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About A+PR
The purpose of the University of Alabama’s Department of Advertising and Public Relations is to help the world’s brands, communicators, and scholars tell better stories that matter. As one of the top APR programs in the country, we are comprised of a passionate, committed and talented faculty who through their research and teaching make possible communication campaigns that move people and make a difference.

A+PR Mission Statement
To change the work and the world by producing research and leaders that are creative, socially conscious and business-savvy.

A+PR Student Statement
Students, you are here to become leaders in advertising and public relations, wherever and however you chose to practice your craft. We expect you to be extraordinary, passionate and engaged, committed to excellence and ethics, and willing to do more than expected. Average does not change the world or you. We are here to help you do both.
THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Advertising and Public Relations is designed for aspiring students who wish to gain advanced knowledge and expertise in creating and managing persuasive communication. We help motivated students transition from a tactical to a more strategic, managerial approach to advertising and public relations, while becoming ethical and globally competent thought leaders in their future careers. Our curriculum will provide students with knowledge of industry trends, proficiency in research-driven critical thinking and problem solving, exposure to scholars and professionals who are well-connected in an evolving communication landscape, and an expertise in managing persuasive communication. Students that complete our M.A. program will be well-prepared for doctoral studies or to step into roles that will help them advance easily into management positions in their desired fields.
The M.A. in Advertising and Public Relations, completed in 33-36 credit hours, is designed to provide students with a more unique, individualized expertise in managing persuasive communication. The curriculum is designed to be completed in either the fall or spring semester of the second year at The University of Alabama. The curriculum is divided into three sections (see the Graduate Catalog for a more detailed description).

In addition to coursework, students will be required to obtain professional industry experience during the summer after their first year in order to enhance the knowledge they gain in the classroom. Students will submit a description of the professional experience opportunity to the graduate coordinator and provide proof of completion before the beginning of the fall semester.

**Core**
12-15 HOURS
A series of 4-5 courses that provide a broad knowledge of theory, research methodology and industry readiness

**Emphasis**
12-15 HOURS
A series of 4-5 courses chosen by the student and his/her faculty advisor that provides a more in-depth understanding of his/her area of interest

**Capstone Project**
6 HOURS
A research-driven, year-long final project that prepares the student to either begin doctoral studies (thesis) or enter the industry (strategic plan or integrated campaign)
CONCENTRATIONS

As an advertising creative student, a portfolio is an all-access pass to the big show. Minerva, the Creative Portfolio Specialization, helps build a portfolio while teaching students to solve a client’s problems by beautifully wrapping smart strategies in innovative, layered and memorable ideas.

Students will practice a wide range of ideation techniques and learn how to spot a great concept hiding among piles of lesser ones. To focus on creative research, students will self-identify as an art director or copywriter. They will cultivate an appreciation for a strong work ethic as they execute their ideas at a professional level. Students will study industry literacy and develop creative leadership skills. In the end, they will have a portfolio that highlights their natural talents and emphasizes their newly developed strengths.

Minerva graduates award-winning, concept-churning, strategy-devouring, hustle-and-grind-loving advertising creatives. Alumni from this program have been recruited to work at some of the top agencies in the world, including BBDO, R/GA, McGarryBowen, MullenLowe, VML and many others.

Media Strategy Specialization

In today’s media environment, advertising and public relations professionals must meaningfully connect brands with consumers across an endless array of media. Practitioners must possess the ability to analyze data and craft a narrative about how brands can leverage insights to better connect with the ever-connected consumer.

The Media Strategy Specialization equips students with the skills necessary to analyze traditional, digital and social media data, uncover actionable insights and develop brand strategies leveraging those insights. Through hands-on course work and industry collaboration, this specialization will prepare students to pursue careers in media strategy, brand planning and advertising and public relations analytics.

Although A+PR’s M.A. program encourages students to define their area of study, we do offer optional concentrations that provide expertise in two growing, more specialized areas within the industry.
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

The faculty members in the A+PR Department bring decades of both industry and academic experience to the classroom. They also provide a diverse array of industry expertise and research interests. We can all but guarantee that students will find a faculty mentor that can help them to reach their goals during their time in the program. Here are a few of the esteemed faculty members that represent A+PR.

Karla K. Gower, Ph.D.
Professor and Director of The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations

INDUSTRY EXPERTISE
marketing / public relations / development

RESEARCH INTERESTS
public relations history / law

“Students should join our M.A. program because you will get to work with and learn from amazing educators who care deeply about your success, not just in the classroom but also in your career.”

Joseph Phelps, Ph.D.
Reese Phifer Professor

INDUSTRY EXPERTISE
market research

RESEARCH INTERESTS
privacy of personal information / narrative persuasion

“Dedicating yourself to this program will help you to refine your strategic thinking skills to become a better problem solver. The world, and every business in it, can use good problem solvers.”
**FACULTY SPOTLIGHT**

**Suzanne Horsley, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor  

**INDUSTRY EXPERTISE**  
government public affairs / corporate communication  
nonprofit communication / disaster communication  

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**  
crisis communication / disaster management  

“Any M.A. program can teach you about public relations and advertising. UA’s A+PR faculty have not only studied it and researched it, but we have lived it and contributed to the profession along the way. Students will benefit from that edge of experience as students and faculty work together to shape the future of our industries.”

**Ethan Stokes, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor  

**INDUSTRY EXPERTISE**  
government and military intelligence / public policy  

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**  
political public relations/communications  
religion public policy / public diplomacy  

“The A+PR master’s degree program at UA provides our students with a top-level education across a wide array of specializations in the fields of advertising and public relations. This program enables students to harness their skills and increase their marketability for future academic and professional endeavors.”
**STUDENT RESOURCES**

**Digital Media Center**
At The University of Alabama’s Digital Media Center (DMC), students work alongside industry professionals through jobs, internships and course laboratories to develop the skills needed for their career. The state-of-the-art teaching facility is housed in Bryant-Denny Stadium, located just steps away from Reese Phifer Hall. The DMC is home to four professional media outlets including university owned WVUA 23, Alabama Public Radio, The Center for Public Television and Crimson Tide Productions. The DMC has more than 90 staff members and more than 100 students work in the Digital Media Center each year.

**Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations**
The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations is the leading international resource for practitioners, educators and students who are passionate about advancing their careers and the public relations profession. From skill-based resource guides and topic-trending webinars to lessons from legends and leaders, The Plank Center offers a variety of free resources in areas of leadership, mentorship and diversity and inclusion. Information about expanding skill sets, empowering careers and elevating the profession can be found at plankcenter.ua.edu.

**Speaking Studio**
The Speaking Studio is a campus wide resource designed to help students, faculty, and community partners improve their public speaking, presentation, and oral communication skills. Consultants help students clarify and craft effective messages, cultivate dynamic delivery and calm public speaking anxiety.

The Speaking Studio is the only service on campus staffed with trained public speaking consultants who facilitate the recording and immediate feedback of individual or group presentations. Appointments can be made online at speakingstudio.ua.edu.
Available to assist students with their research responsibilities during their time in the A+PR MA program, The Institute for Communication & Information Research (ICIR) is a premier communication research facility specializing in creative and effective research designs, participant recruitment and insightful reporting. From data collection and analysis to facility rentals, the ICIR connects organizations and individuals with top communication and information professionals at The University of Alabama.

**Focus Group Lab:** The Focus Group Lab offers researchers the chance to develop, learn and grow their initiatives through a centralized location. Featuring a conference-room style table, individuals can gather and discuss certain ideas and concepts in a casual and comfortable way. With special cameras and access to our high-end observation room, scholars can understand and develop their research through the input of others. The Focus Group Lab is functional for groups of up to 12 people. The ICIR also offers focus group facilitators if needed.

**Public Opinion Lab:** The Public Opinion Lab (POL) is an innovative space for gathering and exploring social media conversations, analyzing engagement and identifying insights. With a mix of industry technology and academic tools, the POL is a space for scholars and students to do cutting-edge research in the social space.

**Content Analysis Lab:** The Content Analysis Lab allows researchers the opportunity to record and store live television content for later use in content analysis or for educational demonstrative purposes. This space and corresponding technology is located within the Public Opinion Lab.

**Theater Lab:** The Theater Lab is a lecture-style room with 24 desk spaces that allow researchers to distribute content, speak with participants and display media on a larger scale for more participant viewing and engagement. This space can be used for the ICIR’s portable continuous response equipment or for town hall-type settings.
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Capstone Agency
Capstone Agency is a student-run integrated communications agency focused on creating strategic and innovative campaigns for its clients. Membership in the agency is a competitive application process. The agency is structured into four departments that each perform a specific function of the communication process. Each department is led by a director and assistant directors who report directly to the firm director and assistant firm director. They believe that an integrated, collaborative approach is the key to success, and this structure helps to ensure that they can accomplish any objective clients throw their way. Check out capstoneagency.org for more information and application guidelines.

Public Relations Student Society of America
The mission of the Arlyn S. Powell Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) is to serve members by enhancing their knowledge of public relations, providing access to professional development opportunities and serving the public relations profession by helping to develop highly qualified, well-prepared professionals. PRSSA hosts general meetings once a month where public relations professionals share their knowledge and experiences. In addition, PRSSA provides members with opportunities to expand their knowledge of the public relations field through chapter committees and workshops, while building their resumes and networking with professionals along the way.

Alabama A+PR offers student organizations to encourage professional development. Although the majority of students in these organizations are undergrads, A+PR MA students are always encouraged to either join or assist with supervision.
Public Relations Council of Alabama
The UA student chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA) is a student led organization that prepares students for careers as public relations professionals. PRCA hosts monthly meetings featuring guest speakers from a wide range of public relations backgrounds. Student PRCA members can also attend special events coordinated with the professional chapter, including networking socials and resume review sessions. There is also a mentor program pairing students with experienced professionals. The organization regularly coordinates service projects and sponsors award competitions where students can be recognized for work done in the classroom or elsewhere. PRCA gives students the opportunity for real world, resume building experience through ongoing projects with nonprofit organizations as well local DJs, bands and other performers.

Capstone AdFed
The mission of The University of Alabama College Chapter of the American Advertising Federation (Capstone AdFed) is to provide and promote a better understanding of the functions of advertising and its values. They work to stimulate and encourage advertising professionalism through education; to apply the skills, creativity, and energy of advertising to help solve social problems; to develop the individual abilities of its members, to promote fellowship and free exchange of ideas. Capstone AdFed hosts professional development meetings twice a month, networking events and agency tours throughout the year. Additionally, members enjoy access to industry competitions, conferences, internships and job opportunities.
The A+PR MA program has produced an alumni base that stretches across the country. Our graduates are in various corporate, agency, government and nonprofit settings representing the department and its standard of excellence.

Leah Seay ’17
Assistant Manager, Public Policy Communications
GENERAL MOTORS
“Pursuing my master’s at The University of Alabama was one of the best decisions I’ve made. I was exposed to some of the very best professionals (including my current employer) and academics in the industry. Through rigorous courses, interactions with public relations professionals, and an exceptional thesis committee, I was challenged and prepared for the fast-paced world of public relations. While I still have a lot to learn, I am confident the A+PR M.A. program made me a better problem solver, strategist and communicator.”

Jordan Doyle ‘14
Senior Coordinator of Social Content and Engagement
CHICAGO WHITE SOX
“The A+PR MA program taught me about the advertising and public relations fields while giving me the freedom to hone in on the career path of my choice — sports!”

Jessi Russell ‘16
Assistant Account Executive/Business Leadership
MOMENTUM WORLDWIDE (CHICAGO OFFICE)
“The A+PR program provided me with the opportunity to work with real clients and taught me how to not only pitch to them, but how to navigate the daily relationship between us. They instilled in us a focus on strategy and now that I work for a government client I realize how important that is. Whether it is forecasting metrics, choosing vendors or consulting on creative designs, I rely on the strategy skill set that I learned at the Capstone every day.”

Michelle Fowler ‘15
Assistant Account Executive
MP&F STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS
“The A+PR MA program gave me a holistic view on communications, which has been invaluable while working for an agency. I wear many hats for several different clients, so having the knowledge of how each project fits into the bigger picture helps me do the best work I can for my teams.”
Alex Thompson ’11
Assistant Director for Athletics Communications, Baseball and Football
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA ATHLETICS COMMUNICATIONS
“A thing I took away from my graduate studies was the quality time that I spent with my classmates — both in-class and working on projects. This time together built a lifelong bond which has provided me contacts and networks for the real-world that I could have never expected. With everyone in the class having similar career goals, the numerous hours spent together in the program helps you to grow individually and as a collective unit that can help each other in the program as well as in the long-term.”

Mackenzie Ross ’18
Corporate Communications and Community Relations Specialist
TRACTOR SUPPLY COMPANY
“Having received my bachelor’s degree from The University of Alabama’s award-winning public relations program, I thought I knew everything I needed to enter the workforce. While my undergraduate education definitely gave me the skills I needed to perform well in my job, the M.A. program took those skills to a whole new level. Now, I feel not only prepared to do my job well but also capable of handling higher-level tasks and managing others to achieve success.”

Amanda Annonio ’17
Marketing Account Coordinator
AGENCY54
“The A+PR MA program taught me that while networking is the key, it’s just as important to have the knowledge and ability to fulfill an individual’s business needs. This program enabled me to enter my career confident in my knowledge of creating effective marketing campaigns, executing and evaluating social media campaigns and performing advertising buys. Not only did this program build my skills in these areas and many others, it empowered me to fulfill my dream of working at a communications agency.”
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS & PROCESS

Admission Requirements:
Applicants are only admitted into the program for the fall semester of each year. In order to be considered for full admission, students must have:

- 3.0 or higher undergraduate GPA
  (or a 3.0 in your last 60 undergraduate hours)
- 90 or better on the TOEFL iBT test
  (if you are an international student)

Entrance exams are not required for admission; however, to be considered for departmental funding, applicants must take either the GRE or GMAT. Applicants’ eligibility for departmental funding will be based on entrance exam score, GPA and relevant educational and professional experience. Students may be admitted with permission to continue if their GPA does not meet minimum standards.

Application Materials:
In addition to submitting a transcript, students must submit the following to complete their application:

- A video (max. 5 minutes) or written (max. 2 pages) statement of purpose
  (see website for details about what’s required for the statement of purpose)
- A resume or curriculum vitae with at least two references
- Three samples of academic and/or professional work, including one long-form essay or research paper
- $65 application fee ($80 for international students)

VISIT GRADUATE.UA.EDU FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY FOR THE PROGRAM.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

NOVEMBER 1
Committee begins reviewing applications on a rolling basis

MARCH 1
Deadline to be considered for departmental funding

JUNE 1
Deadline to be considered for admission into the A+PR MA program
ACCELERATED MASTERS PROGRAM (AMP)

Talented undergraduate students majoring in Advertising or Public Relations at Alabama are eligible to participate in the accelerated master’s program (AMP). This program allows students to begin graduate studies their senior year and take up to 12 hours that can count towards both their undergraduate and graduate degree. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Earned 91 or more hours by the time they enroll in the AMP program
- Earned at least a 3.3 GPA
- Present an impressive resume and portfolio for review by the graduate committee
- Students interested in the AMP program must meet the same criteria and complete the same application process for graduate admission (see pg. 15). AMP students will work with the graduate coordinator to create a plan of study for their final two years
FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE M.A. PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT:

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