



Universidad  
de Alcalá

# COURSE DESCRIPTION

## AUDIOVISUAL LANGUAGE

**Degree in Audiovisual Communication**

**University of Alcalá**

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**Academic Year 2025/2026**

**1st Year – 1st Semester**

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Subject Name:	Audiovisual Language
Code:	641003
Degree:	Audiovisual communication
Department and Academic Discipline:	Philology, Communication & Documentation Audiovisual Communication
Type:	Basic
ECTS Credits:	6
Year and Semester:	1st – 1st
Lecturer:	Bienvenida Araceli Parres
Office hours:	araceli.parres@uah.es By appointment (via e-mail)
Class Schedule:	Wednesdays, 3 pm - 7 pm
Medium of instruction:	English

### 1. PRESENTATION

This course adopts an innovative teaching perspective, **combining lectures inside and outside the classroom. Visits to art centers, museums, multimedia exhibitions, or performances in Madrid or around the world, online or offline, become an essential element of this course.** The topics proposed for each of the sessions are presented by combining traditional and new media, contemporary art, and visual culture.

People use languages that go beyond words; they use not only oral and written language, but also other resources that rely on the human ability to explore the world using the five senses. In audiovisual language, words can be combined with sounds and images to convey a message, and each of these elements can become a powerful communication tool. We understand language as an instrument that allows people to express themselves and communicate with each other. Its power comes from the rules that organize its components, as well as from cultural practices that enable people to transform the world and adapt to it. **The main goal of this course is to develop the ability of interpreting and creating audiovisual discourses in specific social contexts.**

**Theoretical and practical approaches are combined. In addition to this, the approach to the topics will be both synchronic**, allowing us to reflect and create specific discourses considering their structure and the context of audiovisual communication and expression, **and diachronic**, taking into account the evolution of expressive and communicative phenomena over time.

## 2. KEY COMPETENCIES

### General competencies:

1. To gain a multidisciplinary and integrated understanding of specific audiovisual phenomena in expressive and communicative contexts of contemporary culture.
2. To analyze information generated from any media critically in order to transform, distribute and facilitate the processes of knowledge construction to new audiences, whether they are close or distant.
3. To be present in new media by using digital tools for communication. Students should be able to analyze, create, produce, and distribute audiovisual contents, which will pave the way for their future professional careers.

### Specific competencies:

4. To understand the dimensions and characteristics of images in communication contexts.
5. To understand the social, cultural, aesthetic and political role of images in contemporary society.
6. To analyze, represent and organize information in digital and audiovisual environments.
7. To establish relationships between images and sounds, understanding the rules that organize their discourses in different media.
8. To use digital and audiovisual technologies to be present in mass media.
9. To understand the social impact of information and communication technologies, considering audiovisual discourses as mediating tools in specific cultural contexts.

### Transversal Skills

The course addresses the following soft skills, digital competencies, and those related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as outlined in the Master Plan of the Department of Philology, Communication and Documentation, which forms part of the Strategic Plan 2036 of the University of Alcalá.

- Soft skills

Effective communication	
	Written expression
X	Oral presentation
X	Video and/or audio recording
	Use of bibliographic references
Teamwork	

X	Leadership
X	Cooperative learning
X	Adaptability
X	Conflict resolution
Problem solving	
	Autonomous learning
X	Task planning
X	Time management and organization
X	Creativity
	Critical thinking
X	Concept integration and systemic thinking

- Digital skills:

Digital resources	
x	Search for existing digital content
x	Creation and publication of new digital content
	Use of AI to assist in content creation
	Ability to assess the digital content used
x	Data protection, privacy, and security
x	Understanding and proper management of copyright
Digital tools	
	Communicate and collaborate in the digital environment
x	Problem solving through digital tools
x	Responsible use of the internet and digital well-being
Empowerment	
x	Active student engagement in their own learning

x	Accessibility and inclusion in digital content
x	Attention to diversity in content creation

- Skills related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

	They are a central part of the course content/objectives	They are related to the course content/objectives, or will be addressed in complementary activities
SDG 4 – Ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	x	
SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	x	
SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries	x	
SDG 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Target 4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage		x
SDG 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns		x
SDG 16 – Promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies	x	

### 3. SYLLABUS

<b>Content blocks</b> (topics may be specified if necessary)	Total number of classes, credits or hours
BLOCK 1. Mass media discourses	1 ECTS

BLOCK 2. Consuming and creating images	2 ECTS
BLOCK 3. Sound	2 ECTS
BLOCK 4. Inventing the media: design principles	1 ECTS

## Audiovisual Language. Sessions & Topics.

1	Introduction	General Introduction: Main goals. Syllabus.
2	I. Mass media discourses	Story and visual structure
3		<i>Museum or other Art Centers</i>
4	II. Consuming and creating images	Space, lines & shapes
5		<i>Museum or another Art Center</i>
6		Color & Tone
7		<i>Museum or another Art Center.</i>
8	III. Mvt & Sound	Movement, Rhythm, Sound
9		<i>Museum or another Art Center</i>
10	IV. Internet&AI	Internet and audiovisual discourses
11		Final presentation

### 4. TEACHING METHODOLOGIES- PRACTICAL WORK

The teaching methodology will be practical and dialogical, both face to face and online, based on the analysis of different audiovisual products in a way that encourages reflection, creativity and critical treatment of knowledge based on both audiovisual documentation and direct experiences with film professionals.

There will also be some practical work related to audiovisual discourses.

Constructive discussion in class and online forums and chats will be fundamental tools to enable students to develop and enhance their self-confidence, creativity, pragmatism and ability to reflect and analyze spontaneously.

#### 4.1. Credit distribution (hours)

Number of lecture hours:	50
Number of study hours:	100 (includes study hours, assignment preparation, tasks preparation, and online activities)
Total:	150

#### 4.2. Methodological strategies, materials and didactic resources

Working in large and small groups	Online or offline
Individual work	Reading, audio and video analysis & productions
Creators and producers	Digital materials

Some specific exercises

- **Visualization Exercises.** Students will be asked to experiment with several visualization and sound tools, and to create a simple visualization with each tool. This could be an in-or out-class exercise. **Collaborative**
- **Visualization Project.** Working in groups of 4 / 5, students will investigate a particular topic, and create an audiovisual product of it. **Final Project and Presentation.** Each student in IML 422 will create a final visualization project related to individual research and interest. This visualization will be presented to the class in a formal session at the conclusion of the semester, with an articulation of the project's historical and conceptual context.

Student participation plays an important role in the development of the course. The activities will encourage comprehension and critical thinking, so that the students can transfer what they learn to new situations and contexts.

There will be both individual and group activities during the course, encouraging students to be active, autonomous, reflective and cooperative. There will also be workshops, tutoring sessions, classroom or online conversations, and online support via WEB CT platform.

## 5. ASSESSMENT: Procedures, assessment criteria and grading system

Students have the option of using Continuous Assessment (PEC) distributed throughout the semester. In addition to this, those students looking for a non-Continuous Assessment (Article 10) shall be eligible for final evaluation. To qualify for the final evaluation, the student must apply in writing to the dean or director of the center in the first two weeks of teaching of the subject, explaining the reasons that keep him/her from following the continuous assessment system. Continuous Assessment in any case serves as formative assessment during the teaching-learning process.

Students who fail the course either by Continuous Assessment or Final Evaluation, will have to undergo Special Assessment through a set of activities to be specified at the time by the teacher responsible for the course. However, these students are advised to contact her before the date foreseen for this call.

In general terms, **the assessment criteria** are as follows:

1. Participation in the network and attendance to sessions, online or offline. 80% of the sessions attendance is required.
2. Use of multimedia languages that show the level of understanding and development of the contents.
3. Creative ability which will manifest itself at any time during the course and in any kind of participation.
4. Ability to synthesize when it comes to showing the acquired knowledge: A degree of textual coherence (written expression), both at a macro-structure and micro-structure level of the text.
5. Ability to establish relationships between everyday situations and theoretical frameworks from which they can be interpreted. Ability to interpret real situations based on conceptual frameworks.
6. Teamwork skills.
7. Ability to explore, analyze and create new contexts of communication.
8. Student behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with teaching and learning activities is contemplated as disruptive activity, and may be considered in the evaluation process. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach.

All of the above should be incorporated in every single assignment during the course as well as in portfolio work as well.

The objective of the proposed assessment system is to accompany the student through their learning process, using this formative evaluation. The principles supporting this are as follows:



- **The students' learning process and its results will be evaluated.** The criteria will go further than conceptual skills and will test the way the acquired knowledge is applied to practical situations. The following criteria will be taken into account: Clarity of exposition using multiple discourses (oral, written, audiovisual), accuracy in presentation, understanding and relating ideas, application and transference to new situations, creative ability...
- **A participatory assessment is proposed, taking into account different sources,** so that the student can become integrated in the **self-assessment**, co-assessment and heterogeneous evaluation. The aim is to encourage student participation both in the learning process and their assessment in a participation context.
- **One assessment tool** will be a **portfolio system**, which will include a selection of works, practices, projects, activities, etc, which each candidate selects as evidence that they have achieved the necessary skills during the course.

### Grading

Grading will be determined by evaluation of the learning over the course that shows the student's understanding and expression of the concepts taught in the class as revealed in the following activities-

- Participation. 15%
- Presentation of an individual blog (portfolio system), first & second part of the course 30%
- Presentation of an individual blog (portfolio system), ART MUSEUM / AUDIOVISUAL. 30%
- Group work and oral presentation. 25%

The teaching-learning methodology and the assessment process will be adjusted when necessary, with the guidance of the Diversity Attention Unit, to apply curricular adaptations for students with specific needs.

### Final evaluation and Special Assessment

Portfolio system, which will include a selection of works, practices, projects, activities, etc. to be specified at the time by the teacher responsible for the course. The students are advised to contact her before the date foreseen for these calls.

The grading system will be provided for in the legislation, according to the following qualifying criteria:

- **Fail:** The student has not acquired the skills listed on the evaluation criteria specified in the teaching guide. He/she has failed to actively participate in the learning process.
- **Pass:** The student has participated actively in the course sessions and demonstrates the basic acquisition of competences proposed by the evaluation criteria.
- **Very good:** The student has participated actively in the course sessions and demonstrates a remarkable domain of the competencies proposed by the evaluation criteria. The degree of development and production is clearly high.
- **Outstanding:** On top of the above, the student shows a greater degree of autonomy in managing and directing his/her learning process and supporting his/her peers.
- **Honors:** The student demonstrates a greater degree of complexity, design and creativity in the domain, understanding and application of the proposed competences. In addition to this, his/her active role in the learning process is crucial.

During the development of the evaluation tests, the guidelines set out in the Regulation establishing the Rules of Coexistence of the University of Alcalá must be followed, as well as the possible implications of irregularities committed during such tests, including the consequences for committing academic fraud according to the Disciplinary Regulations of the Student Body of the University of Alcalá.

## 6. SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

All the audiovisual or reading materials will be online at the Blackboard, the UAH official platform for teaching and learning, communication and sharing content.

It is the main books for this course. These readings should be complemented with screening and listening specific audiovisual materials.

Block, Bruce A. (2008). *The visual story : creating the visual structure of film, TV and digital media* (2nd ed.). Amsterdam ; Boston: Focal Press/Elsevier. <https://amzn.to/2QERBlw> (Spanish, free) Amazon English Kindle edition: Important <http://cort.as/6WCp>

*You can download this book*

<http://cort.as/6X-8>

<http://www.masmenos.es/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Block-B.-2007-The-visual-story.-Creating-the-visual-structure-of-film-TV-and-digital-media.pdf>

**The following readings are supplementary.**

**More specific for each topic will be uploaded to the BlackBoard**

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Koc Michalska, K., & Römmele, A. (2020, 2020/04/01). Populism in the era of Twitter: How social media contextualized new insights into an old phenomenon. *New Media & Society*, 22(4), 585-594. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819893978>

Green, L. (2021). *The Routledge companion to digital media and children*. Routledge,.

Jenkins, H. (2020). *The benefits of a transmedia approach - Transmedia Storytelling: Narrative worlds*, <https://bit.ly/3bNgXtW>, UNSW Sydney.

Jenkins, H. (2020 (January, 21)). *Cinema and media*. - Dr. Yael Levy in conversation with Prof. Henry Jenkins, [https://youtu.be/Die\\_CXh1Lqo](https://youtu.be/Die_CXh1Lqo).

Lacasa, P. (2020). *Adolescent fans. Practices, discourses, and communities*. Peter Lang. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3726/b14291>

Lacasa, P. (2018). *Expresiones del futuro. Como se comunicarán las próximas generaciones. Expressions of the future. How the next generations will communicate* (Expresiones del futuro. Cómo se comunicarán las proximas generaciones ed.). Ediciones Morata.

Literat, I., & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2021, 2021/04/01). How Popular Culture Prompts Youth Collective Political Expression and Cross-Cutting Political Talk on Social Media: A Cross-Platform

Analysis. *Social Media + Society*, 7(2), 20563051211008821.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051211008821>

Livingstone, S. (2019). Audiences in an Age of Datafication: Critical Questions for Media Research. *Television & New Media*, 20(2), 170-183.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476418811118>

Orgad, S. (2020, 2020/09/01). The Sociological Imagination and Media Studies in Neoliberal Times. *Television & New Media*, 21(6), 635-641. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476420919687>

Poell, T. (2020, 2020/09/01). Three Challenges for Media Studies in the Age of Platforms. *Television & New Media*, 21(6), 650-657. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476420918833>

Ryan, M.-L. (2019). Narration in Various Media. In P. Hühn & et\_al. (Eds.), *The living handbook of narratology*. Hamburg University. <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/narration-various-media>

Shanbaum, P. (2019). *The Digital Interface and New Media Art Installations* (1st ed.). Routledge,.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429467899>

Vázquez-Herrero, J., Negreira-Rey, M.-C., & López-García, X. (2020). Let's dance the news! How the news media are adapting to the logic of TikTok. *Journalism*, 1464884920969092.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884920969092>