

NEWSREEL 2

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# NEW TEACHING FIELDS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF JOURNALISTS

## TEACHING GUIDE

### GRAPHIC JOURNALISM AND COMICS REPORTAGE



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## About the Newsreel Project

An indispensable ability that journalists need to acquire is the creative and responsible use of digital tools. Journalists should be reliable and trustworthy sources of news amidst the digital din as they need to provide a counterpoint to the wealth of unverified information that affects the raw emotions and tempers of audiences around the world. The target audience of the EU-funded NEWSREEL2 - New Teaching Fields for the Next Generation of Journalists project is the millennial and post-millennial generations of journalists whose lifestyles are inherently linked to digital devices and social media. The primary aim of NEWSREEL2 is to improve their digital skills in a creative and responsible way to enhance the societal benefits of the digital era. To achieve these objectives, the NEWSREEL2 project team developed innovative teaching methods and materials for media and journalism students.

The project is the extension of NEWSREEL - New Skills for the Next Generation of Journalists, widening the scope of the original four journalistic fields covered (data journalism, collaborative journalism, new business models and ethical challenges) with nine new ones: (1) 'Storytelling in social media' enables students to learn how to present journalistic contents on social media networks. (2) 'Graphic journalism' helps students to get to know the basic tools and subgenres of comics journalism. (3) Improving students' 'democratic sensibility' enables them to be aware of their social role and responsibility in the democratic society of the digital age. (4) 'Covering migration' helps to improve their research and reporting skills and understanding migration in a global context. (5) 'Foreign coverage' enables students to contribute to a more balanced coverage of international topics. (6) 'Journalism for voice-activated assistants and devices' teaches students how to use them and see their potential in newsrooms. (7) 'AI and journalism, robot journalism and algorithms' teach their usage, and enables students to clearly see the potential benefits and risks. (8) 'Verifying and analyzing fake news' teaches students to be able to identify information and opinion going viral and to verify information with the help of suitable tools and software. (9) 'Debunking disinformation' helps students to get solid knowledge about the mechanisms used for debunking fake news and disinformation. The project aims to facilitate efficient international cooperation between university-based journalistic ecosystems. All educational materials produced by the project partners are open free and accessible through open licenses via the NEWSREEL2 website (<https://newsreel.pt.e.hu/>). The project partners are the University of Pécs, in Hungary; the Erich Brost Institute, from the Dortmund Technical University, in Germany; the University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL), in Portugal; the University of Bucharest, in Romania; the Masaryk University, from Brno, in the Czech Republic; and Hostwriter, from Berlin, in Germany.

## **The Teaching Guides**

There is a teaching guide for each field of the NEWSREEL2 project. The main goal of these teaching guides is to give some hints that can help teachers and trainers to implement the developed courses. The guides help understand how the courses are structured and showcase the complete courses and the e-learning or other teaching materials available for each course on the online platform. Through the guides you can have access to main goals of the course, for whom it was thought, bibliographical references and other contents that can help you get the most out of the contents the NEWSREEL2 team has prepared.

## **The structure**

Besides the detailed syllabus, this course provides teaching materials developed to support the teaching process. You can find these materials in the syllabus and in this teaching guide. The teaching guides structure is the following:

- The professional field
- Target audience
- General objectives
- Specific objectives
- Professional competences to be enhanced
- Course
  - o Complete course
    - Contents according to the Syllabus
    - Advised teaching methods
    - Evaluation suggestion
    - Bibliography suggestions
  - o E-learning or other teaching materials
- Notes to teachers
- General observations
- The team

## Graphic Journalism and Comics Reportage

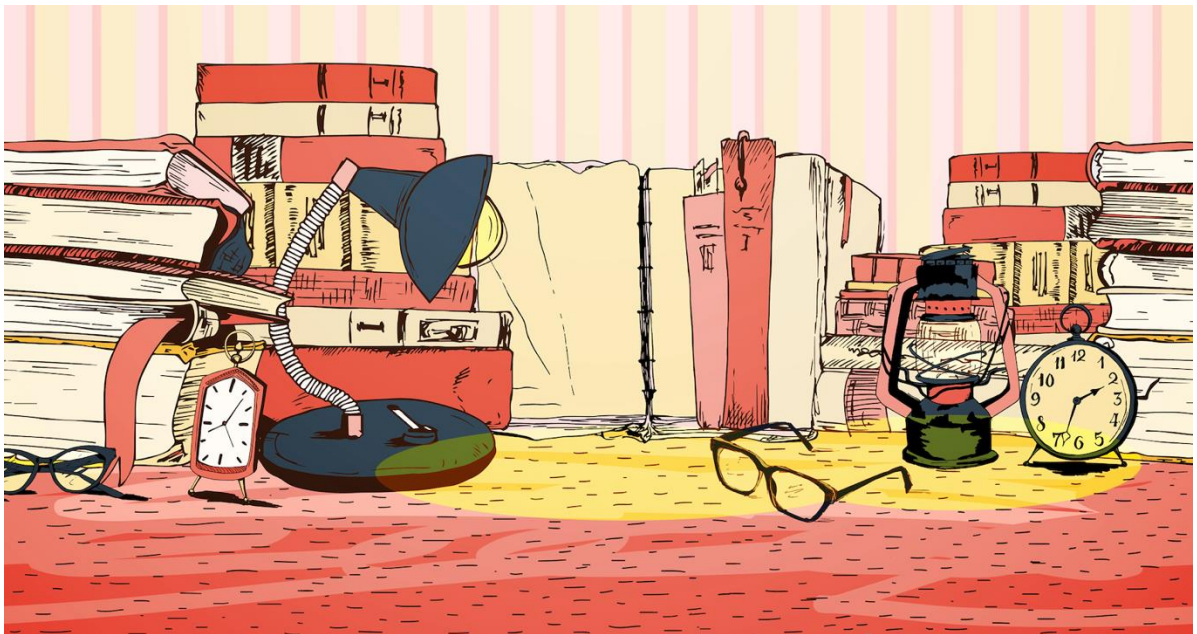


Image: macrovector\_official - Freepik.com

## **The professional field**

Comics journalism is nowadays becoming more relevant (digital and print formats of comics journalism are both equally important), but not widespread. Comics reportage is an emerging field that exists on the margins of mainstream media. Yet, it seems to be a promising kind of journalism. Comics can play the traditional roles of media in a new way: information, entertainment, education in graphic expression. Instead of the indigestible, constantly rolling and multiplying images of news and actualities, comics reportages provide the opportunity for a slower, and deeper reception – potentially reflecting the trend of Slow Journalism.

## **Target audience**

Recommended level: Bachelor.

Recommended study programme/qualification: Journalism/Communication and Media Studies.

## **General objective of the course**

The overall objective is that students gain knowledge about the different forms of graphic journalism and graphic journalism projects in their home country and abroad. They will also learn how to plan a graphic journalistic project.

## **Specific objectives of the course**

By the end of the semester, students will:

- have acquired knowledge of the different tools for analysing graphic narratives and will be able to produce their own analyses.
- be able to independently explore, read and discuss a variety of written/drawn texts, especially in the field of graphic journalism and its professional literature.
- be able to analyse comics reportages produced in graphic novel format or other formats and to write an analysis.
- be able to transfer the knowledge acquired into their own graphic journalism project ideas.

### **Professional competences to be enhanced**

The course develops students' ability to translate theoretical knowledge into journalistic practice and vice versa. The course will help participants to understand the terminology of the field (in English) and to review relevant academic literature. The course will develop participants' critical analysis skills in the field of comics media and graphic journalism, and students will be able to design case studies and tell journalistic stories in comics.

## **COURSE**

### **Contents**

#### **Course - week 1: Introduction of the course, Comics Studies**

Presenting the objectives and the structure of the course, the assignments and evaluation methods. Introduction to Comics Studies.

Comics studies is an academic field that deals with comics. Within the field of cultural and media studies, comics studies and/or manga studies seem to be emerging. The recent proliferation of international journals shows the spectacular institutionalization of independent comics studies. Since the 1980s, independent centres for comic art in Belgium and France have functioned as both collections and museums. In the last two decades, comics research has been organized in several European countries.

#### **Course – week 2: Comics as Media Culture**

Comics as Media Culture, a. Production, Texts and Audiences, b. Transcultural Flows and Geopolitics of Comics.

The study of comics as media culture focuses on three major aspects. (1) The media culture approach examines production, industry, distribution and authorship. (2) Analyses look at media texts in terms of the content conveyed, the creation of comics, and the use of comics language. (3) Studies also focus on the audiences, uses, and reception of comics. Transversal approaches examine all three aspects, such as the genre, popular geopolitics, or subculture.

#### **Course – week 3: Tools for Analysing Graphic Narratives: a. Genres and Formats, b. Narration in Comics, c. Visual Language of Comics.**

The comics medium operates as a language, a system of several smaller signifier units, as page layouts, strips, margins, speech bubbles or panels. Cartoonists break the narrative down, framing, sequencing and organising the images in the space of the page, so that the reader can decode them in the right order. Some cross-cultural differences exist though, between the visual languages of the different comics cultures of the world (e.g. manga is read from right to left).

**Course - week 4: From Comics Reportage to Graphic Journalism: a. Comics Reportage as a (Trans)media Genre, b. Contemporary Panorama and Historical Overview, c. Authenticity in Comics Journalism.**

Also informed by the centuries-old tradition of newspaper illustrations, but mainly reflecting the generic characteristics of the autobiographical graphic novel, comics reportage developed at the intersection of journalistic practice and comics drawing. The genre became popular in both the North American Comics, and Francophone bande dessinée. This course describes the (trans)media genre of comics reportage and some of the frontiers of the phenomenon.

**Course – week 5: Media Genres of Comics Journalism: Media Genres of Comics Journalism, a. Comics Reportages, b. Feuilleton: Comics Journalism and Everyday Life, c. “Expat” Graphic Novels (?)**

In the case of media texts, genre is the interpretative framework for producers, creators, those responsible for media texts, as well as for recipients, audiences and users. Media genres are also commonly seen by researchers as a 'contract' between the creator and the recipient of media texts, or at least as a promise made by the creator to the recipient. The media industry seeks to shape the expectations of audiences through genres. It generates, modifies or even undermines audience expectations through references to genre(s), through procedures aimed at creating the promise of genre.

**Course – week 6: Final discussions and preparing the presentations**

**Seminar - week 7, 8, 9, 10: Individual Presentations: Analyses**

Presenting analyses (10 min. presentations) focused on comics reportages in graphic novels and other formats.

**Seminar - week 11, 12: Group Presentations: Plan**

Designing a graphic journalistic project in groups. Presenting a plan (15 min. presentation).



## Teaching methods

Course: teaching materials,, lecture, discussion, questions/answers

Seminar: presentations, discussions

## Evaluation

Course (week 1 – week 6): Class participation (10 %) Knowledge of the compulsory reading, ability to answer questions during the lecture or/and discuss topics.

Seminar/laboratory (week 7 – week 12):

Individual assignment (week 7 – week 10): Presentation (20%) and Essay (30%). Presenting and writing an analysis (10 min. presentation and 7-12 pages academic essay) focused on one comics reportage in graphic novel or another format.

Group assignments (week 11 – week 12): Presentation (20%), Written version (20%). Designing a graphic journalistic project in groups. Presenting and writing a plan (15 min. presentation and 7-12 pages). Develop a graphic journalistic project idea in groups.

## Short Bibliography

### Primary sources:

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### Secondary sources:

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## Teaching materials

You can find the following classes on the project portal:  
[https://newsreel.ptte.hu/graphic\\_journalism](https://newsreel.ptte.hu/graphic_journalism)

- Introduction to Comics Studies
- Comics as Media Culture
- Tools for Analysing Graphic Narratives
- Media Genres of Comics Journalism

## Notes to the teachers

To prepare for the class, you can find out more about the context of comics studies here: [https://newsreel.ptte.hu/glossary/comics\\_studies](https://newsreel.ptte.hu/glossary/comics_studies).

In preparation for the class, you will find excellent examples of comics journalism projects on these sites:

La Revue Dessinée: <https://www.larevuedessinee.fr/>

XXI: <https://www.revue21.fr/>

Alphabet des Ankommens: <http://alphabetdesankommens.de/>

Dan Archer: [www.archcomix.com](http://www.archcomix.com), <https://lostineurope.eu/journalist/dan-archer>,

Drawing the Times: <https://drawingthetimes.com/>

Patrick Chappatte: <http://www.graphicjournalism.com/>

Josh Neufeld: <http://www.joshcomix.com/>

## General observations

The course is linked to existing media studies and journalism courses. It aims to enhance students' skills in aspects of graphic journalism. This graphic journalism course will introduce students to new practices in journalistic storytelling.

## **The team**

Gyula Maksa, PhD, is an associate professor at the University of Pécs (Hungary), Department of Communication and Media Studies, where he heads the Comics Studies Research Centre (Képregénnytudományi Kutatóközpont, KTKK). He has organised several conferences, exhibitions and published two books in Hungarian on comics as a medium: Változatok képregényre (Variation for Comics, 2010), Képregények kultúraközi áramlatokban (Comics in Transcultural Flows, 2017). He is co-editor of five books, most recently New Skills for Journalists: Comparative Perspectives from Europe (2022). His main research areas are the geopolitics of comics, transcultural situations and communicative uses of comics. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5733-0033>