Social Sciences

Degree conferred
Rerum Socialium Doctor / Doctor of Philosophy in Communication (PhD)

Commencement of studies
An application for admission may be submitted at any time.

Regulation
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/lX6Q7 (French and German only)

Application procedure
Candidates with Swiss qualifications
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/0bJpN
Candidates with foreign qualifications
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/4a2qV

Fribourg profile
The Department of Communication and Media Research DCM at the University of Fribourg/Switzerland offers the possibility to pursue a doctoral degree of Social sciences in Communication Studies. Communication Studies at the University of Fribourg is firmly rooted in the tradition of the social sciences and is devoted to the analysis of public communication in modern societies, looking at both legacy and new media. Central topics are the general framework, systems, processes, contents and effects of communication. Research at the DCM focuses on different actors of communication, media content, media use, exposure and effects, media and news organisations as well as on media systems, including economic, political and cultural influences.

Doctoral theses can be written in the following research fields, among others:
- Journalism studies (e.g., current developments of journalism, quality in journalism)
- Theory and history of communication and journalism
- Political communication (e.g., analysis of political debates, mediatisation of politics)
- Media use, exposure, and effects (e.g., persuasion, parasocial relationships, health communication, media exposure)
- Organisational communication (e.g., reputation and issues management, corporate social responsibility, communication strategies)
- Comparative communication research
- Media systems and media organisations
- Media policy and media regulation (e.g., public service media, policy-making processes and power, governance)
- Analysis of new media and new forms of communication

The core part of the doctoral programme (30 ECTS credits) is the DCM Colloquium. It is held at least once each semester and offers doctoral students the possibility to present and discuss the current state of their projects. ECTS credits can also be acquired by participating in academic courses at the University of Fribourg or elsewhere (e.g., summer or winter schools) in areas such as theory, methodology, didactics or academic writing and presentation skills, by giving presentations at scientific conferences, by publishing articles in scientific journals or books (first author or co-author), by writing reviews or helping with the organisation of conferences, or by undertaking other academic tasks at the department.

For detailed information about the doctoral programme, see https://www3.unifr.ch/dcm/fr/assets/public/files/handouts/dr-richtlinien2015.pdf

Professors who are eligible to supervise theses
- Prof. Andreas Fahr
  Areas of specialisation:
  - Media selection, media use, media effects
  - Emotional & cognitive processing of media exposure
  - Mediated social communication
  - Parasocial relationships, health communication, entertainment
  Supervision of theses in German and English.

- Prof. Alexandra Feddersen
  Areas of specialisation:
  - Political communication
  - Media and public opinion
  - Media and democracy
  Supervision of theses in English, French and German.

- Prof. Regula Hänggli
  Areas of specialisation:
  - Political communication
  - Quality of debates
  - Challenges to democracy based on commercialisation and digitalisation
  - Relation between media and democracy
  Supervision of theses in German and English.

- Prof. Laura Illia
  Areas of specialisation:
  - Legitimacy, reputation, stigmatisation and new media
  - Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and communication
  - Communication, social impact and businesses in the circular economy
  - Emerging forms of organising, audiences and social media
  - Business, agenda setting (1st, 2nd, 3rd level), media salience
  - Crisis communication, stakeholder management
  Supervision of theses in French and English.

- Prof. Diana Ingenhoff
Areas of specialisation:
- Strategic communication, organisational communication, communication management
- International public relations research, public diplomacy and country images
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR), social advocacy, and media quality
- Reputation management and crisis communication in the digital age

Supervision of theses in German and English.

- **Prof. Manuel Puppis**
  
  Areas of specialisation:
  - International comparison of media systems & Swiss media system
  - Media policy and media regulation
  - Media organisations
  - Critical communication research

  Supervision of theses in German and English.

- **Prof. Philomen Schönhagen**
  
  Areas of specialisation:
  - Theory and history of mass communication
  - Journalism research
  - History of mass communication research
  - Qualitative methods in communication studies
  - Gender and media

  Supervision of theses in German, French and English.

**Studies organisation**

**Structure of studies**

30 ECTS credits can be earned.

**Doctoral school**

- **Admission**

  In order to be admitted to a doctorate the candidate must have been awarded an academic Bachelor's and Master's degree or an equivalent qualification by an university recognised by the University of Fribourg.

  Before applying for a doctorate the candidate must contact a professor who would be willing to supervise the thesis work.

  There is no general right to be admitted to a doctorate.

  *The respective conditions of admission for each doctoral study programme are reserved.*

**Contact**

Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences  
Department of Communication and Media Research (DCM)  
Dr Daniel Beck, lecturer and study advisor