

# 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	Visual Exploration 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-5232	History of Visual Storytelling: Film	summer
VNG-5234	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

<b>Course #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Semester(s)</b>
VNG-6120	Bridging Type, Image and Context	summer
VNG-6150	Shaping Your Story	summer
VNG-6210	Visual Research	summer
VNG-6240	Form, Empathy and Character Play	summer
VNG-6250	Picturing Your Story	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 Mentorship 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	Professional Presentation and Communication	summer
VNG-6860	Professional Practice Seminar	summer
VNG-6900	Thesis Production Seminar: Industry and Promotion	summer
VNG-6901	Thesis Production Seminar: Community Story Project	summer

# GENERAL COURSE LISTING

Updated course information can be viewed using MyServices Student, which can be accessed at: [myservices.sva.edu](https://myservices.sva.edu).

*Note: Courses are listed by year.*

## FIRST YEAR

### VNG-5040-A

#### Visual Exploration and Narrative Color

Tuesday, Thursday; June 8 – July 29 (no class July 1)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2021 semester: 3 credits

Instructor: N. Fox

Beyond format and medium, how do the images and visual content we use really function in the stories we create? And why does an audience care, empathize, or immerse themselves with some stories or images, over others? What are the fundamental elements required to communicate specific content effectively and how do our choices as visual story designers inform how successful our stories are constructed and received? Are there rules to visual storytelling and if so, how do we know if or when they can be manipulated or broken? This course aims to help students challenge and examine these questions in their own work and explore the fundamental building blocks of visual composition, communication and storytelling 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, going beyond visual problem-solving by asking students to dig deeper. Students will discover how informed story-first decisions can truly elevate their visual narrative art and personal voice—as both author and artist.

### VNG-5080-A

#### Analog to Digital: Dynamic Transformations

Tuesday, Thursday; June 8 – July 29 (no class July 1)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2021 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 7 – July 28 (no class July 5)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2021 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. Breaking down the essential elements of story mechanics, students will discover how story transcends medium using the same core elements. The goal is not merely to communicate, but to connect. In addition to reading theoretical and narrative works, students will develop one common narrative as a class. Along the way, we will examine how these basic principles present themselves in both traditional prose and in radio and 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 the two mediums function differently, while discovering the common core of story.

### VNG-5230-A

#### History of Visual Storytelling: Graphic Media

Monday, Wednesday; June 7 – July 28 (no class July 5)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2021 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-A

#### History of Visual Storytelling: Film

Friday June 11 – July 30 (no class July 2)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2021 semester: 1 credit

Instructor: L. Rosen

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

### VNG-5234-A

#### History of Visual Storytelling: Photography

Friday June 11 – July 30 (no class July 2)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2021 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, games, 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 Type, Image and Context**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 8 – July 29 (no class July 1)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2021 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 7 – July 28 (no class July 5)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2021 semester: 3 credits

Instructors: A. Eveslage, J. Goldstick

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? These are the core creative questions this course will consider as students begin to develop their thesis idea. Students will be asked to dig deep and put the why of their story first, ahead of the visual or scripted end product. As they start tackling preproduction tasks (asking "why" and "how" every step of the way) students will analyze their chosen medium's strengths and weaknesses in the service of their story. Alongside story development, students will answer questions of scope, budget, and other preproduction criteria in pursuit of an ambitious, but feasible, outcome. The ultimate goal is to present a carefully considered and professional thesis pitch wherein students will demonstrate a clear, focused understanding of their story and be poised to hit the ground running as they begin production in the following fall and spring thesis courses.

**VNG-6210-A****Visual Research**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 8 – July 29 (no class July 1)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2021 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**

Monday, Wednesday; June 7 – July 28 (no class July 5)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2021 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-6250-A****Picturing Your Story**

Friday June 11 – July 30 (no class July 2); hours: 9:00-11:50

Monday June 28 and Tuesday July 6; hours 6:00-8:50

Summer 2021 semester: no 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 for thesis. The goal 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 being pursued. The course is structured around extensive group critiques, presentations and research. It will guide students to write, visualize and speak coherently about the visual projects they are preparing, and will culminate in fully realized pitch presentations for the final thesis project.

**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
VNG-6520-OL	fall
VNG-6525-OL	spring

**VNG-6540-OL / VNG-6545-OL****Thesis Mentorship 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 this thesis exhibition and public presentations.

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

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

Tuesday, Thursday; June 8 – July 29 (no class July 1)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2021 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** (previously VNG-6530)**Professional Presentation and Communication**

Tuesday, Thursday; June 8 – July 29 (no class July 1)

Hours: Tuesday 6:00-8:50, Thursday 9:00-11:50

Summer 2021 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-6860-A****Professional Practice Seminar**

Friday June 11 – July 23 (no class July 2)

Hours: 10:00-1:00

Summer 2021: no credit

Instructor: N. Fox

This seminar series is designed as both a studio discussion and guest lecture series through which students will assess and advance their professional practice, promotional materials and portfolio development skills. In addition, individual and small group meetings will be held throughout the semester to discuss and realize individual portfolio development, networking and outreach initiatives—building relationships and enhancing connections within professional communities. Guest professionals, such as artists, authors, producers and publishers, will be invited to share their experience and expertise and provide feedback to students. Exit interviews will be held at the end of the semester and are required for degree conferral.

**VNG-6900-A****Thesis Production Seminar: Industry and Promotion**

Monday, Wednesday; June 7 – July 28 (no class July 5)

Hours: 1:00-3:50

Summer 2021 semester: 3 credits

Instructors: A. Garfunkel, C. Roussos

In the thesis year students will design, produce and complete a professional digital video asset that presents their thesis project in the style and format of a trailer or preview. In addition to the compilation of the thesis project, this course will include various guest artists, authors, critics, publishers and industry leaders, who will be invited to network and critique—both in the classroom and on an individual basis.

**VNG-6901-A****Thesis Production Seminar: Community Story Project**

Monday, Wednesday; June 7 – July 28 (no class July 5)

Hours: 9:00-11:50

Summer 2021 semester: 3 credits

Instructors: T. Cheung, N. Fox

As studio artists and professional storytellers, regardless of profession or industry, we create original works of art and literature for our audiences to consume, critics and peers to validate, and history to judge. Every artist and every author take on varying levels of responsibility, ownership and authorship. Each decision made, the medium used and audience addressed in the creation of the work reflects the voice of that artist, author and storyteller. In this course students will design, produce and complete a community-focused story project based on their thesis project that will expand and connect each student's specific audience and professional marketplace. In addition, various industry and community guests will be invited to offer feedback via individual and group meetings.

## SUMMER 2021 FACILITIES ACCESS

### RisoLAB Access for MFA Visual Narrative Students

Summer semester: June 7 – July 30

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](http://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 2021 / SPRING 2022 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](http://vfl.sva.edu).

#### Course # Semester

PDG-Access-A	fall
PDG-Access-B	spring

### Photography Lab and Equipment Access

One semester: no credit

Access fee: \$250

Graduate students want access to the labs or equipment in the BFA Photography and Video Department must contact the department via email at: [bfaphotovideo@sva.edu](mailto:bfaphotovideo@sva.edu).

### 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