated career as a public advocate and crusading founder and publisher of the Las Vegas Sun newspaper. Greenspun confronted major public issues, using the power of the press to fight corruption and demagoguery, and championing the welfare of the poor and disenfranchised in society. Greenspun's legacy lives on at the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies, where we actively emphasize the powerful functions of communication in addressing challenging social issues and promoting public good. We use communication knowledge strategically to enhance the quality of life with our progressive educational curriculum, applied research efforts, relevant media production projects, and influential community outreach programs.