Center for the

Audio-Visual Communication

of Scholarship

Figure 1: Examples of use of cartoons and graphic novels to communicate UCI scholarship. Left,

from *Lissa* (Hamdy et al); Right, from *We Have No Idea* (Whiteson et al)

Short Description

We believe that it is crucial for today's scholars to begin to diversify scholarly communication to

include creative modes including film, theatrical adaptations, or comic/visual storytelling genres.

By devoting resources to a forward-thinking Center, our proposed Audio-Visual Communication

of Scholarship Center at UCI can be at the forefront of intentional programming that is

happening more haphazardly elsewhere. Eventually, UCI may host the very first University Press

(or imprint) dedicated to Audio-Visual Scholarship through which academic films, podcasts,

comics, and other multi-modal forms of scholarship are produced and distributed. We propose an

initiative that will build upon a critical mass of faculty expertise from across schools and disciplines with research interests in various media forms, to enable the collaborative production of multi-modal scholarship of the 21st century. Just two examples from within our own campus at UCI are (1) Physics Professor Daniel Whiteson's use of comics in his publication [We Have No Idea](#), oriented toward engaging a general readership in the latest state of the field of Physics; and (2) Professor Sherine Hamdy's production of a 220-page comic [Lissa](#); an adaptation of her medical anthropological research at the intersection of health, genetics, and political revolution, with accompanying [film](#) and [website](#); (3) Professor Magda El-Zarki's (Information and Computer Sciences) work integrating research, education and online gaming, as in the [Ghana Slave Trade project](#), among many others.

If known, what is timeline for implementation?

Phase	Activities
2017-8	Planning meetings, identifying interested Faculty, Staff, and Students from across the campus
2018-9	Fundraising, Hire administrative director and 2 Audio-Visual Editors

2018-9	Audio-Visual Editors solicit and help cultivate project from faculty from across the campus.
2018-9	Hold First Annual Symposium to convene Audio-Visual Scholarship/Storytellers
2019-20	Call for and funding of Proposals in Multi-Modal Audio/Visual Scholarship
2019-20	Hold Second Annual Symposium to convene Visual Scholars and Visual Storytellers

Describe the current state of the field, and how this proposal is unique to the field

The multi-media scholarly programs that currently exist in Europe and North America tend to focus on visual anthropology and ethnographic filmmaking, like the Culture and Media Program at New York University or Harvard University's Sensory Ethnography Lab. On the West Coast, USC's Center for Visual Anthropology is the only ethnographic film program, and is at the M.A. level. These programs are modeled on film schools, in which training in videorecording and (ethnographic) film theory constitute one of the central goals of the program.

In contrast, the proposed Center for Audio-Visual Communication of Scholarship will offer an updated program for creating scholarship in various genres and media. It will leverage

existing UCI facilities and infrastructure and provide the space, time, and resources for people from various disciplines and perspectives across schools to work on translating and/or presenting their work in creative forms. We will offer discrete technical training for faculty and students, and will focus on the analysis, presentation, and workshopping of audiovisual works. The Center will also host events on multimodal scholarship, as well as support course development, drawing upon the strengths and supporting the interests of the faculty and students. We will create spaces for experimentation and innovation in scholarship by breaking out of the standard logo-centrism of academia. The Center will also attract faculty across Engineering, the Natural and Social Sciences to re-imagine the production and dissemination of their scholarship in new creative formats and through collaboration with those in the Arts and Humanities.

Describe the urgency of your idea for UCI and for society:

By the turn of the millennium, rapidly changing media ecologies have become ubiquitous in contemporary life, and, as such, have had significant impact on how social scientists conduct research, gather and analyze data, and, perhaps most importantly, share their findings. Today, scholars are creatively adapting and responding to the affordances of both digital and analog technologies, through the production of art installations, websites, graphic novels, and podcasts, among other forms. Further, as we learn more about neurodiversity and different learning styles for processing information, it is ever more critical to diversify the genres and media of our scholarship and teaching. A few examples from within our own campus at UCI are (1) Professor Daniel Whiteson's (Physics) use of comics in his publication We Have No Idea, oriented toward introducing a general readership to the open questions of modern physics; (2) Professor Sherine

Hamdy's (Anthropology) production of a 220-page comic Lissa; an adaptation of her medical anthropological research at the intersection of health, genetics, and political revolution, with accompanying film and website; (3) Professor Eleana Kim's (Anthropology) productions in ethnographic filmmaking based on her expertise in South Korea; (4) Professor Roxanne Varzi's (Anthropology) multi-media projects, including film, ethnographic fiction, and sound installations based on her research on Iran and the Iranian diaspora; (5) Professor Eric Potma's (Chemistry) use of art in his pedagogy and dissemination of research in Chemistry, and (6) Professor Magda El-Zarki's (Information and Computer Sciences) work integrating research, education and online gaming, as in the Ghana Slave Trade project.

We propose an initiative that will build upon a critical mass of faculty expertise from across schools and disciplines with research interests in various media, to enable the collaborative production of twenty-first century multi-modal scholarship. This cross-school initiative will focus on the production, analysis, and distribution of scholarly work through various media platforms, including, but not limited to film/video, animation, art, sound, and illustrated panels. The Center will also provide resources and training for faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students.

Describe how your proposal aligns with UCI Strategic Plan:

Researchers at UCI produce a huge amount of important scholarship that is relevant and interesting to the broader public. However, most of it is not widely read because the vast majority is solely published in poorly circulated academic journals. At the same time, digital publishing and the proliferation of screens and interactive media devices have created a new

opportunity to communicate this valuable scholarship directly to the public if it can be made accessible. We propose a Center for the Audio-Visual Communication of Scholarship at UCI, to promote the communication of UCI scholarship in broadly accessible and easily digestible modern forms, such as cartoons, comics, games or short videos (Fig 1). To remain relevant to this fast-changing world, we maintain that scholarship in the 21st century can no longer be confined to poorly circulated academic journal articles.

By devoting resources to a Center for Audio-Visual Communication of Scholarship, UCI will position itself at the forefront of 21st century scholarship. This endeavor aligns with UCI's vision for inclusive excellence, in that it honors different ways of knowing and different abilities and epistemologies. In terms of inclusivity, exploring alternate modes of knowledge dissemination is not only an improvement that accommodates preferences; rather, multi-modal scholarship is absolutely fundamental to widening the scope of academic relevance to those who lie outside its reach. Our Center will intentionally foster creative outlets for scholarship, a trend that is happening sporadically and haphazardly elsewhere. Eventually, UCI may host the very first University Press (or imprint) dedicated to Audio-Visual Communication of Scholarship through which academic films, podcasts, comics, and other multi-modal forms of scholarship are produced and distributed.

Describe how the proposal aligns with the criteria you selected:

1- Transformational to UCI and/or the world We are at a time when people receive their information in several media and genre and form and to remain competitive in the marketplace

of ideas, academics must produce and communicate their scholarship in multi-modal formats including visually-rich media, apps, gaming, short films, comics, performances, and other forms of creative scholarship. UCI has all the resources and an excellent creative and engaged faculty who can make this happen.

2- Multidisciplinary or multi-organizational To succeed this program has to bring in faculty from across disciplines and Schools together with those in the Arts and Humanities; the Center will provide the collaborative and experimental space for exchange ideas and expertise so that filmmakers can teach physicists and computer gamers can teach literary scholars how to communicate their work more broadly.

3- Includes areas where UCI is emerging as a leader UCI is home to anthropologists who are also creative filmmakers, novelists, and artists; physicists who are also writers who collaborate with cartoonists; chemists who use visual arts in their teaching and thinking; film scholars who work on graphic novels; historians and computer scientists who create video games based on their research; and many other sites of rich collaboration such that this Center can really push UCI to the forefront of emerging trends that have thus far occurred sporadically and haphazardly elsewhere.

4- Links to fundamental grand challenges or opportunities This Center addresses a fundamental opportunity for academics and researchers to engage with the public and to rectify the public's mistrust in academia and its seeming "ivory tower." It also addresses concerns that people's attention has been drawn *away* from learning and research, by harnessing multiple media and genre toward the efforts of knowledge production and dissemination.

5- Makes UCI competitive in the marketplace Through this Center, UCI will pave the way for a new paradigm in knowledge production and dissemination; making it competitive for soliciting

tody's top students and researchers throughout the world. Drawing on the resources of professional tech communities in Orange County and the film and television studios of Southern California, UCI can forge new connections to popular modes of entertainment and information consumption that do not "dumb down" scholarship, but rather, provide new opportunities by re-imagining the forms in which it can take shape.

ABSTRACT:

Researchers at UCI produce a huge amount of important scholarship that is relevant and interesting to the broader public. However, most of it is not widely read because the vast majority is solely published in poorly circulated academic journals. At the same time, digital publishing and the proliferation of screens and interactive media devices have created a new opportunity to communicate this valuable scholarship directly to the public if it can be made accessible. We propose a **Center for the Audio-Visual Communication of Scholarship at UCI,** to promote the communication of UCI scholarship in broadly accessible and easily digestible modern forms, such as cartoons, comics, games or short videos (Fig 1). To remain relevant to this fast-changing world, we maintain that scholarship in the 21st century can no longer be confined to poorly circulated academic journal articles.

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Figure 2: interior image, *Lissa*

RATIONALE: By the turn of the millennium, rapidly changing media ecologies have become ubiquitous in contemporary life, and, as such, have had significant impact on how social scientists conduct research, gather and analyze data, and, perhaps most importantly, share their findings. Today, scholars are creatively adapting and responding to the affordances of both digital and analog technologies, through the production of art installations, websites, graphic novels, and podcasts, among other forms.

Further, as we learn more about neurodiversity and different learning styles for processing information, it is ever more critical to diversify the genres and media of our scholarship and teaching. A few examples from within our own campus at UCI are (1) Professor Daniel Whiteson's (Physics) use of comics in his publication *We Have No Idea,* oriented toward introducing a general readership to the open questions of modern physics; (2) Professor Sherine Hamdy's (Anthropology) production of a 220-page comic *Lissa*; an adaptation of her medical anthropological research at the intersection of health, genetics, and political revolution, with accompanying film and website; (3) Professor Eleana Kim's (Anthropology) productions in ethnographic filmmaking based on her expertise in South Korea; (4) Professor Roxanne Varzi's (Anthropology) multi-media projects, including film, ethnographic fiction, and sound installations based on her research on Iran and the Iranian diaspora; (5) Professor Eric Potma's (Chemistry) use of art in his pedagogy and dissemination of research in Chemistry, and (6) Professor Magda El-Zarki's (Information and Computer Sciences) work integrating research, education and online gaming, as in the Ghana Slave Trade project.

We propose an initiative that will build upon a critical mass of faculty expertise from across schools and disciplines with research interests in various media, to enable the collaborative production of twenty-first century multi-modal scholarship. This cross-school initiative will focus on the production, analysis, and distribution of scholarly work through various media platforms, including, but not limited to film/video, animation, art, sound, and illustrated panels. The Center will also provide resources and training for faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students.

The initiative will be led by Eleana Kim and Sherine Hamdy, two visual anthropologists who through their own work have demonstrated that visual production is not merely a way to "dumb down" or "simplify" scholarship, but rather a medium that can be productively applied toward the illumination of ever-complex, fluid, and networked social realities, thereby *deepening* text-based scholarship. For example, within the field of health studies, a growing interest in "graphic medicine" has exploited comics and animation to delve into processes that can be difficult to capture in written words alone, concepts such as: pain, suffering, oppression, mental illness, on the one hand, and the depiction of complex global

assemblages of technologies and resources that impact stratified health outcomes, on the other. Through the juxtaposition of text and image and/or sound, we can illustrate complex social and political processes and their impact on people's psychic interiority across different times, places, and social contexts. Illustration and film are particularly well-suited toward depicting phenomena across different scales -- e.g. from the body, person, social world, nation-state, ecological networks, global political economy -- as well as different scales of time, e.g. from the instantaneous, the daily, the life-time, the historical period.

The multi-media scholarly programs that currently exist in Europe and North America tend to focus on visual anthropology and ethnographic filmmaking, like the Culture and Media Program at New York University or Harvard University's Sensory Ethnography Lab. On the West Coast, USC's Center for Visual Anthropology is the only ethnographic film program, and is at the M.A. level. These programs are modeled on film schools, in which training in videorecording and (ethnographic) film theory constitute one of the central goals of the program.

In contrast, the proposed **Center for Audio-Visual Communication of Scholarship** will leverage existing UCI facilities and infrastructure and provide the space, time, and resources for people from various disciplines and perspectives across schools to work on translating and/or presenting their work in various visual-media genres. We will offer discrete technical training for faculty and students, and will focus on the analysis, presentation, and workshopping of audiovisual works. The Center will also host events on multimodal anthropology and new media ecologies, as well as support course development, drawing upon the strengths and supporting the interests of the faculty and students. A similar program is positivenegatives.org, Directed by Benjamin Dix, Senior Lecturer at SOAS. This program generates comics and/or animation touching on human rights issues and activism around the world that have reached schools, major news outlets, policy-makers and even legislative bodies. Taking inspiration from positivenegatives the Center for Audio-Visual Communication of Scholarship at UCI will not only rely on investigative journalism/comics, but will also adapt long-form academic projects and generate projects in multiple forms, including but not limited to comics and animation. We will create spaces for experimentation and innovation in scholarship by breaking out of the standard logocentrism of

academia. The Center will also attract faculty across Engineering, the Natural and Social Sciences to reimagine the production and dissemination of their scholarship in audio-visual formats and through collaboration with those in the Arts and Humanities, especially Film and Media Studies, Music, and Visual Studies.

Timeline for Implementation (100 words)

Phase	Activities	Personnel involved
2017-2018	Planning meetings, identifying interested Faculty, Staff, and Students from across the campus	Core faculty
2018-2019	Fundraising, Hire administrative director and 2 Audio-Visual Editors	UCI Administration
	Proposals and planning activities; Audio-Visual Editor to solicit and help cultivate visual scholarship from interested faculty and students from across the campus	Core faculty; Audio-Visual Editor; Interested Faculty
	Hold First Annual Symposium to convene Audio-Visual Scholarship/Storytellers	Core faculty, administrative staff, students
2019-2020	Call for and funding of Proposals in Multi-Modal Audio/Visual Scholarship	Core faculty, admin staff, students

	Hire Artists	Core faculty
	Hold Second Annual Symposium to convene Visual Scholars and Visual Storytellers	

	Name	Department	Expertise related to Hub
1	Julia Lupton	English	Design studies
2	Sherine Hamdy	Anthropology	Medical anthropology, graphic medicine, Visual Anthropology, Arab world
3	Roxanne Varzi	Anthropology	Visual Anthropology, Theater, Iran, Iranian Diaspora
4	Eleana Kim	Anthropology	Visual Anthropology, Korea, global networks, militarism, ecology
5	Daniel Whiteson	Physics	Use of Comics in transmitting Physics Ideas
6	Eric Potma	Chemistry	Use of Visual Arts in transmitting Chemistry ideas
7	George Marcus	Anthropology	Creative Modes of Ethnographic Scholarship
8	Leo Chavez	Anthropology and Chicano/Latino Studies	Use of film in ethnography, Mexican American experiences
9	Keith Murphy	Anthropology	The anthropology of design
10	Sohail Daulatzai	Film and Media Studies	Film, empire, race
11	Kim Fortun	Anthropology	Engaged, public scholarship,
12	S. Ama Wray	Dance	arts and activism, health communications through the arts, originator of methods to develop transdisciplinary creativity
13	Michael Fortun	Anthropology	Visualization of big data, public scholarship, science communication
14	Jonathan Alexander	English / Informatics	Multimedia composition; theories of multimodality; history and theory of graphic books and visual storytelling
15	Amal Alachkar	Neuropharmacology	Will collaborate on a visually-told narrative on intergenerational trauma
16	Antoinette LaFarge	School of the Arts	Creative forms of scholarship
17	Magda ElZarki	Information and Computer Sciences	Telecommunications and networking design
18	Eric Potma	Chemistry	Use of cartoons in transmitting Chemistry concepts

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES:

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
● **Launch** Multi-Disciplinary Creative Scholarship Projects that generate a shift in the way academic knowledge is produced, disseminated, and consumed	● Generate project-oriented and institutional funding so that faculty and researchers from across the disciplines can learn discrete skills and produce audio/visually rich scholarship, such as film or illustrated texts.

If known, what would it take to fund it?
Include the following in your attachment:
- Personnel
- Equipment
- Capital/ Facility
- Expendables
- Others (please describe)

This project requires long-term commitment. Therefore we prepared a flexible budget depending on the available funds as they accumulate. Early commitments to funding will be used as seed funding, to support the submission of funding proposals from the NEH and other sources.

1. **Personnel**
2. **Capital/ Facility**

3. **Equipment**

4. **Expendable Funds**

5. Others (please describe)

Annual Fund	Proposed Budget
$ 250,000	Hiring a AudioVisual (Film) Editor; salary plus benefits Hiring a Visual Editor (illustrations/comics projects); salary plus benefits
$ 100,000	Administrative staff salary plus benefits, including fundraising and publicity skills
$ 50,000	Cost of annual programming activities; planning events
$200,000	Project support funds (2-3 projects/year)
$200,000	Provide course release for faculty launching new labor-intensive multi-media projects

$400,000 can launch the Center, and put UCI on the map as a place for innovative Audio-Visual Scholarship

$600,000 can launch the Center and support faculty projects

$800,000 can launch the Center and support faculty projects and support their time for sustainable commitment and faster outcomes.