

UNDERGRADUATE \ COMICS AND VISUAL STORYTELLING



CURRICULUM

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY
OF ART & DESIGN

design
mundo
afora

NABA

bachelor of arts in

COMICS AND VISUAL STORYTELLING^{NEW!}

AREA

Communication
and Graphic Design

AREA LEADER

Milan | Rome
Patrizia Moschella

The BA in Comics and Visual Storytelling (First Level Academic Degree in Graphic Design and Art Direction) prepares future comics illustrators, graphic novelists and visual artists providing them with the necessary skills to create engaging stories and develop their own style. By studying various genres - from Superheroes to Manga, from Mickey Mouse to the Comic Strips, from Indie Comics to Visual Novels, as well as the art of visual storytelling, students will learn the basic principles of comics, enabling them to create narratives, characters and visual sequences capable of conveying messages and emotions.

LANGUAGE

Italian - English

CAMPUS

Milan - Rome

DEGREE AWARDED

First Level
Academic Degree

CREDITS

180 CFA

LENGTH

Three years

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Comic book artist

Graphic novelist

Cartoonist

Storyboard artist

Concept artist

Comic strip creator

Illustrator

Webcomic creator

Visual development
artist

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To learn basic visual and narrative skills
to create fantasy characters and worlds

To develop projects designed for both
traditional and digital channels

To integrate academic education with
multidisciplinary exploration and market
knowledge

CURRICULUM

FIRST YEAR

SEMESTER	COURSES	CFA
1	History of modern art	6
1	Project methodology	12
	Visualisation techniques	6
	Methodology	6
1	Computer graphic	8
1	Mandatory IT training activities	4
TOTAL CREDITS 1ST SEMESTER		30
2	Project culture	8
	History of comics	4
	Semiotics	4
2	Graphic design	8
	Visualisation techniques 2	5
	Scriptwriting 1	3
2	Art direction 1 - Comics 1	8
	American comics - Theory	3
	American comics - Practice	5
2	Additional training activities	2
2	Mandatory training activities English and additional language skills	4
TOTAL CREDITS 2ND SEMESTER		30
TOTAL CREDITS FIRST YEAR		60

SECOND YEAR

SEMESTER	COURSES	CFA
3	Editorial design	10
	Graphic printing techniques	3
	Editorial design	7
3	Audiovisual languages and techniques - Comics 2	8
	Anime and manga - Theory	3
	Anime and manga - Practice	5
3	Digital technologies and applications - After effects and AI	6
3	Theory and methodology of mass media	6
TOTAL CREDITS 3RD SEMESTER		30
4	Multimedia design 1 - Digital publishing 1	6
4	Art direction 2 - Comics 3	8
	European comics - Theory	3
	European comics - Practice	5
4	Communication methodology and techniques	8
	Digital drawing	5
	Scriptwriting 2	3
4	Illustration - Character design	4
4	Additional training activities	4
TOTAL CREDITS 4TH SEMESTER		30
TOTAL CREDITS SECOND YEAR		60

THIRD YEAR

SEMESTER	COURSES	CFA
5	Project methodology of visual communication	12
	Graphic novel	6
	Scriptwriting 3	3
	Coloring	3
5	Multimedia design 2 - Self publishing	6
5	Introduction to cultural marketing	6
	1 course to be chosen by the student:	
5	Multimedia languages 1 - Kids development	6
	Multimedia languages 2 - Digital animation techniques	
TOTAL CREDITS 5TH SEMESTER		30
6	Career development	6
	Creative lab and portfolio	
6	Final workshop	12
	Thesis lab	7
	Thesis tutoring	5
6	Final project	10
6	Additional training activities	2
TOTAL CREDITS 6TH SEMESTER		30
TOTAL CREDITS THIRD YEAR		60
TOTAL CREDITS BACHELOR OF ARTS		180

COURSES

FIRST YEAR

HISTORY OF MODERN ART

This course explores the history of art as a way to understand contemporary phenomena: the languages of art and its contexts and fields; images and their manipulation and consumption from the beginnings of the industrial era to the developments of technology and communication media, that mark our current situation.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

This course is an introduction to design in the field of applied arts, through the study of methods and techniques of observation, analysis and visual processing.

COMPUTER GRAPHIC

The course provides thorough knowledge of the professional use of digital technologies for creative design, using the most common informatics tools, both software and hardware: computers, graphic tablets and other applications. The topics range from drawing to compositing and digital layouts.

PROJECT CULTURE

By integrating the historic and semiotic aspects (understanding of images and cultural objects), this course gives an overview of the rise and evolution of comic strips at a global level. Its synoptic approach follows an ideal timeline through geographically distant cultures. The course is an introduction to its discipline language and the critical analysis of the fundamental elements - cultural, visual and conceptual - of the design and creative culture. It is therefore propaedeutic to all design activities that are transversal to the various fields of communication (comics, graphic design, advertising and visual design).

GRAPHIC DESIGN

The course lays the foundation to develop all the necessary skills to write comic scripts, analysing the dynamics involved in the narration, structure of the story, plot, and development of unforgettable characters and topics. The course goes in-depth on the differences and contaminations among cinema, literature and television, reviewing and comparing the most meaningful examples. Moreover, it introduces the students to the industry production practice, familiarising them with the workflow. It also explains the editorial production process with its pace and deadlines.

ART DIRECTION 1 COMICS 1

The course goes over the history of American comics from the beginning until today and teaches the students the basics of drawing inspired by the masters of overseas productions which have covered all genres, from superheroes to Sunday strips, to the Disney empire. The students will become familiar with American comics' main authors, publishers and characters, learning how this medium evolved over time. They will also learn the use of different tools and drawing techniques such as pencil, ink and digital drawing.

SECOND YEAR

EDITORIAL DESIGN

This course analyses the theoretical, methodological and practical understanding of editorial design in all its phases and applications: from magazines to graphic novels to online publishing, with an excursus on promotional communication for products. Specific attention is devoted to the proper use of typographic and iconic elements, to the study of formats and layout grids, to the balance between text and images, as well as to the choice of printing materials and techniques.

AUDIOVISUAL LANGUAGES AND TECHNIQUES COMICS 2

The course focuses on manga, very different from Western comics. Manga - and Eastern comics in general - are often more dramatic, aggressive and sexual, marked by unique artistic style based on the intensification of gestures and traits. Their deep impact on popular culture will also be analysed, which they reached through films, anime and video games. The course goes over the history and genres of manga and teaches the basics of this type of drawing, narration and creativity.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND APPLICATIONS AFTER EFFECTS AND AI

This course fosters the development of the professional use of digital technologies for creative design, in particular for motion graphics and 3D modelling. It enhances the computer designers' technical skills, supporting the development of web projects and digital art.

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF MASS MEDIA

This theoretical course presents the socio-cultural impact of mass media through the critical analysis of their evolution - from mass media to digital media - with a focus on the main theories and contemporary mapping. It helps the students develop an analytical and critical approach to the cultural production of films, TV shows, websites, new media projects.

MULTIMEDIA DESIGN 1 DIGITAL PUBLISHING 1

The exploration and analysis of the typical ways of use and navigation (user experience) across digital devices (web/desktop, tablet, smartphone) is the focus of this propaedeutic course to integrated communication systems design. It focuses on the understanding of information architectures in the transition from print to digital, from fixed to fluid, and on the introduction to the design of layouts and interfaces that are aesthetically consistent with usability along with communication and distribution strategies. It includes practical work.

**ART DIRECTION 2
COMICS 3**

The course focuses on European comic strips, often realistic, political and philosophical, with a unique artistic style based on the use of clean lines and vivid colours. It examines the history and genres of European comics, analysing the difference between different currents among which the French-Belgian, Italian, Spanish, and English and their sub-genres, as well as teaching different styles of drawing.

**COMMUNICATION
METHODOLOGY
AND TECHNIQUES**

In this course, the students will enhance the skills acquired in other subjects. On one hand, they will apply their theoretical and practical knowledge of illustration techniques with a specific focus on digital illustration and its manifold applications; on the other, they will continue their script writing work reinforcing their ability to write for comics, through the exploration of genres and archetypes, narrative styles and dialogues to develop characters and plots.

**ILLUSTRATION
CHARACTER DESIGN**

This course prepares the students for the development of Character Design, including all aspects of acting and identification of characters. It provides an overview of genres and authors as well as of the main techniques and languages. Specific attention will be devoted to the comic's target, with an analysis of the difference in character development based on an adult rather than children target.

THIRD YEAR

**PROJECT
METHODOLOGY
OF VISUAL
COMMUNICATION**

The course develops in three ways and has the students focusing on practical work to complete a narrative project: from its concept, to scripting, to the presentation. The course sees the study and creation of a Graphic Novel project, as well as a thorough focus on colouring techniques for comic strips.

**MULTIMEDIA
DESIGN 2
SELF PUBLISHING**

The course examines and analyses the opportunities offered by the paper-to-digital transition, which allows for alternative ways to the traditional author/publisher/distributor/market distribution pattern. With the study of online platforms (web and apps), the students learn how to use the tools and promotion strategies offered by self-publishing.

**INTRODUCTION
TO CULTURAL
MARKETING**

The theoretical and methodological course introduces the students to the disciplinary language (segmentation, targeting, positioning, marketing plan, fundraising, competitions and tenders) in consideration of the contemporary marketing evolution (marketing mix and online), and provides guidelines for structuring systems that are consistent with the client's needs - either a publisher or a reader, crucial to the development of corporate communication policies.

**MULTIMEDIA
LANGUAGES 1
KIDS DEVELOPMENT**

The course introduces the peculiarities of comics for children, from preschool age to primary school. The target segmentation is analysed by age groups with their cognitive/behavioural touchpoints, a crucial precondition to developing stories and characters that are relevant to the audience. Through an analysis of the market offer and most successful cases, the students will be able to discern the founding elements of a good product targeted to kids.

**MULTIMEDIA
LANGUAGES 2
DIGITAL ANIMATION
TECHNIQUES**

This theoretical and practical course introduces the main animation techniques and is aimed at third-year students who have been already trained in visual taste and communication. It provides the first elements to mindfully approach animation projects using a language that is well-paced, rich in images, taste and narrative aspects, outlining the story and psychology of the characters.

**CAREER
DEVELOPMENT**

This course, created as a workshop-like laboratory, revolves around experimentation and practical knowhow. Within a creative workshop that brings together research, strategy and creativity on real projects (in collaboration with companies and agencies), the students develop non-conventional solutions in order to create a professional portfolio. Part of the course, in collaboration with the Career Service, will cover some aspects that relate to the professional practice (types of contract, intellectual property, CSR - corporate social responsibility). Overall, this course aims for the students to develop a knowledgeable approach to design, that also considers ethical issues (sustainability, company relations, community development, as well as support to arts and culture).

FINAL WORKSHOP

This course summarises all the skills and abilities acquired over the three years, in order to integrate the students' training and mindfully guide them in consideration of their specific inclinations and potential, highlighted in their dissertation works. It is divided in two modules: the Thesis lab includes different activities (lectures, projects and revisions) that revolve around the dissertation works submitted by the students and approved by the representative lecturer for each area. It closes and deepens the course of study within the chosen specialisation, also supporting all the phases of the thesis project (research, creativity, technical application, creation and presentation of the final work) with suitable methodologies. The Thesis tutoring module supports the students in the preparation of their final exam. Its teaching method aims at developing the individual aptitudes acquired over the three-year course, with special attention to the complete creation of the thesis project (research, creativity, publishing and presentation).

FINAL PROJECT

The final project is the high point of the entire Three-year programme. The exam consists of a written part, where students analyse, with a critical and/or reflexive approach, a complex topic agreed upon with a supervising lecturer. In order to develop the theoretical part, students must carry out attentive research, not only bibliographical, and contextualise their opinions with suitable arguments. The final project also includes a project that depends on the kind of study course and that, through the discipline's own design method, reflects the complexity of thoughts and ideas expressed in the written part. The relation between the two components and the kind of research and project are largely based on the decisions and dispositions of the students, who will agree upon all practical and conceptual aspects with their supervisor. Each study course contains general advice about the kind of work that should be undertaken. Throughout the Academy, specific norms are enforced that the students should be familiar with.