



## MFA Visual Narrative

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## 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. A Pass (P) or High Pass (HP) will be awarded for the successful completion of a course. Students are required to remain in good academic standing.

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

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## First-Year Course Requirements

Summer Semester

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Title</b>                                              |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| VNG-5040        | Framing the Story                                         |
| VNG-5080        | Analog to Digital: Risograph Production and Process       |
| VNG-5085        | Analog to Digital: Lens-Based Storytelling                |
| VNG-5130        | Writing Studio: Narrative Structure and Development       |
| VNG-5234        | Visual Narrative: Photography                             |
| VNG-5237        | Storytelling Through the Moving Image: Friday Film Series |

Fall Semester (online)

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Title</b>                    |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| VNG-5530        | Visual Narrative: Graphic Media |
| VNG-5580        | Writing Studio: Creative Script |

VNG-5584      The Haunted Machine: Horror in the Age of AI  
or VNG-5587      Power of Story

Spring Semester (online)

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Title</b>                                                       |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| VNG-5652        | Visual Narrative: The Craft and Theory of Interactive Storytelling |
| VNG-5657        | Writing Studio: Mythology and Folklore                             |

VNG-5640      Narrative Color  
or VNG-5664      Unbound: Personal Narrative as Artifact

## Second-Year Course Requirements

Summer Semester

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Title</b>                      |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| VNG-6150        | Thesis Prep: Shaping Your Story   |
| VNG-6210        | Visual Research                   |
| VNG-6240        | Form, Empathy, and Character Play |
| VNG-6250        | Thesis Prep: Picturing Your Story |
| VNG-6253        | Thesis Mentorship Seminar         |

Fall Semester (online)

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Title</b>                                 |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| VNG-5584        | The Haunted Machine: Horror in the Age of AI |
| or VNG-5587     | Power of Story                               |

VNG-6520      Thesis I  
VNG-6532      Seminar I

Spring Semester (online)

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Title</b>             |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| VNG-6510        | Storyteller as Community |
| VNG-6525        | Thesis II                |
| VNG-6533        | Seminar II               |

## Third-Year Course Requirements

Summer Semester

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Title</b>               |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| VNG-6820        | Storyteller as Brand       |
| VNG-6852        | Thesis Exhibition          |
| VNG-6860        | Professional Practices     |
| VNG-6900        | Portfolio and Presentation |

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## General Course Listing

Several elective courses offered through other graduate departments may be taken with the proper prerequisites and permission from both department chairs, space permitting. Please refer to each department's General Course Listing for descriptions and information.

### First Year

#### VNG-5040-A

##### Framing the Story

Monday, Wednesday; June 1 – July 22 (no class July 6)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructors: [N. Fox](#), [L. Rosen](#)

This course focuses on the fundamental principles and visual language of compositional design and how the framing of a story's imagery can influence or alter its communication and how it is perceived by an audience. Through collaborative projects and rapid-prototyping challenges, students will be asked to step outside of their comfort zones, apply their discoveries, and dig deep to develop their own visual language and unique approach to narrative image-making.

#### VNG-5080

##### Analog to Digital: Risograph Production and Process

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2026 semester: 1.5 credits

Instructor: TBA

Utilizing Risograph duplicator technology in this project-based workshop, students will learn to harness the power of print through the print reproduction process, developing a personal workflow that can be applied to any professional analog or digital medium. We will cover a variety of color separation methods, such as spot-color, duo-tone and faux CMYK. Students will gain familiarity with preparing files for print with their desired analog/digital medium, including analog/digital illustrations, photography and text; and learn how to translate these digital files into Risograph prints and zines. We will also examine the ever-growing independent publishing community and the integral role that the Risograph plays in personal storytelling and sharing your work with a wider audience.

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Day</b> | <b>Dates</b>                        |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| VNG-5080-A      | Tu         | June 2 – July 21 (no class June 30) |
| VNG-5080-B      | Th         | June 4 – July 23 (no class July 2)  |

#### VNG-5085

##### Analog to Digital: Lens-Based Storytelling

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2026 semester: 1.5 credits

Instructor: [A. Eveslage](#)

Through technology and project-based workshops, this course will examine best practices for telling a story through video. Traditional media and analog processes will be transformed by time, sound and photography. Video and sound capture techniques, as well as production design and lighting will be addressed. Using Adobe Premiere Pro, students will explore a variety of methods for producing digital images, and how to translate a stationary vision into the dynamic world of motion. The evolution of storytelling from analog to digitized media will be discussed.

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Day</b> | <b>Dates</b>                        |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| VNG-5085-A      | Th         | June 2 – July 21 (no class June 2)  |
| VNG-5085-B      | Tu         | June 4 – July 23 (no class July 30) |

**VNG-5130-A****Writing Studio: Narrative Structure and Development**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 2 – July 23 (no class July 2)

Hours: 6:00-8:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: [A. Eveslage](#)

Stories are powerful. Through the lenses of narrative craft, this course will explore the structures behind this power and how they can be wielded to create effective narratives without the use of images. We'll look at the function storytelling serves in our lives—from our basic psychology to how we use story to understand ourselves and the world around us. Breaking down the essential components of story mechanics, students will discover how story transcends medium using the same core elements. In addition to reading theoretical and narrative works, we will develop one common narrative as a class. Along the way, we will examine how these basic elements present themselves in both traditional written prose and audio podcasts, giving students the opportunity to write for both mediums. With a focus on how language alone can be used as imagery to achieve these narrative goals, students will learn how to make editorial decisions designed to fit the evolving needs of a story.

**VNG-5234-A****Visual Narrative: Photography**

Monday, Wednesday; June 1 – July 22 (no class July 6)

Hours: Monday 6:00-8:50; Wednesday 9:00-11:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: [S. Morrison](#)

The Visual Narrative series offers an overview of various creative fields. This course is a survey of the history of photography with special emphasis placed on how narrative is communicated through the medium. Photographs often suggest open-ended, non-linear narratives, and we will examine these ideas by looking at both the individual image and serial work. Studying photographs from the 19th century to contemporary practices, we will embark upon a careful analysis of the bond between photography and narrative will be defined and disassembled. The notion of photographers' intentions versus viewers' perceptions will also be explored. Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of how the practitioners of this medium create stories.

**VNG-5237-A****Storytelling Through the Moving Image: Friday Film Seminar**

Friday; June 5 – July 17 (no class June 19, July 3)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2026 semester: no credit

Instructor: [A. Ding](#), [I. Lombardi-Bello](#), [L. Rosen](#)

Through a series of film screenings and talkbacks, this course explores how the moving image combines time, image, and sound to tell stories. Films will span different forms and genres of the moving image, including uses of scripted narrative cinema, cinema vérité, documentary, personal memoir, animation, and experimental cinema. Students will learn to leverage film's position as a time-based medium to navigate stories that are nonlinear and blend genres. Guests, including filmmakers, animators, and critics, will speak about the works screened, demonstrating how storytelling techniques are not only applied throughout film history, but also in contemporary film industries. The course will present both Western and non-Western forms of cinema.

**VNG-5530-A** (previously VNG-5230)

**Visual Narrative: Graphic Media**

Fall semester: 2 credits

Instructors: [B. Kartalopoulos](#), [C. Neal](#)

The Visual Narrative series offers an overview of various creative fields. This course will examine the evolution of picture books, comics, artists' books and graphic novels as the departure point for different approaches to telling a story with words and pictures. A history of these art forms and their various points of intersection will be given, from children's adventure books to comic strips, web comics and experimental graphic picture books to contemporary independent, direct and book publishing markets. Guest artists and lecturers will address the class and field trips will be included.



*This course is held online through asynchronous instruction.*

**VNG-5584-A**

**The Haunted Machine: Horror in the Age of AI**

Fall semester: 2 credits

Instructor: [S. Simpson](#)

This course explores how horror is transforming in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), social media, and algorithmic control. From haunted machines to Dead Internet theory, data possession to doom-scrolling, we will investigate how new technologies echo classic horror tropes. Through critical readings and foundational horror theory, students will analyze the mechanics of terror, unpack what we fear, why we fear it, and how those fears bleed into digital spaces. They will explore hauntology and simulated connection, delve into Internet folklore and digital myth-making, and probe the shifting boundary where the real dissolves into the synthetic. Alongside theoretical study, students will learn from guest speakers working in fields such as AI, film, and experience design. They will examine cutting-edge projects and use these works as case studies, creative models, and provocations to inform and inspire their own projects. For their final projects, students will create an original piece that brings the course's ideas to life in a medium of their choice. This project could be a workshop, short film, performance, graphic or interactive work, critical essay, or multimedia experiment. The aim is to craft a piece that not only engages deeply with horror, AI, and speculative design, but also advances each student's creative practice. In doing so, students will confront their fears of the future and step into their role as architects of the future, not victims of it.



*This course is held online through asynchronous instruction.*

**VNG-5580-A**

**Writing Studio: Creative Script**

Fall semester: 2 credits

Instructor: [M. Sable](#)

Concept, character, structure, and craft—the fundamentals of creative storytelling and the architecture of a well-defined outline—will be explored 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 concept with a specified target audience. The similarities and differences among theater, film, television, comics, games, and other visual media will be explored through lectures and primarily through writing itself.



*This course is held online through asynchronous instruction.*

**VNG-5587-A****Power of Story**

Fall semester: 2 credits

Instructor: [S. Bhattacharya](#)

Stories are powerful reflections of both our inner and external worlds—be it a single image, ancient artifact, poetic verse, motion picture, photo journalism, video game, and more. The fundamental purpose of storytelling is to create connections, persuade opinions, and share aspects of life and the human experience, but what happens when the lines between truth and fiction become blurred, conflicted, or one-sided? In this course we will explore how different forms of storytelling can reshape and influence our perception of the world around us. Though aspects of the truth and fiction can be complex and sensitive subjects to address, this course will view both through a contemporary lens of meaningful and relevant discussion and research. Students will be encouraged to express their perspectives with respect for others, as well as take agency and ownership over the stories they tell and the content they create. By the end of the course, students will have a greater understanding of the complexity and power inherent in the facts and fiction of the past, to better inform their vision of the world around them.



*This course is held online through asynchronous instruction.*

**VNG-5640-A****Narrative Color**

Spring semester: 2 credits

Instructor: [J. Rosen](#)

From fundamental principles of color theory to the invention of the printing press, color film, and the digital exploitation in today's mobile media and entertainment, this studio course will explore the emotive, psychological, and symbolic properties of color and the narrative role color plays in visual communication, culture, politics, and storytelling across media. Students will create a series of works that convey atmosphere and mood through narrative color.



*This course is held online through asynchronous instruction.*

**VNG-5664-A****Unbound: Personal Narrative as Artifact**

Spring semester: 2 credits

Instructor: [H. Lee](#)

This asynchronous course explores the book as a powerful medium for self-expression, personal narrative, and identity. Students will engage with both traditional and experimental book forms, learning the physical, conceptual, and historical mechanics of publishing, and what makes a book—regardless of its final form. From ancient codices to contemporary artists' books and digital publications, this course provides an historical context for understanding how bound (and unbound) publications function as vessels for storytelling and personal voice. Alternative book markets and distribution models will also be explored—from zines and small press to online publishing, social media and print-on-demand platforms. By the end of this course, students will have learned how to craft and publish original book projects—either as a singular, cohesive work or a thematic collection of smaller narratives—emphasizing media exploration, personal expression, and immersive storytelling.



*This course is held online through asynchronous instruction.*

### **VNG-5652-A**

#### **Visual Narrative: The Craft and Theory of Interactive Storytelling**

Spring semester: 2 credits

Instructor: [S. Simpson](#)

From the nostalgic allure of choose-your-own-adventure books to groundbreaking digital experiences, this course uncovers the magic behind stories shaped by choice, exploration, and player agency. You'll delve into the psychology of connective storytelling, the design of narrative structures, and the rich media that has transformed audiences from passive readers into active participants. Through weekly play and in-depth analysis, you'll explore the dynamics of trust, agency, and play.



*This course is held online through asynchronous instruction.*

### **VNG-5657-A**

#### **Writing Studio: Mythology and Folklore**

Spring semester: 2 credits

Instructor: [C. Roussos](#)

This survey course will explore the history, universality and use of mythology and folklore across literature, the arts, entertainment and popular media. We will review a diverse list of stories from around the world, studying the symbolism, archetype, structure and intent, and what these stories reveal about our shared humanity. How these stories influence contemporary storytelling across media will be discussed. In addition to analysis, the course will focus on application of the structures and characters found in mythology and folklore through creative writing and peer response. Students will concept and create new forms and works of myth and fiction.



*This course is held online through asynchronous instruction.*

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Second Year

### **VNG-6150-A**

#### **Thesis Prep: Shaping Your Story**

Monday, Wednesday; June 1 – July 22 (no class July 6)

Hours: 6:00-8:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: [A. Eveslage](#)

What is the best way to research, develop and produce a particular story? How do you get to the root of what that story is about? How do you leverage your chosen medium to deliver that story? These are the core creative and professional questions this course will ask of each student and their thesis. Students will be asked to dig deep and make story choices that put the why of their story first, ahead of the visual or scripted end product. In addition to one-on-one meetings, in-class critique and discussions, students will conduct in-depth research into their story. As they start tackling preproduction tasks (asking “why” and “how”), students will analyze their medium’s strengths and weaknesses in the service of their story. Alongside story development, students will be asked to answer questions of scope, budget and other preproduction criteria in pursuit of an ambitious, but feasible, outcome. The ultimate goal is to present a professional thesis video pitch at the end of the semester wherein students demonstrate a clear, focused understanding of their story.

### **VNG-6210-A**

#### **Visual Research**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 2 – July 23 (no class July 2)

Hours: 6:00-8:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructors: [J Goldstick](#), [A. Soetarman](#), [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. The materials they gather will be compiled into visual archives and students will 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.

### **VNG-6240-A**

#### **Form, Empathy and Character Play**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 2 – July 23 (no class July 2)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: [C. Stephens](#)

Sometimes the best way to find a character's voice is to become the character. This course is designed to further develop skills in character creation through examining what makes characters behave in the ways they do. With lectures on archetypes, defining moments, unconscious desire and design, students will examine the elements necessary for creating their own characters. Through improvised time-based exercises, in-class writing prompts and role-playing techniques, students will understand how their characters will behave in fictional settings, better enabling them to write and visualize their creations.

### **VNG-6250-A**

#### **Thesis Prep: Picturing Your Story**

Monday, Wednesday; June 1 – July 22 (no class July 6)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: [S. Morrison](#)

Through research, critical discourse and presentations, students in this seminar will formulate and articulate the conceptual positions of their portfolio and visual thesis development. The goal of this seminar is to identify, analyze and interpret each student's creative interests, creative values, intent, influences, philosophical viewpoints and historical lineage as it relates to the work they are pursuing. This course is structured around extensive group critiques, presentations and research. Along with the story development produced in *Shaping Your Story*, this seminar course will culminate in a fully realized pitch video at the end of the semester.

### **VNG-6253-A**

#### **Thesis Mentorship Seminar**

Monday, Wednesday; June 1 – July 22 (no class July 6)

Hours: 10:00-11:50

Summer 2026 semester: no credit

Instructors: [A. Ding](#), [N. Fox](#)

In this seminar students learn how to properly research and fully vet potential mentors who will help them develop their skills and their thesis. Students also meet with instructors individually to further develop the medium and themes of their thesis, and understand how this development applies to choosing their mentor.

### **VNG-6510-A**

#### **Storyteller as Community**

Spring semester: 2 credits

Instructor: [S. Hipol](#)

As an artist, your "brand" is defined by how others perceive you and your work. In this course students will lay the foundation for developing a personal brand by understanding and engaging with their creative community. Students will conduct research and build connections with potential audiences,

supporters, collaborators, clients and customers. Through this process, students will identify their professional goals and the impact they want to have on their community. There will be individual and group feedback sessions where students will review their findings and prepare for developing their personal brands.



*This course is held online through asynchronous instruction.*

### **VNG-6520 / VNG-6525**

#### **Thesis I and II**

Fall and spring semesters: 3 credits per semester

Instructors: Faculty advisors

Focusing on thesis story development, this course will address project management, thesis production, and how to achieve audience engagement. Students will establish production schedules and deadlines with instructors and mentors, who will guide and support them through constructive critique, industry feedback and troubleshooting. Participating in discussions and hearing from professionals in various fields, students will build a community of mutual support and accountability for the completion of each thesis, and in preparation for exhibition and public presentation.



*This course is held online through asynchronous instruction.*

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

### **VNG-6532 / VNG-6533**

#### **Seminar I and II**

Fall and spring semesters: 1 credit per semester

Instructor: [S. Morrison](#)

Through research, critical discourse and presentations, students in this seminar will formulate and articulate the conceptual positions of their portfolio and visual thesis development. The goal is to identify, analyze and interpret each student's creative interests, creative values, intent, influences, philosophical viewpoints and historical lineage as they relate to the work they are pursuing. This seminar is structured around extensive group critiques, presentations and research, and will culminate in a fully realized pitch video.



*This course is held online through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous class sessions. Schedules will be available prior to the beginning of the semester.*

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Semester</b> |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| VNG-6532-A      | fall            |
| VNG-6533-A      | spring          |

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Third Year

### **VNG-6820-A**

#### **Storyteller as Brand**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 2 – July 23 (no class July 2; additional class on July 10)

Hours: 6:00-8:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: [S. Hipol](#)

In this course students will develop a personal brand that resonates with their audiences based on the research completed during the previous semester. Students will define their purpose, vision and values as an artist and assess the unique value they bring to their audiences. This will lay the foundation for the development of an artist presentation that each student will give at the end of the

semester. There will be individual and group feedback sessions to help students refine their personal narratives, and solidify their brand strategy and expression.

### **VNG-6852-A**

#### **Thesis Exhibition**

Monday, Wednesday; June 1 – July 22 (no class July 6)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructors: [O. Li](#), [B. Viegut](#)

The challenges in realizing a professional gallery exhibition will be addressed in this course, as students explore spatial design, work to scale, and how to curate materials from their thesis projects for presentation to the general public. Working with the SVA Galleries and Visible Futures Lab, various modes of fabrication will be applied, including pedestal fabrication, lighting strategies, and signage development for the installation of the work in a gallery space. Time management and budgetary constraints will be considered and students will explore promotional techniques that articulate their work for specific venues. The course will culminate in the two-part thesis exhibition, first as a physical gallery installation and then as a digital exhibition on the MFA Visual Narrative website.

### **VNG-6860-A**

#### **Professional Practices**

Monday, Wednesday; June 1 – July 22 (no class July 1, July 6)

Hours: 6:00-8:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: [G. Meola](#)

Designed as both a studio workshop and guest lecture series, this course will focus on developing professional business practices, including networking, social media skills, outreach and financial literacy. Guest presentations will be held throughout the semester to discuss and share real-world expertise and industry best practices.

### **VNG-6900-A**

#### **Portfolio and Promotion**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 2 – July 23 (No class July 2; additional class on July 11)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2026 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: [Q. Wang](#)

Developing each student's online portfolio and accompanying promotional materials and networks will be covered in this course. We will examine current trends and professional standards for market and audience, which will be paramount in cultivating relationships with art directors, editors, producers, and clients. In addition, students will engage in pitching exercises to refine their ability to communicate ideas clearly, persuasively, and professionally. At the end of the semester, students will present their thesis and portfolio at a public exhibition. Students will complete this course with an online portfolio, website presence, and professional presentation skills to support their creative practice.

### **VNG-6965**

#### **Thesis Extension**

One semester: 1.5 credits

This course is designed for students who have not met the unanimous approval of the Thesis Review Committee and who need an additional semester to complete their project. Students will work with a faculty advisor and have limited access to facilities.



*Registration for Thesis Extension is contingent upon approval by the department chair.*



*This course is held online.*

## MFA Visual Narrative Courses Open to All Graduate Departments

The following courses may be taken by any graduate student, with permission from the MFA Visual Narrative department chair. Please refer to the MFA Visual Narrative Department General Course Listing for descriptions and information.



*These courses do not include access to the RisoLAB.*

| <b>Course #</b> | <b>Title</b>                                              |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| VNG-5040        | Framing the Story                                         |
| VNG-5130        | Writing Studio: Narrative Structure and Development       |
| VNG-5530        | Visual Narrative: Graphic Media                           |
| VNG-5237        | Storytelling Through the Moving Image: Friday Film Series |
| VNG-5580        | Writing Studio: Creative Script                           |
| VNG-5584        | The Haunted Machine: Horror in the Age of AI              |
| VNG-5587        | Power of Story                                            |
| VNG-5640        | Narrative Color                                           |
| VNG-5652        | Visual Narrative: Crafting Worlds and Immersive Stories   |
| VNG-5657        | Writing Studio: Mythology and Folklore                    |
| VNG-5664        | Unbound: Personal Narrative As Artifact                   |
| VNG-6210        | Visual Research                                           |
| VNG-6240        | Form, Empathy, and Character Play                         |

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## RisoLAB Access

Lab access is available to all graduate students. For more information, see the [Facilities Access](#) section.