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. 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.

First-Year Course Requirements

Summer Semester

Course #	Title
VNG-5040	Framing the Story
VNG-5080	Analog to Digital: Riso and the Power of Print
VNG-5085	Analog to Digital: Lens-Based Storytelling
VNG-5130	Writing Studio: Narrative Writing
VNG-5230	Visual Narrative: Graphic Media
VNG-5234	Visual Narrative: Photography
VNG-5256	Storyteller Series I

Fall Semester (online)

Course #	Title
VNG-5540	Story Visualized: A Text and Image Lab
VNG-5580	Writing Studio: Creative Script
VNG-5583	Visual Narrative: Film and the Moving Image

Spring Semester (online)

Course #	Title
VNG-5640	Narrative Color
VNG-5652	Visual Narrative: Interactive Media
VNG-5657	Writing Studio: Mythology and Folklore

Second-Year Course Requirements

Summary Semester

Course #	Title
VNG-6150	Thesis Prep: Shaping Your Story
VNG-6210	Visual Research
VNG-6240	Form, Empathy and Character Play
VNG 6243	Visual Narrative: The Power of Story
VNG-6250	Thesis Prep: Picturing Your Story
VNG-6256	Storyteller Series II

Fall Semester (online)

Course #	Title
VNG-6320	Identity in a Digital World
VNG-6520	Thesis I
VNG-6532	Seminar I
VNG-6540	Mentor Review I

Spring Semester (online)

Course #	Title
VNG-6510	Storyteller as Community
VNG-6525	Thesis II
VNG-6533	Seminar II
VNG-6545	Mentor Review II
VNG-6551	Thesis Exhibition I

Third-Year Course Requirements

Summer Semester

Course #	Title
VNG-6820	Storyteller as Brand
VNG-6850	Professional Presentation
VNG-6851	Thesis Exhibition II
VNG-6856	Storyteller Series III
VNG-6860	Professional Practices
VNG-6900	Portfolio and Promotion

General Course Listing

First Year

VNG-5040-A
Framing the Story
Tuesday, Thursday; June 6 – July 27 (no class July 4)
Hours: 9:00-11:50
Summer 2023 semester: 3 credits
Instructor: N. Fox
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 break out 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: Riso and the Power of Print
Tuesday, Thursday
Hours: 1:00-3:50
Summer 2023 semester: 1 credit
Instructor: P. Terzis
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 examine a variety of reproduction methods, such as spot-color, four-color/CMYK and photo-based print design techniques for producing both print-based and digital imaging. Contemporary print and printmaking activities and examples of print-based projects from art history will be viewed and discussed. Finally, we will connect print-based analog media to the advent of digital platforms, including the rise of the Internet as a primary information distribution network, and how digital media and analog print complement each other.

Course #	Day	Dates
VNG-5080-A	Tu	June 6 – June 18 (no class July 4)
VNG-5080-B	Th	June 8 – July 20 (no class July 6)

VNG-5085

Analog to Digital: Lens-Based Storytelling

Tuesday, Thursday

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2023 semester: 1 credit

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.

Course #	*Day*	*Dates*
VNG-5085-A	Th	June 8 – July 20 (no class July 6)
VNG-5085-B	Tu	June 6 – July 18 (no class July 4)

VNG-5130-A

Writing Studio: Narrative Writing

Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class June 19 and July 3)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2023 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: A. Eveslage

Words are powerful. This course will explore how to use their power to create effective narratives, looking 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. As a class we will develop one common narrative during the semester, through which we will break down the essential elements of story mechanics to discover how story transcends medium using the same core elements. The goal is not merely to communicate, but to connect. How these basic principles are presented in both traditional prose and in radio and podcasts will be examined, and students will have the opportunity to write their own narratives for both mediums. With a focus on how language alone can be used as imagery to achieve these narrative goals, students will explore how the two mediums function differently. Readings of theoretical and narrative works will be included.

> ℹ️ *There will be one session scheduled outside of the listed class hours. The day/time will be announced at the beginning of the summer semester.*

VNG-5230-A

Visual Narrative: Graphic Media

Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class June 19 and July 3)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2023 semester: 2 credits

Instructors: B. Kartalopoulos, L. Marcus

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.

> ℹ️ *There will be one session scheduled outside of the listed class hours. The day/time will be announced at the beginning of the summer semester.*

VNG-5234-A
Visual Narrative: Photography
Tuesday, Friday; June 6 – July 28 (no class July 4)
Hours: Tuesday, 6:00-8:50; Friday, 1:00-3:50
Summer 2023 semester: 2 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-5256-A
Storyteller Series I
Wednesday, dates TBA (3 sessions)
Hours: 7:00-9:00
Summer 2023: no credit
Instructor: N. Fox
This lecture series welcomes traditional and nontraditional storytellers. Working professionals and creative story-makers across industries will share their work, background and professional experience.

VNG-5540-A
Story Visualized: A Text and Image Lab
Fall semester: 2 credits
Instructor: S. Reece
In this course students will create fully formed visual narratives, such as creating a visual documentary story incorporating collaged elements or creating a visual story entirely out of letterforms and words. The relationship of text and image in visual storytelling will be explored by experimenting with text as image, image as text, and using them together to tell stories in different formats, media and materials. Throughout the semester students will create a series of short projects that lead up to a longer adaptation of an existing story.

    This course is held online.

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.

VNG-5583-A

Visual Narrative: Film and the Moving Image

Fall semester: 2 credits

Instructor: L. Rosen

The Visual Narrative series offers an overview of various creative fields. In this survey of the moving image we will screen a classic film every week—each from a different genre and era—and explore the concepts and visual narrative structures it illustrates. Clips from other influential films that inspired (or were inspired by) our core films will be incorporated, to gain a deeper understanding of the continuum of film history. The course will also examine how film theory, specifically the interplay between montage and mise-en-scène, is put into practical use. How the visual vocabulary of film developed along with new innovations (and innovators) will be addressed as we examine how filmic vocabulary informs, and borrows from, other visual media.

This course is held online.

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.

VNG-5652-A

Visual Narrative: Interactive Media

Spring semester: 2 credits

Instructor: N. Fortugno

The Visual Narrative series offers an overview of various creative fields. This course will examine the transformative ways that information, stories, games and ideas are presented through creative digital technologies and platforms. The evolution of analog and interactive digital media, web design and mobile technology, game platforms and user interface design will be examined as we undertake a historical survey of these interactive art forms and their various points of intersection. Guest artists and lecturers will address the class.

This course is held online.

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.

Second Year

VNG-6150-A
Thesis Prep: Shaping Your Story
Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class June 19 and July 3)
Hours: 1:00-3:50
Summer 2023 semester: 3 credits
Instructors: A. Eveslage, J. Goldstick
What is the best way to research, develop and produce a personal story from start to finish? How do you identify the point of what that story is about—and the reason that drives you to create it? Why would the audience care? These are the core questions that this course will consider as students begin to develop their thesis concepts. Students will analyze their chosen medium's strengths and weaknesses in the service of their story while taking into consideration the scope, budget and relevant production criteria in pursuit of an ambitious and professional outcome. At the end of the semester, students will pitch their concept development to the Thesis Review Committee for evaluation and approval.

There will be one session scheduled outside of the listed class hours. The day/time will be announced at the beginning of the summer semester.

VNG-6210-A
Visual Research
Tuesday, Thursday; June 6 – July 27 (no class July 4)
Hours: 9:00-11:50
Summer 2023 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. 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 6 – July 27 (no class July 4)
Hours: 1:00-3:50
Summer 2023 semester: 3 credits
Instructor: C. Roussos
Sometimes the only way to find a character's "voice" as a storyteller is to become that character in order to understand it. 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 improv 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-6243-A
Visual Narrative: The Power of Story
Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class June 19 and July 3)
Hours: 9:00-11:50
Summer 2023 semester: 2 credits
Instructor: J. Gottschall
This lecture survey takes a critical and bold look at the power and influence storytelling has employed throughout history as a force for both good and evil. Through discussion and research, students will look at historical movements and cultural shifts in major religions, literature, art, digital media, entertainment and politics through a global lens and assess the narrative concepts, messaging and impact of storytelling. As content creators and future gatekeepers of change, students will be challenged to reflect upon the past and consider how the power of their storytelling can affect and shape culture and society.

ℹ️ *There will be one session scheduled outside of the listed class hours. The day/time will be announced at the beginning of the summer semester.*

🖥️ *Some sessions will be held online.*

VNG-6250-A
Thesis Prep: Picturing Your Story
Friday, June 9 – July 28 (no class June 30)
Hours: 9:00-11:50
Summer 2023 semester: 1 credit
Instructor: S. Morrison
Through research, critical discourse and presentations, students in this course will formulate and articulate the conceptual positions of their visual work. The goal is to identify, analyze and interpret each student's creative interests, creative values, intent, influences, philosophical viewports and historical lineage as it relates to the work being pursued. The course is structured around extensive group critiques, presentations and research. It will guide students to write, visualize and speak about the visual projects they are preparing, and will culminate in fully realized pitch presentations.

VNG-6256-A
Storyteller Series II
Wednesday, dates TBA (3 sessions)
Hours: 7:00-9:00
Summer 2023: no credit
Instructor: N. Fox
This lecture series welcomes traditional and nontraditional storytellers. Working professionals and creative story-makers across industries will share their work, background and professional experience.

VNG-6320-A
Identity in a Digital World
Fall semester: 2 credits
Instructor: M. Rota
Aspiring artists and storytellers will advance the development of their online tool set and studio practice skills to take agency of their personal identity and communications across platforms and marketplaces. A variety of web hosting, social media, blog and portfolio/skill-sharing platforms will be discussed, along with marketing and data collection to effectively share and represent students' digital identity and content. The pros and cons of each tool will be addressed, and specific strategies for finding clients and generating traffic and interest will be discussed.

 This course is held online.

VNG-6510-A
Storyteller as Community
Spring semester: 2 credits
Instructor: TBA
 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 their 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 discover their interests and the impact they want to have on their community. There will be individual consulting sessions where students will review their findings and prepare for developing their personal brands in the following summer semester.

 This course is held online.

VNG-6520 / VNG-6525
Thesis I and II
Fall and spring semesters: 3 credits per semester
Instructors: A. Garfunkel, C. Roussos
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.

Course #	Semester
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: D. Keilu
With multiple areas of focus these seminars will assist students with their individual production techniques in order to achieve a finished thesis product for full-scale development. Presentations on the theory and practice of visual narrative production and fabrication will be given, as they relate to various industries such as print, animation and film production, art law, accounting and studio management. Group discussions and individual consultations with faculty and advisors will help students identify specific formats, processes and techniques to successfully apply their findings into their projects.

 This course is held online.

Course #	Semester
VNG-6532-A	fall
VNG-6533-A	spring

VNG-6540 / VNG-6545
Mentor Review I and II
Fall and spring semesters: no credit
Instructor: N. Fox
To support thesis development, students will work with a mentor during the fall and spring semesters. Individual meetings with the department chair for review of the thesis and mentorship process will be held throughout both semesters.

 This course is held online.

Course #	Semester
VNG-6540-A	fall
VNG-6545-A	spring

VNG-6551-A
Thesis Exhibition I
Spring semester: no credit
Instructor: L. Spinelli
Thesis exhibition preproduction and schedule management will be addressed in this course. Meetings and discussions throughout the semester will support students in defining the design and promotional plan for their thesis exhibition. Production and installation of the thesis exhibition will be completed in the third summer semester.

 This course is held online.

Third Year

VNG-6820-A
Storyteller as Brand
Tuesday, Thursday; June 6 – July 27 (no class July 4)
Hours: 1:00-3:50
Summer 2023 semester: 3 credits
Instructor: TBA
In this course students will develop a personal brand strategy that resonates with their audience based on the research completed during the previous spring semester. Students will utilize their brand strategy to design and implement actionable marketing plans toward their creative and professional goals. Throughout the semester there will be guest presentations to explore industry best practices as well as small group consulting sessions to gather feedback and refine materials. By the end of the course, students will have a polished visual deck that establishes their personal brand and content across various channels.

VNG-6850-A
Professional Presentation
Tuesday, Thursday; June 6 – July 27 (no class July 4)
Hours: 6:00-8:50
Summer 2023 semester: 3 credits
Instructor: R. Thill
Preparing students for their professional life, this course will focus on refining professional presentation skills through exercises and by preparing materials for job and arts opportunities. Critical and practical readings, talks by visiting artists and individual meetings with the instructor will lay the foundation for public speaking engagement and professional initiatives. This practice is a vital and necessary component of any creative's life. At the end of the semester, students will present an artist's talk on their thesis project and creative process.

VNG-6851-A
Thesis Exhibition II
Tuesday June 6 – July 18 (no class July 4)
Hours: 9:00-11:50
Summer 2023: no credit
Instructor: Lucea Spinelli
In this course students will be supported as they implement the exhibition proposal developed in Exhibition I, including the production, fabrication and promotion of the thesis show.

Some sessions will be held online.

VNG-6856-A
Storyteller Series III
Wednesday, dates TBA (3 sessions)
Hours: 7:00-9:00
Summer 2023: no credit
Instructor: N. Fox
This lecture series welcomes traditional and nontraditional storytellers. Working professionals and creative story-makers across industries will share their work, background and professional experience.

VNG-6860-A
Professional Practices
Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class June 19 and July 3)
Hours: 1:00-3:50
Summer 2023: 3 credits
Instructor: N. Fox
Designed as both a studio workshop and guest lecture series, this course will assist students in advancing their professional business networking and social media skills as well as developing practical outreach skills. Guest presentations will be held throughout the semester to discuss and share real-world expertise, production pipeline techniques and industry best practices.

Some sessions may be scheduled outside of the listed class hours due to guest availability. These days/times will be announced at the beginning of the semester.

VNG-6900-A
Portfolio and Promotion
Monday, Wednesday; June 5 – July 26 (no class June 19 and July 3)
Hours: 9:00-11:50
Summer 2023: 3 credits
Instructor: M. Rota
Serving as a production course for portfolio completion and the launching of promotional materials, students will work on their website presence and on bringing their work to a finished, professional level. In addition, students will develop their exhibition curation skills in advance of the thesis gallery exhibition at the end of the semester. Industry professionals will share their studio practice and portfolio expertise.

There will be one session scheduled outside of the listed class hours. The day/time will be announced at the beginning of the summer semester.

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.*

EVG-0291
Writing Strategies
Day/time: TBA
One semester: no credit
Instructor: N. Schiff
In this course students will explore literary structures for class assignments and story development projects while focusing on grammar, syntax and vocabulary. Students will work toward building language skills to better express their narrative vision.

⚠️ *Registration for this course is by invitation of the department.*

🖥️ *The fall and spring sections are held online.*

Course #	Semester
EVG-0291-A	fall
EVG-0291-B	spring
EVG-0291-C	summer