

# Undergraduate student handbook

**Bachelor of Arts in Advertising, Journalism and  
Public Relations**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**MEMPHIS**®

Department of Journalism  
and Strategic Media

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Note: The Department of Journalism and Strategic Media reserves the right to alter any part of this handbook and/or the policies and procedures involved without notice.

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# Welcome

Do you like to deal with people?

Do you enjoy writing?

Are you visual?

If yes, then the programs offered by the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media at The University of Memphis may be of interest to you.

In addition to journalism and mass communication skills, you will gain a broad background and in-depth exposure to a variety of social and natural sciences, the humanities, business and other subjects. The program is flexible to permit coursework in areas of greatest interest to you.

The Department of Journalism and Strategic Media is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and has more than 350 undergraduates in three majors — advertising, journalism and public relations, including an online public relations program. The public relations program also is certified by the Public Relations Society of America. The department also has a public relations program at the Lambuth campus.

Housed in Meeman Journalism Building, the department is headquarters for The Daily Helmsman, an independent campus newspaper; Meeman 901 Strategies, a student-run strategic communication firm; Tiger News, a weekly broadcast news program; and Newspaper Research Journal, a refereed quarterly journal of the Newspaper and Online News Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. WUMR, the campus jazz radio station, also hires students. Students can earn Student Media Practicum credit working for The Helmsman, Meeman 901 Strategies, Tiger News or WUMR.

We can help you most effectively when you take time to read, understand and follow the guidance provided in this handbook. The full undergraduate catalog is at: [www.memphis.edu/ugcatalog](http://www.memphis.edu/ugcatalog).

## Program Goals

Program objectives for a B.A. in a program from the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, are:

1. To think critically, creatively and independently
2. To conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
3. To write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
4. To critically evaluate one's own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

Department of Journalism and Strategic Media graduates typically work as newspaper or television reporters and photographers, editors and anchors, advertising executives, public relations professionals, freelance writers and producers, web content producers, web designers and editors. No matter which program is selected, each student requires a strong background in liberal arts and an understanding of the social sciences to augment his or her professional skills. Consequently, no more than 48 hours of Journalism and Strategic Media courses may be included in the 120 hours required for graduation. The remainder of the student's course work must follow the guidelines provided by the university to qualify for a Bachelor of Arts degree.

## Facilities

Named for the late editor of the Memphis Press-Scimitar, the Edward J. Meeman Journalism Building is a three-story brick complex that houses many modern and versatile facilities, including numerous smart classrooms, a 144-seat lecture hall, wireless access, four computer labs with the Adobe Creative Suite. It houses offices of The Daily Helmsman, Meeman 901 Strategies, Newspaper Research Journal and the Memphis Advertising Federation.

## Ties to media in the Mid-South

Strong ties with local media are important to the success of any undergraduate program. Journalism and Strategic Media students enjoy the benefits of a program that maintains close rapport with the local media through its contacts with successful alumni and through affiliation with several professional organizations.

Memphis is the 50th largest U.S. media market, and the department capitalizes on the rich potential for practical experience and career-building professional contacts available to students in this urban setting. The Memphis media market supports a major daily newspaper, The Commercial Appeal, and about 20 smaller newspaper-format publications including suburban weeklies. More than 100 magazines are published independently or through one of the several large publishing firms located in Memphis. Memphis also boasts 20-plus radio stations, five commercial television stations and an expanding cable system. WUMR, the campus radio station, broadcasts from studios located on the campus.

Advertising and public relations students also find many opportunities in the Memphis area. The local market supports more than 70 advertising firms and almost 20 public relations consultant and counseling firms, as well as the advertising and public relations departments of many large businesses, government and not-for-profit organizations.

## Student Organizations

Student professional organizations provide an important link to the professional world. Student chapters include American Advertising Federation, the National Association of Black Journalists, the Society of Professional Journalists and the Public Relations Society of America. Honor societies include Kappa Tau Alpha and Alpha Delta Sigma.

All of these groups meet periodically and are involved in projects. They bring speakers to campus, attend national and regional conferences, and meet regularly with local chapters of their sponsoring professional organizations.

Many of the local organizations have special provisions for student attendance at their monthly meetings. Links forged by such contact have resulted in additional scholarship funds distributed to majors through the department. And introductions to professionals at such luncheons and meetings often provide vital associations leading to student internships and job placement.

### American Advertising Federation

The AAF, the oldest advertising trade association, represents all facets of the industry. Its membership is comprised of the nation's leading advertisers, advertising agencies and media companies with more than 200 AAF college chapters and 6,500 students members. The AAF operates many programs, including the National Student Advertising Competition, the Most Promising Multicultural Students, the Vance and Betty Lee Stickell Student Internship Program, the Seventh District Mosaic Scholarship and the Jan Gardner Memorial Scholarship.

## **National Association of Black Journalists**

The NABJ is a organization of journalists, students and media-related professionals. It seeks to provide opportunities for black journalists in both the professional and students ranks and raises awareness about the importance of fairness in the workplace.

## **Public Relations Student Society of America**

PRSSA is the foremost organization for students interested in public relations. Students are connected to more than 21,000 professionals. It advocated rigorous academic standards for public relations education, the high ethical principles and diversity in the profession. PRSSA is made up of more than 111,000 students and advisers organized into more than 300 chapters.

## **Society of Professional Journalists**

SPJ is dedicated to the perpetuation of a free press as the cornerstone of our national and out liberty. Founded in 1909 as Sigma Delta Chi, SPJ promotes the free flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry, works to inspire and education the next generation of journalists and protect First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press.

# **Internships**

The department has an extensive student internship program with a large host of employers available in the Mid-South and nationally. Graduates of the department often say the experience they gained on their internship was among the best parts of their academic program at the university. They learned how to work in the real world and felt better prepared to succeed at their full-time jobs after graduation. All students are required to complete either an internship or to work in student media.

Most interns are paid by the host employer for the hours they work or the materials they produce. Some hosts award grants and stipends to interns. An advanced student might undergo supervised practical training, in conjunction with appropriate academic assignments, at a recognized communications organization, whether it be at a newspaper office, television or radio station, magazine office, film production house, public relations or advertising firm or similar outlet.

Responsibilities of the student include academic work in addition to regular on-the-job requirements. Assignments are made to acquaint the intern with the organization and its structure, audience characteristics of the medium in which he is employed, general issues facing the population of the area, and the general problems and concerns within the field.

At the end of the internship, an evaluation will be made in detail by the intern's organization, and by the student of the organization to determine how well the student and the organization performed in providing meaningful internship experience.

All students who have registered in advance and completed the academic assignments receive, in addition to the pay and work experience, three units of internship credit.

# **Job Placement Services**

To further assist graduates in finding employment in the career field of their choice, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media maintains a job placement service. This internal service is in addition to the university's central Placement Office.

Since the service was established in 1989, it has helped numerous U of M graduates find positions. Memphis journalism and strategic media employers have learned to contact the department for job placement before placing public ads.

## Important Policies

- Students must maintain at 2.0 overall GPA to remain in advertising, journalism or public relations major.
- All majors must complete 1700, 1750 and 2121 within one year of declaring the major.
- The mandatory attendance policy.
- The mandatory use of, or automatic forwarding of, a student's university email accounts.

## Responsibility of the Student

### Sharing the Load

Final responsibility for fulfilling requirements of the university and the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media rests with you. To this end, students must familiarize themselves with the information in this manual, the university catalog, the departmental worksheets for the three majors and the UMDegree online degree planner.

Many courses are offered only once a year. Therefore, students must plan their schedules well in advance so to make schedule adjustments with relative ease should time conflicts arise with required or desired courses. A senior student, for example, who has not fulfilled requirements because of last minute conflicts, must remain enrolled until such requirements are met.

### Attendance Policy

The faculty unanimously voted to implement a mandatory attendance policy for all classes; therefore, students who do not attend classes may be administratively dropped or have their grades docked at the discretion of the department. Professors may refuse to revisit material a student missed because of an absence.

In the online Schedule of Classes, it specifically states: "Students not attending the first meeting of Department of Journalism and Strategic Media classes without prior arrangements with the instructor may be dropped." Classes have limited seats and students who do not participate will not be allowed to deprive others of the opportunity to learn.

This is a professional program for media specialists who are expected to understand, and comply with, deadlines. Think of your class as your "job" and treat it as such. If you have problems attending class you are encouraged to make arrangements with your other commitments to enable you to fully participate. If you cannot do so you should drop the class and enroll in something else.

Attendance may be taken randomly. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with your professor who retains the discretion of whether to accept it. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for a catastrophic emergency, such as a serious injury, death in the family, etc. In all such cases official documentation (e.g. a doctor's note, official police report, or newspaper obituary) will be required.

### Email Policy

All students are required to have their University of Memphis email activated, and if using another provider, such as Google, must visit the [iam.memphis.edu](http://iam.memphis.edu) website to implement forwarding of the university's email to your account. You are required to check your email daily, and you will be held for complying with any sent to you by your professor or the university.