

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

Course #	Title	Semester(s)
VNG-5040	Black and White and Narrative Color	summer
VNG-5080	Analog to Digital: Dynamic Transformations	summer
VNG-5130	Narrative Writing	summer
VNG-5230	History of Visual Storytelling: Graphic Media	summer
VNG-5240	History of Visual Storytelling: Film	summer
VNG-5250	History of Visual Storytelling: Photography	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

Course #	Title	Semester(s)
VNG-6120	Bridging Image and Context	summer
VNG-6150	Shaping Your Story	summer
VNG-6210	Visual Research	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

Course #	Title	Semester
VNG-6820	Connecting Story to Audience	summer
VNG-6850	Professional 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 at: myservices.sva.edu.

Note: Courses are listed by year.

FIRST YEAR

VNG-5040-A

Black and White and Narrative Color

Tuesday, Thursday; June 4 – July 25 (no class July 4)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2019 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: N. Fox

Beyond the surface and medium, how do stories really work visually in images? What fundamental elements are required and how do our narrative choices as visual storytellers inform or affect how each story is constructed and received? Are there rules and how do we break them? This course aims to help students explore, challenge and examine these questions and the fundamental building blocks of visual storytelling in their own work through a limited and focused palette. Through collaboration and rapid prototyping, students will be given a series of visual story explorations that are intended to disrupt and challenge their assumptions and current working methods by asking each student to dig deeper and discover how their decisions as visual storytellers truly mold and shape their narrative approach as both author and artist.

VNG-5080-A

Analog to Digital: Dynamic Transformations

Tuesday, Thursday; June 4 – July 25 (no class July 4)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2019 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

Narrative Writing

Monday, Wednesday; June 3 – July 24 (no class July 3)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2019 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: TBA

Writing artfully shouldn't be the first concern of any author; this is as true for the beginner 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 each student's 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-5230**History of Visual Storytelling: Graphic Media**

Monday, Wednesday; June 3 – July 24 (no class July 3)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2019 semester: 1 credit

Instructors: B. Kartalopoulos, L. Marcus

This is the first course in a three-part series that will provide an overview of visual storytelling in photography, film and graphic media. The series 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-5232**History of Visual Storytelling: Film**

Friday; June 7 – July 19 (no class July 5)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2019 semester: 1 credit

Instructor: L. Rosen

This is the second part of a three-part course. See VNG-5230 for course description.

VNG-5234**History of Visual Storytelling: Photography**

Friday; June 7 – July 19 (no class July 5)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2019 semester: 1 credit

Instructor: S. Morrison

This is the third part of a three-part course. See VNG-5230 for course description.

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 that we previously 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.

<i>Course #</i>	<i>Semester</i>
VNG-5650-OL	fall
VNG-5655-OL	spring

SECOND YEAR

VNG-6120-A

Bridging Image and Context

Tuesday, Thursday; June 4 – July 25 (no class July 4)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2019 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: D. Vainesman

Perhaps more than ever, 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

Monday, Wednesday; June 3 – July 24 (no class July 3)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2019 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: TBA

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 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 zero in on the story they want to tell and how they want to tell it, given the specific visual method they plan to employ. 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. Students will also practice and perfect pitching their story, in conjunction with the plan for production of the thesis.

VNG-6210-A

Visual Research

Monday, Wednesday; June 3 – July 24 (no class July 3)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2019 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: T. Szetela

This course focuses on the application of mapping and data visualization techniques for use in concept development and world building. Students will identify locations connected to their existing story ideas and will investigate these locations using documentary media, data collection, and other methods of site-specific research. Students will compile the materials they gather into visual archives and create analog and digital maps that describe their content. The work produced in the course will function as a reference for the development of thesis projects and as a means of communicating the spaces that these stories will inhabit, and the experiences their audiences will have while navigating them.

VNG-6240-A

Form, Empathy and Character Play

Tuesday, Thursday; June 4 – July 25 (no class July 4)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2019 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: C. Roussos

Character and narrative are symbiotic; 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

Instructor: M. Rota

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

Instructor: B. Zackheim

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 I and II

Fall and spring semesters: 6 credits per semester

Instructors: A. Garfunkel, C. Roussos

This course is focused on thesis story development, project management, production, achieving a professional level of finish and audience engagement. Student will establish their own production schedule and deadlines with instructors and mentors, who will guide and support students through constructive critique, industry feedback and real-world troubleshooting. Mutually agreed upon milestones will be created, based on project and media requirements, to ensure the successful outcome of the thesis project. Students will complete their assignments alongside their peers, participate in ongoing discussions and hear from professionals in various fields. The underlying emphasis of this course is on building a community of mutual support and accountability for the completion of each thesis at the end of the spring semester, as well as in preparation for the summer graduate exhibition and public presentation.

Course #	Semester
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VNG-6520-OL	fall
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VNG-6525-OL	spring
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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. Individual meetings with the department chair for review of the thesis project and the mentorship process will be held throughout both semesters. During the spring semester, students will focus on the continuation of biweekly mentor logs, as well as begin individual thesis exhibition installation development, budgeting and proposals. Students and the department chair will discuss and view all designs for implementation in the third summer session for thesis exhibition and public presentations.

Course #	Semester
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VNG-6540-OL	fall
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VNG-6545-OL	spring
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THIRD YEAR

VNG-6820-A

Connecting Story to Audience

Tuesday, Thursday; June 4 – July 25 (no class July 4)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2019 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

Professional Presentation and Communication

Tuesday, Thursday; June 4 – July 25 (no class July 4)

Hours: 6:00-8:50

Summer 2019 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: R. Thill

This course works closely in conjunction with the other final semester courses to prepare students for their professional life in the world of creative production. At the end of the semester, students will present an artist's talk on their thesis project and their creative practice, sharing insights into their process. This practice is a vital and necessary component of any creative's life. Students will also refine their professional presentation skills through exercises and visiting artists' talks, and by preparing materials for job and arts opportunities. Critical and practical readings, and individual meetings with the instructor will lay the foundation for public speaking engagement and their professional initiatives. Guest lectures and field trips will complement the course.

VNG-6900-A

Thesis Production and Professional Practice

Monday, Wednesday; June 3 – July 24 (no class July 3)

Hours: 9:00-3:50

Summer 2019 semester: 6 credits

Instructor: N. Fox

As visual storytellers, we create and contribute original narrative works of art and literature for an audience to consume and critics, peers to validate and history to judge. Over the course of the thesis year, each student is responsible for varying levels of professional practice, portfolio development, promotion, ownership and authorship. The thesis year and thesis project is a reflection of each student's unique voice as artist, author and visual storyteller. In this final studio course, students will complete their thesis study, installation, exhibition and exit interview. In addition, various guest artists, authors, critics, publishers and industry leaders will be invited to network and critique—both in the classroom and on an individual basis. Approval of the thesis by the Thesis Committee and department chair are required for degree conferral.

SUMMER 2019 FACILITIES ACCESS

RisoLAB Access for MFA Visual Narrative Students

Summer semester: June 3 – July 26

No credit; no fee

Created and managed by the MFA Visual Narrative Department, the RisoLAB is dedicated to the philosophy and practice of independent self-publishing. It provides the opportunity for creative expression, offers an understanding of the print production process, and encourages collaboration in the production and publishing of student projects. RisoLAB access includes use of the Risograph duplicators for self-publishing and printing, as well as small-format bindery tools, paper trimming equipment, inks, paper, tools and resources, along with tech support. All MFA Visual Narrative students receive training in their first 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 tools and shop equipment. Graduate students who have projects that support and/or enhance the VFL's philosophy of purposeful and extensible 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.

FIG-Printg-A

Printmaking Workshop Access

June 4 – August 15

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 4 – August 3

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 2019 / SPRING 2020 FACILITIES ACCESS

RisoLAB Access for MFA Visual Narrative Students

One semester: no credit; no fee

Created and managed by the MFA Visual Narrative Department, the RisoLAB is dedicated to the philosophy and practice of independent self-publishing. It provides the opportunity for creative expression, offers an understanding of the print production process, and encourages collaboration in the production and publishing of student projects. RisoLAB access includes use of the Risograph duplicators for self-publishing and printing, as well as small-format bindery tools, paper trimming equipment, inks, paper, tools and resources, along with tech support. All MFA Visual Narrative students receive training in their first summer semester.

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 tools and shop equipment. Graduate students who have projects that support and/or enhance the VFL's philosophy of purposeful and extensible 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.

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

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
PHG-Dkroom-A	fall
PHG-Dkroom-B	spring

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
FIG-Sculpt-A	fall
FIG-Sculpt-B	spring

Printmaking Workshop Access

One semester: no credit

Access fee: \$350

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
FIG-Printg-A	fall
FIG-Printg-B	spring