

# MFA Visual Narrative

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

- Successful completion of 60 credits, including all required courses and the thesis project. Documentation of all thesis projects must be on file in the Visual Narrative Department to be eligible for degree conferral.

- A matriculation of three summers on-site and four semesters (fall and spring) of low residency. Students must complete their degree within six years, unless given an official extension by the provost.

- Visual Narrative grades on a pass/fail system. Students are required to remain in good academic standing.

*Note: Departmental requirements are subject to change by the department chair if the chair deems that such change is warranted.*

## FIRST-YEAR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<b>Course #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Semester(s)</b>
VNG-5040	Black and White and One Color	summer
VNG-5080	Analog to Digital: Dynamic Transformations	summer
VNG-5130	Wired for Story: Creating Powerful Narratives	summer
VNG-5170	History of Visual Storytelling	summer
VNG-5540	Story Visualized	fall
VNG-5580	Creative Script	fall
VNG-5620	Digital Short Story	spring
VNG-5650/5655	Lecture Series I and II	fall/spring

## SECOND-YEAR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<b>Course #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Semester(s)</b>
VNG-6120	Bridging Image and Context	summer
VNG-6150	Shaping Your Story	summer
VNG-6210	Visual Writing	summer
VNG-6240	Form, Empathy and Character Play	summer
VNG-6320	Identity in a Digital World	fall
VNG-6330	Selling Your Story	spring
VNG-6520/6525	Thesis Studio I and II	fall/spring
VNG-6540/6545	Thesis and Mentor Review I and II	fall/spring

## THIRD-YEAR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<b>Course #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Semester</b>
VNG-6820	Connecting Story to Audience	summer
VNG-6850	Presentation and Communication	summer
VNG-6900	Thesis Production and Professional Practice	summer

# GENERAL COURSE LISTING

Updated course information can be viewed using *MyServices Student*, which can be accessed through MySVA ([my.sva.edu](http://my.sva.edu)).

*Note: Courses are listed by year.*

## FIRST YEAR

### VNG-5040-A

#### **Black and White and One Color**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 6 – July 27 (no class July 4)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2017 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: N. Fox

Story, atmosphere, composition, character, conflict, resolution and format—these are but a few of the fundamental and unifying building blocks of visual storytelling. Favoring original content, story essential specifics, narrative meaning and solid story-centric design over “artful, finished product,” this course aims to help students examine their assumptions of traditional visual techniques in their own work through a limited and focused palette. Using only black and white, mixed with spot colors, students will be given a series of visual story explorations that are intended to disrupt and challenge these assumptions and current working methods by asking students to dig deeper and explore how their decisions as visual storytellers begin to mold and shape their narrative approach as both author and artist.

### VNG-5080-A

#### **Analog to Digital: Dynamic Transformations**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 6 – July 27 (no class July 4)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2017 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: M. Rota

The proliferation and advancements in technology and mobile media have redefined, if not revolutionized, how narrative art is created. The goal of this course is to give students an understanding of their story work through digital image-making, motion graphics, print and web. The tools of Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and After Effects will be explored, as well as how to integrate traditional analog techniques into the digital realm. Students will discover a variety of methods for producing digital images, and how to translate a stationary vision into the more dynamic world of motion. The evolution of storytelling from analog to digitized new media and the future of storytelling will be discussed.

### VNG-5130-A

#### **Wired for Story: Creating Powerful Narratives**

Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class July 3)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2017 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: L. Cron

Writing artfully shouldn't be the first concern of any author; this is as true for beginners as it is for the seasoned pro. First and foremost, every story author, visual or otherwise, needs a firm grasp of what a story actually is, and what his or her audience is hardwired to expect in every story it reads, hears, interacts with or views (which is often the opposite of what writers have been taught or think it is). This course will tap into recent discoveries in brain science and uncover what those expectations are, where they came from, and how to translate the students' unique stories into the universal language of storytelling. Instead of rooting around in story plot, key story elements will be unearthed beneath the plot that bring it to life, drive it forward and give it meaning. These elements have little to do with the surface plot or “writing well” and everything to do with what people actually respond to in every story encountered. The course will proceed step by step, from the first glimmer of an idea to an evolving, multilayered narrative capable of hooking the audience from the very first page. Just as important, students will come away with a yardstick to gauge whether each twist is on target or is a digression that brings the narrative to a screeching halt.

### VNG-5170-A

#### **History of Visual Storytelling**

Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class July 3)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Friday June 9 – July 21 (no class June 30)

Hours: 9:00-11:50 and 1:00-3:50

Summer 2017 semester: 3 credits

Instructors: B. Kartalopoulos, L. Marcus, S. Morrison, L. Rosen

This seminar provides an overview of visual storytelling in photography, film and graphic media. It will examine the evolution of children's books, comics, photography and film as the departure point for different approaches to telling a story with words and pictures. A thorough history of these art forms and their various points of intersection will be given, from children's adventure books to comic strips and photojournalism to modernist approaches to storytelling, the underground revolution, contemporary photography and film. Guest artists and lecturers will address the class and field trips will be included.

### VNG-5540-OL

#### **Story Visualized**

Fall semester: 3 credits

Instructor: J. Rugg

Visual storytelling is a language. Advertising, video, cartoons, symbols, icons, and typography transfer information at rates our parents and grandparents could not have imagined possible. Today's content crosses borders and time at the speed of thought—its meaning often altered by everyone who receives its signal. In this course, students will investigate the role of distribution, technology and media in creative content, as well as the significance of editing, design, format and context in narrative. They will consider the impact of business on their practice. Assignments include methods of adapting and creating fictional and nonfictional visual narratives from original and found texts. Students will deconstruct, reconfigure and critically analyze existing visual narratives such as films, video games, book covers, movie posters and graphic novels.

### VNG-5580-OL

#### **Creative Script**

Fall semester: 3 credits

Instructor: M. Sable

Concept, character, structure and craft—the fundamentals of creative storytelling and the architecture of a well-defined outline—will be emphasized in this course. Through a series of exercises, students will develop writing skills in the core components of storytelling, such as an active but flawed protagonist with a concrete goal, a story with a solid structure based on a character arc, and a unique concept with a specified target audience. The similarities and differences among theater, film, television, comics, and other visual media will be explored through lectures, but primarily by writing itself. The objective of this course is to expose students to the fundamentals of storytelling as applied through writing for a variety of visual narrative mediums.

### VNG-5620-OL

#### **Digital Short Story**

Spring semester: 6 credits

Instructors: J. Rugg, M. Sable

In this course students will combine and apply the ideas and concepts from VNG-5540, Story Visualized, and VNG-5580, Creative Script, to create an original short story in a digital, visual narrative format. We will focus on the creative process of taking an idea from its initial stage through a proposal, story and character development, editing, layout, design, color palette, typography and, finally, revision and finishing. The course culminates in an exhibition of both the digital story and physical artwork. As students create works intended for digital publication and distribution, traditional production techniques will be addressed, including the technical considerations necessary to produce both digital and print copies. Guest artists will discuss digital publishing, online community building, self-promotion, digital distribution and self-publishing.

## VNG-5650-OL / VNG-5655-OL

### Lecture Series I and II

Fall and spring semesters: no credit

Instructor: J. Rosen

This series offers students the opportunity to hear from a wide variety of professional perspectives. Lectures will be given by artists, authors, art directors and others from around the world, and will address multiple aspects of narrative, picture-making, history and storytelling.

Course #	Semester
VNG-5650-OL	fall
VNG-5655-OL	spring

## SECOND YEAR

### VNG-6120-A

#### Bridging Image and Context

Tuesday, Thursday; June 6 – July 27 (no class July 4)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2017 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: D. Vainesman

Today type and image go beyond their original targets of visual communication and message design and have become visual and cultural art forms all their own. With thousands and thousands of typographic options to choose from, how do visual storytellers decide which font, design and format is best? How can the content or message of our work inform our decisions? And how will that typographic decision impact and/or engage the story's audience? In this course students will be challenged to look beyond basic typographic design approaches by considering alternative methodologies including psychology, sociology, history and aesthetics to solve the various design challenges unique to each work. Students will recognize the beauty of the letterform and learn how to bridge their work's visual content and contextual meaning to develop a rich and vibrant artistic/communicative palette. From minimal to "in-your-face" typography, students will explore their work and voice as visual communicators.

### VNG-6150-A

#### Shaping Your Story

Tuesday, Thursday; June 6 – July 27 (no class July 4)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2017 semester: 3 credits

Instructors: L. Cron, T. Szetela

As readers, viewers and consumers of story, we are hard-wired to respond to every story we encounter. In this course students will sharpen their creative writing and visual storytelling skills for their thesis projects by focusing on the "who, how, what, where" and, most importantly, the "why." From a deep understanding of what story is, students will hone in on the specific stories they want to tell and how they want to tell them. Through class discussions, students will develop the foundation, shape and scope of their narrative, establishing a clear yardstick by which to create, gauge and evaluate the relevance of every story element in their thesis. We will also investigate possible forms that these stories may inhabit. Students will identify resources and methods for sculpting their story's digital and physical presence, and craft a project plan and set of goals that will guide their thesis development. Throughout the course, there will be iterations on methods of story development, story pitches and plans for production of the thesis.

### VNG-6210-A

#### Visual Writing

Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class July 3)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2017 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: T. Szetela

The goal of this course is to investigate and iterate on the concept of mapping as a method of visual writing. In the first half of the semester, students will observe and document a specific location's architecture and objects, and the people that utilize and navigate its space. This process will highlight various techniques of media collection and background research (with a particular focus on site-specific research), applicable to many types of creative output. During the remainder of the semester, students will utilize the media and data they have collected to develop a group "atlas" or visualization. The final form of the location's atlas will be both physical (through installation and exhibition) and digital.

### VNG-6240-A

#### Form, Empathy and Character Play

Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class July 3)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2017 semester: 3 credits

Instructors: L. Rosen, C. Roussos

Character and narrative are symbiotic; one cannot exist without the other. Character + choice = story. Sometimes the only way to find a character's "voice" as a storyteller is to get into character—we must become the character in order to understand it. This course is designed to further develop skills in character creation through examining what makes characters behave the way they do. With lectures on character archetypes, character crisis, defining moments, unconscious desire and design, students will examine the elements necessary for creating their own characters. Through improv and role-playing techniques, students will understand their how their characters will behave in fictional settings, better enabling them to write and visualize their character creations.

### VNG-6320-OL

#### Identity in a Digital World

Fall semester: no credit

Instructors: M. Rota, B. Zackheim

What is the story of your life and work that people will find when they enter your name into their browsers? Artists have the ability to control their public identity online and, more than that, they can guide their identity onto the computers and in front of potential clients and marketplaces full of interested viewers looking for exactly the sort of content the artist is creating. This course will introduce aspiring artists and storytellers to the online tools available for sculpting a personal identity, and finding the specific marketplace ideally suited for their unique voice. A variety of web-hosting platforms and blogs will be discussed, along with marketing via social media platforms, gathering data and making sure the work is being seen, as well as helping to match the right platforms with the right content. The pros and cons of each tool will be reviewed, followed by talk about specific strategies for finding clients and generating traffic and interest. Interviews will be provided from a host of creative professionals.

### VNG-6330-OL

#### Selling Your Story

Spring semester: no credit

Instructors: B. Zackheim, M. Rota

Selling your story means telling your story. The creative person's marketing plan can be simple, but it must weave a compelling tale that helps people understand what has been created. Through frank and personal process one-on-ones, students will find the best promotional tools and processes. Students will develop and document their own promotional campaign in a thorough marketing plan that is intended to expand their audience and professional networks for both their thesis show and professional practice. Once completed in this course, each student's marketing plan will be executed in the third summer semester—connecting their story to audience.

**VNG-6520-OL / VNG-6525-OL****Thesis Studio I and II**

Fall and spring semesters: 6 credits per semester

Instructors: J. Rosen, E. Valentine

Guided by faculty and mentors, students will plan, pitch and execute a thesis project. The direction and visual medium for the thesis project is open to students' interpretation, and must demonstrate their strength and vision as storytellers and visual narrative artists. Equal emphasis will be given to the verbal and visual direction of each thesis. Students will maintain a written journal documenting the progression of their narrative thesis from inception to completion, including detailed accounts of discourses and critiques with their advisor. An analog and digital version of each thesis is required. Additionally, thesis work will be augmented with "toolbox" sessions that will explore advanced technique, related analysis and professional practice. One-on-one and online group discussions and lectures by guest artists and authors will be scheduled. The thesis project will culminate in a group exhibition at SVA in the third summer session.

<b>Course #</b>	<b>Semester</b>
VNG-6520-OL	fall
VNG-6525-OL	spring

**VNG-6540-OL / VNG-6545-OL****Thesis Review I and II**

Fall and spring semesters: no credit

Instructor: N. Fox

To support thesis development, students will work with a mentor of their choice during the fall and spring semesters. In addition, individual meetings with the department chair will be held throughout both semesters for review of the thesis project and the mentorship process.

<b>Course #</b>	<b>Semester</b>
VNG-6540-OL	fall
VNG-6545-OL	spring

**THIRD YEAR****VNG-6820-A****Connecting Story to Audience**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 6 – July 27 (no class July 4)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2017 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: B. Zackheim

Promotion is a key part of marketing, but it is only one part. To market our work effectively we need to weave promotions, sales and tales into a captivating whole. Do that, and your marketing leads to sales. But what are you selling? Yourself? Your story? An idea? This course will be a forum in which to discuss the elements of the thesis project that drives each student. By developing a marketing plan through discussions, we'll spot opportunities to highlight each student's passions, process and professional practice—connecting each student's story to his or her respective audience.

**VNG-6850-A****Presentation and Communication**

Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class July 3)

Hours: 6:00-8:50

Summer 2017 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: A. Ogier-Bloomer

This course works closely in conjunction with the other third summer semester classes to prepare students for their life as professionals in the world of creative production. It will help students to formulate their formal thesis presentations before a panel of their peers and select instructors. Students will share personal insight into their creative work, a vital and necessary component of any creative practice, and will engage with their peers on the panel, as well as with a moderator and audience members. During this course, students will also refine their professional presentation skills through visiting artist talks and discussions, training in studio visits and preparing materials for their upcoming job search and/or studio practice. Critical and practical readings, inquiries and individual meetings with the instructor will lay the foundation for students' public speaking engagement and their professional life following graduation. Guest lectures and field trips will complement the course.

**VNG-6900-A****Thesis Production and Professional Practice**

Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class July 3)

Hours: 9:00-11:50 and 1:00-3:50

Summer 2017 semester: 6 credits

Instructor: N. Fox

As visual storytellers, we create original works of art and literature for an audience to consume and critics, peers to validate and history to judge. Every artist and author takes on varying levels of responsibility, ownership and authorship. Each decision made, medium used and audience addressed in the creation of the work is a reflection of the voice of that artist, author and storyteller. In this final thesis studio, students will complete their thesis projects and prepare for the final thesis review, installation and exhibition. In addition, various guest artists, authors, critics, publishers and industry leaders will be invited to engage and critique individual student work. Approval of the thesis by the Thesis Committee and department chair are required for degree conferral.

## SUMMER 2017 FACILITIES ACCESS

### VNG-Riso-A

#### RisoLAB Access for MFA Visual Narrative Students

Summer semester: June 5 – August 4

No credit, free of charge

As part of the MFA Visual Narrative program, the RisoLAB is dedicated to the philosophy and practice of independent self-publishing, and provides the opportunity for understanding the print production process, creative expression and collaboration toward the production and publishing of student projects. RisoLAB Access includes access to the Risograph duplicators for self-publishing and printing, as well as small-format bindery, paper trimming equipment, inks, paper, tools and resources. All MFA Visual Narrative students receive training during the summer semester.

### PDG-Access-A

#### Visible Futures Lab

Summer semester: no credit

The Visible Futures Lab (VFL) offers tools for DIY hacking, crafts, state-of-the-art 3D printing, laser cutting, sewing and CNC routing, as well as traditional equipment. Graduate students who have projects that support and/or enhance the VFL's philosophy of purposeful and extendable projects can request access to the lab and employ the facilities toward completion of their project. Lab access is free of charge and provides mentorship, tools and resources. Students who wish to work in the lab may need to demonstrate proficiency on some equipment or be trained to use equipment. For more information, descriptions of optional course offerings, hours and an access request form, please visit [vfl.sva.edu](http://vfl.sva.edu).

### FIG-Printg-A

#### Printmaking Workshop Access

June 5 – August 19

Summer semester: no credit

Access fee: \$275

Graduate students not enrolled in a printmaking course and who would like to use the printshop facilities to work independently must register for Printmaking Workshop Access. Prerequisite: Two semesters of printmaking or permission from the printmaking coordinator. *Note: Access is available during printshop hours that do not conflict with ongoing courses.*

### DIG-Access-A

#### Digital Imaging Center Access: Graduate Students

June 2 – August 1

Summer semester: no credit

Access fee: \$300

For graduate students who want access to the Digital Imaging Center. Prerequisites: A working knowledge of the Macintosh operating system and the Adobe Creative Suite. *Note: Access is available during hours that do not conflict with ongoing courses.*

## FALL 2017 / SPRING 2018 FACILITIES ACCESS

### RisoLAB Access for MFA Visual Narrative Students

One semester: no credit

Access fee, \$300 per semester

As part of the MFA Visual Narrative program, the RisoLAB is dedicated to the philosophy and practice of independent self-publishing, and provides the opportunity for understanding the print production process, creative expression and collaboration toward the production and publishing of student projects. RisoLAB Access includes access to the Risograph duplicators for self-publishing and printing, as well as small-format bindery, paper trimming equipment, inks, paper, tools and resources. All MFA Visual Narrative students receive training during the summer semester.

Course #	Semester
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VNG-Access-A	fall
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VNG-Access-B	spring
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### Visible Futures Lab

One semester: no credit

The Visible Futures Lab (VFL) offers tools for DIY hacking, crafts, state-of-the-art 3D printing, laser cutting, sewing and CNC routing, as well as traditional equipment. Graduate students who have projects that support and/or enhance the VFL's philosophy of purposeful and extendable projects can request access to the lab and employ the facilities toward completion of their project. Lab access is free of charge and provides mentorship, tools and resources. Students who wish to work in the lab may need to demonstrate proficiency on some equipment or be trained to use equipment. For more information, descriptions of optional course offerings, hours and an access request form, please visit [vfl.sva.edu](http://vfl.sva.edu).

Course #	Semester
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PDG-Access-A	fall
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PDG-Access-B	spring
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### PHG-Dkroom

#### Darkroom Access: Graduate Students

One semester: no credit

Access fee: \$300

Graduate students who want access to the BFA Photography Department black-and-white darkrooms must register for PHG-Dkroom. Prerequisite: PHD-1003, Basic Photography, or equivalent.

Course #	Semester
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PHG-Dkroom-A	fall
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PHG-Dkroom-B	spring
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### Sculpture Center Access

One semester: no credit

Access fee: \$500

Graduate students who want access to the Sculpture Center must register for Sculpture Center Access. Students will work independently. Prerequisite: Two semesters of sculpture or permission from the Sculpture Center manager. All students must attend a mandatory safety demonstration. *Note: Access is available during Sculpture Center hours that do not conflict with ongoing courses.*

Course #	Semester
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FIG-Sculpt-A	fall
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FIG-Sculpt-B	spring
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### Printmaking Workshop Access

One semester: no credit

Access fee: \$325

Graduate students not enrolled in a printmaking course and who would like to use the printshop facilities to work independently must register for Printmaking Workshop Access. Prerequisite: Two semesters of printmaking or permission from the printmaking coordinator. *Note: Access is available during printshop hours that do not conflict with ongoing courses.*

Course #	Semester
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FIG-Printg-A	fall
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FIG-Printg-B	spring
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