



TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY.

# COMM HONORS NEWSLETTER

Winter 2019



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## Reminders for Honors Requirements

To graduate with honors in Communication, students must complete 18 total honors hours. A minimum of:

- 12 total honors credits in Communication
- 9 total honors credits at the 300/400 level
- 6 total honors credits at the 300/400 level in Communication
- 3 honors credits at the 400 level in Communication
- 3.5 cumulative GPR at Texas A&M upon graduation
- 3.25 honors GPR at Texas A&M upon graduation
- A minimum of 60 hours at A&M

To qualify for the honors program, current Texas A&M students must have a GPR of at least 3.5 and must be majoring in either Communication or Telecommunication Media Studies.

This issue of the COMM Honors Newsletter was created by Natalie Hoffmann, Simon Holmes, and David Tarvin.

FRONT: Honor students Olivia Watt, Rylie Steppick, and Kalina Speaks pose for a photo on the side of Volcán Arenal in Costa Rica. Photo credit: Benjamin Harvey.

BACK: Photos from the Fall Honors Hangout.

*Used with permission.*

## Benefits of Honors

Students in the Communication honors program have the opportunity to:

- Receive early registration
- Participate in smaller classes of 10-20 students to facilitate class discussion
- Develop personal relationships with professors, which is essential for students in need of letters of recommendation
- Be eligible to design their own honors experience through honors contracting, embedded honors sections and independent study
- Work with and learn from other students in the honors program
- Receive an honors designation on their official A&M transcript
- Be recognized at a university-wide and departmental honors recognition ceremony
- Receive a gold honors stole to wear at commencement



### *Get connected!*

Join our new Facebook group to network with other honors students and honors faculty:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/tamucommhonors>

Follow on Twitter for announcements and pictures of Honors events:

**@tamucommhonors**

We're also starting our own mini-network through LinkedIn groups:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/10417932/>

Help us invite COMM honors students past and present to create a space where we can reach out to this community even after graduation.

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# Different Versions of "Graduating with Honors"

By Dr. Charlie Conrad

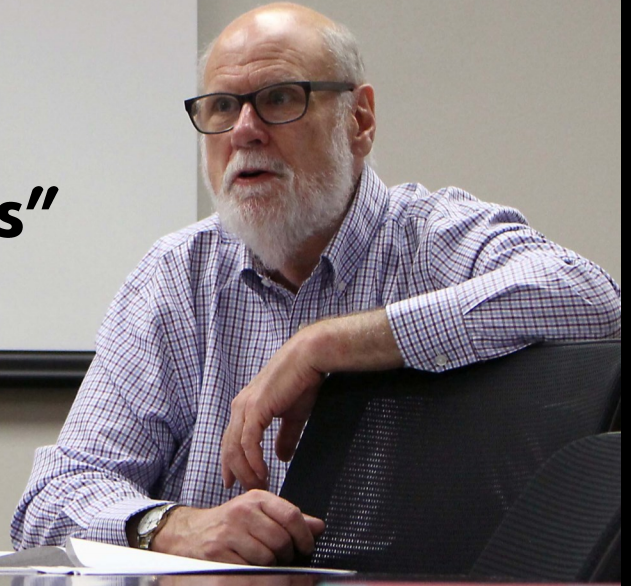


Photo Credit: Madison Brown

## 1) *Latin Honors*

- a. Complete at least 60 hours of coursework at Texas A&M
- b. Graduate with an overall GPR of
  - i. 3.5-3.69 (cum laude)
  - ii. 3.70-3.89 (magna cum laude)
  - iii. 3.9 or greater (summa cum laude)

## 2) *University Research Scholar (honors thesis)*

- a. Eligibility
  - i. Have completed at least 60 credit hours (junior status) of undergraduate course work
  - ii. Have completed at least 24 credit hours at Texas A&M University
  - iii. Have and maintain a cumulative GPR of at least 3.0
- b. Complete a two-semester (fall and spring, in that order) research project in conjunction with an A&M faculty member. Students can either design a project and find a faculty member who is willing to sponsor it, or design a project in conjunction with a selected faculty member

## 3) *COMMunication Honors*

- a. Major in either COMM or TCMS and apply for the COMM Honors program
- b. Complete at least 18 total honors credits, including:
  - i. At least 12 total honors credits in Communication
  - ii. At least 9 total honors credits at the 300/400 level
  - iii. At least 6 total honors credits at the 300/400 level in Communication
  - iv. At least 3 honors credits at the 400 level in Communication
- c. With
  - i. At least a 3.5 cumulative GPR at Texas A&M upon graduation
  - ii. At least a 3.25 honors GPR at Texas A&M upon graduation

## 4) *Cornerstone Honors (Liberal Arts)*

- a. Be accepted into the program
- b. Complete
  - i. 18 hours of Honors coursework in the Liberal Arts.
    - \* 12 of those 18 hours must be taken in at least 4 different CLLA departments and programs.
    - \* Of those 12 hours of CLLA coursework, 9 hours must be completed at the upper division (300/400 level).
  - ii. Additional options to meet requirements for a broader experience must be preapproved by the College (see Dr. Leroy Dorsey, or Joshua Harms in the Liberal Arts Advising Office, and/or <https://liberalarts.tamu.edu/app/uploads/2017/06/Cornerstone-Brochure-for-website.pdf> )
  - iii. Maintain at least a 3.5 GPR

## 5) *Foundation Honors/Honors Student Council*

- a. Consult <http://launch.tamu.edu/Applications/University-Honors>

# SPRINGconferences

SPOTLIGHT ON UPCOMING ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

## ***THE REEF AND THE PUBLIC***

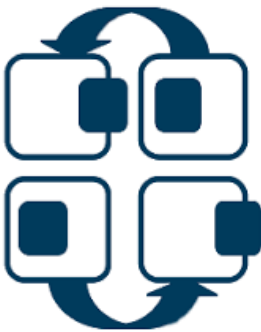
ECA Conference Presentation | April 10 - 14, 2019

**A**ndrea Lloyd's paper, "The Reef and The Public: An Analysis of Past and Current Great Barrier Reef Media Campaigns," was accepted by the Eastern Communication Association Conference, which she will present in early April. Andrea wrote the paper in Dr. Rold's Media Campaigns course and Dr. Parish helped her make it conference ready. Andrea's research focuses on two media campaigns and how they alert the public to help the Great Barrier Reef. She states in her abstract, "Mediated campaigns help communicate to audiences about coral reefs, the stressors they face, and ways people can help." According to Andrea's paper, "By using traditional and new media, media campaigns can receive greater success if they work with the media and news industries using agenda-setting theory, to frame topics in such a way that resonates with the public."

Andrea earned her Strategic Communication Certificate prior to graduating in December. She was a TCMS major and currently interns for NASA in Virginia.



The Eastern Communication Association (ECA) is a professional organization of scholars, teachers, and students of Communication Studies.



what  
does  
diversity  
look  
like?

## Communicating **DIVERSITY** Conference 2019

**March 29**

The Communicating Diversity Conference is an annual conference for students interested in issues of diversity. The conference is hosted by the Climate and Inclusion Committee in the Department of Communication at Texas A&M University. Students interested in participating should keep the following dates in mind:

February 2: 250-word abstract submission due

March 28: Pre-Conference Movie Night- "Bad Moms"

- 6-9 PM in MSC 2404
- Movie followed by a post-film discussion led by Dr. Elizabeth Hatfield
- Free pizza!
- Open to all students!

March 29: Communicating Diversity Conference

If you have any questions, please email [tamucommunicatingdiversity@gmail.com](mailto:tamucommunicatingdiversity@gmail.com).

# SPRINGcalendar

SPOTLIGHT ON UPCOMING EVENTS FOR HONORS STUDENTS

## MEET & GREET

Come join us on Thursday, January 31st for our first Honors Meet and Greet of the semester! The event is located in MSC 2404 and will last from 5:30-7:00 PM. Students will have the opportunity to meet with the COMM Honors faculty and staff and get to know fellow peers, as well as learn about upcoming events in this semester. Did we mention FREE food will be provided? We hope to see you there!



## PRE-REGISTRATION MEETING

What course should you take next year? Which course can you contract as honors? We will have a meeting on March 20th to discuss pre-registration and honors courses offered in the fall and. The location and time for this event is TBD.

## FAMILY WEEKEND

Family Weekend will be April 12-14th. The Communication Honors Committee will host the Family Weekend Event for the Department of Communication on Friday, April 12. We honor a wide variety of students in COMM, TCMS, and USLA-JRN.



## HONORS HANGOUT

Come join your COMM Honors peers at the Honors Hangout to relax before finals! Lunch will be provided and movies on Netflix will be playing. We will be celebrating the end of the semester and taking a break before finals on Thursday, May 2, from 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm in Bolton 206 and 208.

# STUDY ABROAD & HONORS

ENHANCING YOUR HONORS EXPERIENCE WITH FIELD TRIPS,  
FACULTY-LED PROGRAMS, AND STUDENT EXCHANGES

COMM to ITALY SEMESTER Faculty-Led	COMM to IRELAND SUMMER Faculty-Led	COMM to FLORENCE WINTER Faculty-Led	COMM to COSTA RICA SPRING Field Trip	COMM to SOUTH AFRICA MAY Field Trip	COMM to SPAIN STUDENT Exchange
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**The Department of Communication currently offers six study abroad opportunities, ranging from field trips, faculty-led programs, and student exchanges.**

As an honors student, studying abroad is more than just visiting another country; it's involvement and engagement with others as a global citizen. Study Abroad is international experience that allows you to earn credit towards your degree, provides you opportunities to learn about new cultures, and, perhaps most importantly, increases your opportunities in the job market.

The Communication Department offers three primary study abroad programs: international field trips, faculty-led programs, and student-exchanges (see below for details).



## FIELD TRIPS

International Field Trips allow students to take a trip abroad during the academic semester and return within that same semester, and are usually one-to-two weeks long. Field Trips allow students to take course material and apply it in a new culture and return to the classroom with a new perspective.



## STUDY ABROAD

Faculty-led study abroad allow students to spend a semester abroad immersed in a new culture while taking courses with at least two Communication professors. Faculty-led programs allow students to see the connection between studying and the real world, with field trips built into the program.



## STUDENT EXCHANGES

Student exchanges allow students to enroll in a foreign institution for a semester or year, while a student from that institution enrolls in courses in College Station. Students pay their regular Texas A&M tuition and fees for student exchanges.



Castiglion Fiorentino, Italy. Home to our COMM to Italy Semester Faculty-Led Program

# BENEFITS FOR STUDYING ABROAD

By Natalie Hoffman

**D**r. Crick frequently serves as an instructor for faculty-led study abroad programs; in fact, he recently returned from Florence, Italy as part of the Winter 2019 program. Dr. Crick shared three main values that are gained as a result of studying abroad: educational values, cultural values and social values. From a learning perspective, studying abroad offers an advantage, allowing students to perceive how history, ideas and practices isolated in books in the traditional classroom have concrete substance in the real world. Students actually encounter material as living objects and practices rather than simply reading about them. Studying abroad also allows students to become immersed in a different culture, helping them to understand the values and habits of a different people, as well as gain outside perspective on one’s own culture. “The study abroad experience uniquely offers students the opportunity to experience the emancipation that comes from immersive cultural difference, while showing as no other experience can, how history, art, and ideas are alive and



Students on the COMM to Florence Wintermester Trip 2019.  
Photo credit: Dr. Crick

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*“For those who wish to gain a global perspective on their place in the world, there is no better path than studying abroad.”*

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always evolving in cultural practices,” Dr. Crick explained. The study abroad experience is especially valuable to students who have never left Texas or the United States because it provides perspective on one’s place in the world as perceived by other cultures. Dr. Crick continues, “For those who wish to gain a global perspective on their place in the world, there is no better path than studying abroad.” Third, studying abroad offers students a unique social experience, as you bond with peers you don’t know and create friendships that last a lifetime. From educational values to cultural values to social values, study abroad offers a multitude of unique experiences that will benefit your honors experience.





# Honors in Costa Rica

*TAMU Honors isn't about doing more work necessarily; it's about doing higher level thinking and preparing to lead. I think that the field trip to Costa Rica greatly encouraged those things.*

By Rylie Steppick

**B**esides the magnificent beauty of the country, Costa Rica is also beautiful in that the people are so welcoming. One of my favorite memories from Costa Rica is meeting students who were learning English as I was learning Spanish. While visiting Zarcero, we were touring the city square, cathedral, and topiary gardens, and students from a high school across the street ran up to us and asked to practice English with us. It was such a fun five minutes of laughter and communal awkwardness as both sides tried to piece together enough vocabulary and grammar to understand one another and

keep up a conversation. For the first time, I felt like my novice Spanish was something to be proud of, instead of beating myself up for not being completely fluent.

I think "honors" has a lot of baggage to it. TAMU Honors isn't about doing more work, necessarily, it's about doing higher level thinking and preparing to lead. I think that the field trip to Costa Rica greatly encouraged those things. This trip was a worthwhile experience and the honors portion of the course allowed me to spend more time reflecting and internalizing what I had done, rather than coming back to normal

life and never getting to debrief.

A moment that I will never forget and have reflected upon often is the day we went to visit the Green Forest School in Ciudad Quesada (a city in the mountains of northern Costa Rica). We had been at the school the whole morning, and some of the group chatted with kids and teachers, others played soccer with some of the older boys, and I said hi in Spanish to a kindergartener who walked by me. "Hola." He looked up at me and, in English, said "hello." He then ran off, like shy little kids do. An eight year old girl walked up to me, and in perfect English said, "That's my brother Jack, and





he can speak English.” I proceeded to have a wonderful conversation with the girl. She told me about how her American father and Honduran mother had come to Costa Rica to work at a church in town. This moment was so beautiful to me not only because I shared this family’s faith, but also because this girl was the manifestation of intercultural communication. She was a literal bridge between three cultures.

Studying abroad is an opportunity that honors students, students who want to eventually lead others, cannot afford to go without if at all possible. Of course, not everyone can study abroad.

But studying abroad doesn’t have to mean semester-long programs to Europe, it could mean quick field trips to places like Costa Rica. The point is to learn how to adapt to other cultures, how to respect those cultures, and how to gain confidence in yourself that you can be an adult in the global world.

Gaining confidence in myself was an unexpected benefit to studying abroad. That’s because study abroad isn’t just about connecting with others; it is also about connecting with yourself. One morning while we were at the black sand beach, Playa Hermosa, I was able to sit and enjoy the view with the feeling of

sand under my feet and I just paused. I realized that I was seeing the Pacific Ocean and it dawned on me how big it was and how many countries were touching the ocean I was so close to. And then my mind drifted to how much the last eight days had meant to me. It was other worldly. I sat on a washed- up log with the jungle-covered cliffs to my right, and a beautiful beach that stretched as far as I could see to my left, and I just enjoyed the feeling of being small, wrapped up in a new culture that had been so warm and welcoming. Costa Rica isn’t a country on a map to me. It’s a place I know.



# Honors in Florence

*My advice would be to not be afraid of trying new things. Go to restaurants with weird names; try blue wine; get to know the people you're staying around. These weird things lead to great memories!*

By Casey Harrison

I definitely learned a lot from my study abroad program. Being there as more than a tourist allowed me to connect with the culture around me more. Our classroom was outside the touristy area, so we were surrounded by Italians living out their normal, everyday lives. This culture immersion was incredible to be a part of and taught me a lot about the Italian language and culture. On top of that, being able to read about the renaissance and the art at that time, and then to see the artwork in person was a dream. The David by Michelangelo was more stunning in person than I could have ever anticipated.

My favorite experience in Italy was wondering around an open air market in Rome with my friends. We found some really cool trinkets and the produce was so fresh! It was amazing to shop in an area that was frequented by Italians, and being able to communicate in Italian to make purchases was very exciting.

Honors students should study abroad because it brings us out of our comfort zones. We are often trapped in the cycle of studying and planning and always being prepared. Going abroad forces us out of our comfort zones and into a world of uncertainty. This uncertainty teaches us more about ourselves and what we are okay with. For example, I learned that while I have been and am still extroverted, I need downtime where I am not surrounded by others in order to recuperate.

My advice would be to not be afraid of trying new things. Go to restaurants with weird names; try blue wine; get to know the people you're staying around. These weird things lead to great memories!

A great moment in our trip was when a couple of the girls convinced all of us to go try the only Mexican restaurant in Florence. It was (of course) terrible and very small, but being crammed all together in this restaurant allowed us to

get to know one another more. We had fun trading stories and asking questions, and at the end of the dinner, Prof. Crick gave an excellent toast! The evening could have been a total disaster, (and food wise, it was) but we ended up making the best of it.

All in all, studying abroad sounded intense and scary, but it was the best decision I have made in my college career thus far. I learned so much and had a blast experiencing new things with new friends!



# COMM Careers in Science and Engineering

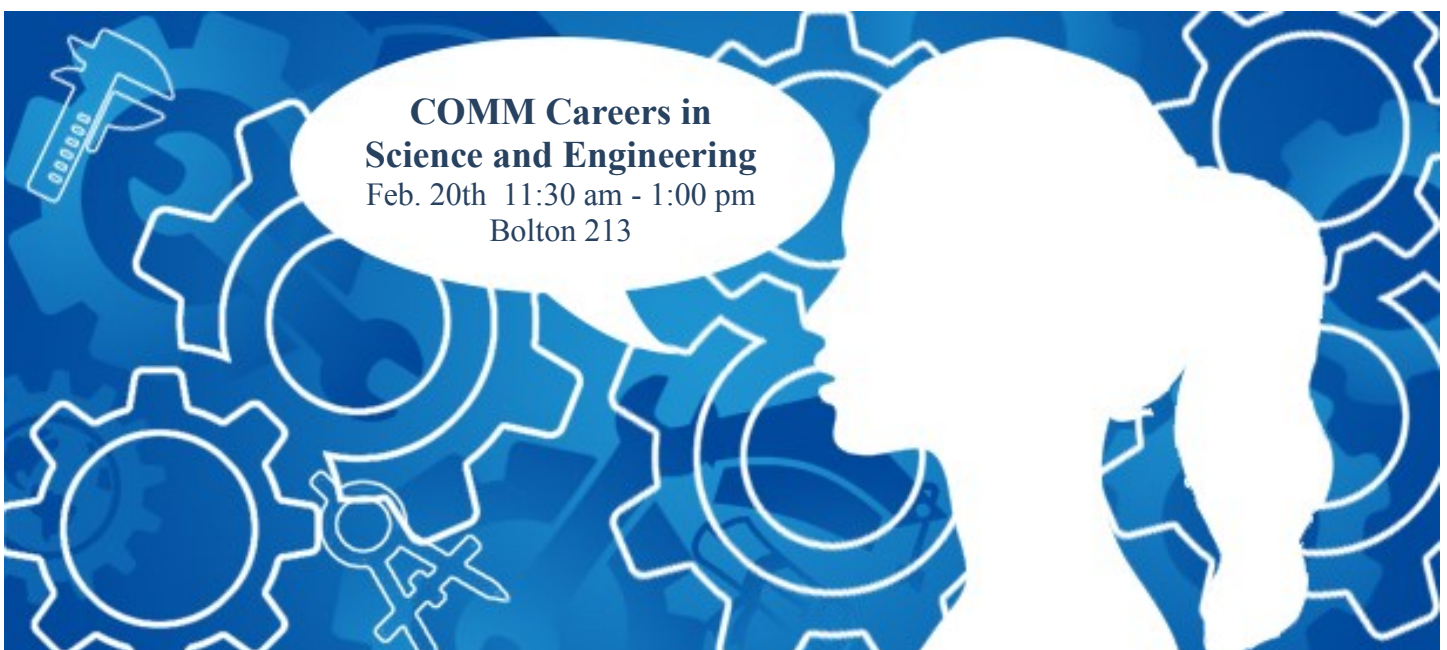
Would you like to be involved in publicizing research that **improves the efficiency of solar power** thereby reducing global warming and enhancing the U.S. alternative fuels program? Would you like to **light up cancer cells** so that surgeons can remove them without harming healthy tissue? Would you like to help physicians and physical therapists develop **individualized treatment programs for spinal surgery patients**? Would you like to help break the supply chains that allow socially irresponsible organizations to **manipulate and abuse workers involved in storm cleanup and reconstruction**?

*If you have interest in any of these questions, the  
COMM Careers in Science and Engineering Panel is for you!*

#### Panelists:

- Barbara Mendoza, Director of Academic Communications, College of Engineering
- Hannah Conrad, Communication Specialist 1
- Jennifer Reilly, Communication Specialist 2
- Gabby Gutierrez, Development Relations Coordinator
- Felysha Walker, Communication Specialist 2

Barbara Mendoza, Director of Academic Communications for the College of Engineering, and four recent Communication graduates who were involved in honors coursework, will discuss their career development on February 20. Their discussion will include their daily activities communicating with various stakeholder groups through multiple media, from print to social media. They will also discuss how they obtained their first positions and what led them back to Texas A&M University.





# *Honors Hangout*

On December 6, Honors students and faculty gathered to celebrate the end of the Fall Semester. We had sandwiches, hot cocoa, coffee, cookies, movies, and gifts. Dr. Conrad wore his Santa outfit! The Honors Hangout was an enjoyable way to end the year. We will be hosting another Honors Hangout at the end of the Spring Semester on Thursday, May 2, from 2:30 - 4:30 pm in Bolton Hall.