

## DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

### GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE

#### **EN 4103G A2 (3 credits)      Fall 2009**

Literary Genres Series: The Graphic Novel 3 (3-0-0) UT

- This course meets twice weekly: Mon. & Wed., 2:30-3:50 p.m.
- EN 4103 G2 consists of about 13 weeks of classes extending from Wednesday, September 9 to Monday, December 7, 2009.
- For complete transfer details and *other important information*, consult the 2009-10 GPRC Calendar, p. 197.

**INSTRUCTOR:** George Hanna

**OFFICE:** C419

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays 2:40 p.m.—4:10 p.m.

Wednesdays 10 a.m.—11:30 p.m.

- Office hours are either as posted or by appointment; posted hours are subject to change.
- If you have classes during my regular office hours, contact me to set up a meeting at a mutually convenient time

**PHONE NUMBER:** (780) 539-2090

**E-MAIL:** [hanna@gprc.ab.ca](mailto:hanna@gprc.ab.ca)

**DELIVERY MODE:** Lecture / Class Participation and Discussion

#### **A Few Thoughts About Graphic Novels**

Is the term “graphic novel” a synonym for “comic book”? If not, why not? Should graphic novels—or even comics—be considered works of serious literature worthy of academic study? This new course examines the transformation of “comics” into “graphic novels,” a term broadly used to include a wide variety of original works combining narrative text and highly complex drawings. To this end, we shall read the diverse graphic works listed below: personal memoirs, histories, journalism, and war documentaries. As the term “novel” generally refers to a work of fiction, the term “graphic novel” is perhaps a misnomer; none of the works that we shall examine are fiction (in the strict sense of the term), though all, to varying degrees, contain fictional elements. Danny Fingeroth, furthermore, thoughtfully asks:

But just what is a graphic novel? Let’s start with what it is not—or not always. First, the word “graphic” does not mean these books are graphically violent or sexually explicit—though some are. The “graphic” part of the term just means that the books involve graphics—or, more precisely, that they consist of sequential art (i.e. comics) of any style (*The Rough Guide to Graphic Novels*. New York: Rough Guides, 2008, p. 3).

### Required Textbooks

1. Ari Folman and David Polonsky. *Waltz with Bashir, A Lebanon War Story*. New York: Metropolitan Books/ Henry Holt and Company. 2009.
2. Joe Sacco. *Safe Area Gorazde: The War in Eastern Bosnia, 1992-95* (2000)
3. Art Spiegelman. *Maus, A Survivor's Tale*. Two-Volume Boxed Set. New York: Pantheon, 1993. [Winner, 1992 Pulitzer Prize]  
Volume 1, *My Father Bleeds History* (1986).  
Volume 2, *And Here My Troubles Began* (1991).
4. Marjane Satrapi. *Persepolis, The Story of a Childhood* (2003). Toronto: Random House / Pantheon, 2003.
5. Chester Brown. *Louis Riel, A Comic-Strip Biography*. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2003.
6. Jason Lutes. *Berlin, City of Stones*. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2004.

### EN 4103G A2 Schedule of Readings Fall 2009

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|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Waltz with Bashir</i>                      | September 9-14-16-21        |
| 2. <i>Safe Area Gorazde</i> .                    | Sept. 23-28-30-October 5    |
| 3. <i>Maus</i>                                   | October 7-14-19-21          |
| 4. <i>Persepolis, The Story of a Childhood</i> . | October 26-28-November 2-4  |
| 5. <i>Louis Riel</i> .                           | November 9-16-18-23         |
| 6. <i>Berlin, City of Stones</i>                 | November 25-30-December 2-7 |

### Quotable Quotes on the Graphic Novel

- A graphic novel is "a perfect synthesis of artwork and literature" (cited by Bob Thompson in "Drawing Power," *Washington Post*).
- "Graphic novels . . . are book-length comic books that are meant to be read as one story" (Stephen Weiner, *Faster than a Speeding Bullet: The Rise of the Graphic Novel*).
- "Graphic novels are on the cusp of critical and public acceptance as a distinct art form" (*The Wall Street Journal*).
- "Comics are . . . enjoying a renaissance and a newfound respectability right now... There is something like a critical mass of artists, young and old, uncovering new possibilities in this once-marginal form" (Charles McGrath, *New York Times Magazine*).
- "Move over Harold Pinter: graphic novelists are being welcomed as artistic heavyweights" (Alice O'Keeffe, "Strip Lit is joining the Literary Elite").
- "A graphic novel is a comic book that you need a bookmark for" (Art Spiegelman).
- "Graphic novel signifies a movement rather than a form. The goal of the graphic novelist is to take the form of the comic book . . . and raise it to a more ambitious and meaningful level" (Eddie Campbell).
- "Comics. Got. Better." (*Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud).

**Evaluation****Due Dates****Take-Home****Monday, September 28.**

A brief Take-Home writing assignment will be *distributed Mon., September 21.*

Minimum length: 500 words (about 2 typed pages).

Weighting: **10%** of the course grade.

**1<sup>st</sup> Major Essay****Monday, October 26**

Weighting: **30%** of the course grade.

2000-2500 word paper (about 8-10 typed pages)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Major Essay****Monday, November 30.**

Weighting: **30%** of the course grade.

2000-2500 word essay (about 8-10 typed pages)

**Group Oral Presentations****Wednesday, December 2**

Weighting: **20%** of the course grade.

[5-6 students per group, depending on class size].

**Oral Participation****Twice Weekly**

Weighting: **10%** of the course grade.

**GRADES**

Grande Prairie Regional College uses the alpha grading system and the following approved letter codes for all programs and courses offered by the College. All final grades will be reported to the Registrar's Office using alpha grades. Alpha grades will be converted to four-point equivalence for the calculation of grade point averages.

<b>Alpha Grade</b>	<b>4-point Equivalence</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Conversion of Percentage into an Alfa Grade*</b>
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\* This conversion scale is used only for multiple-choice tests.

\* Final grades will be calculated strictly through letter grades.

A+	4.0	Excellent	A+ = 90-100%
A	4.0	Excellent	A = 83-89
A-	3.7	Very Good	A- = 80-82
B+	3.3	First Class Standing	B+ = 76-79
B	3.0	Good	B = 72-75
B-	2.7	Good	B- = 69-71
C+	2.3	Satisfactory	C+ = 66-68
C	2.0	Satisfactory	C = 63-65
C-	1.7	Satisfactory	C- = 59-62
D+	1.3	Poor*	D+ = 55-58
D	1.0	Minimal Pass*	D = 50-54
F	0.0	Failure	0 = 0-49

\* For a complete list of letter grades, along with relevant descriptions, *read very carefully* the section on **Grading Systems** in the 2009-10 Calendar, p. 43.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Excessive absenteeism—defined as **two or more unexcused absences** per term—may adversely affect your grade.

### **AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT PLAGIARISM**

All students are expected to read and be familiar with the GPRC policy on **plagiarism**, as defined in the **2009-10 GPRC Calendar** (pp. 49-50).

### **REQUIRED READING:**

Keep up with the assigned readings. Be prepared to discuss the literary works in class and do not show up for class without having read previously assigned material.

### **INDIVIDUAL CONTACT WITH THE INSTRUCTOR**

Individual work with the instructor on specific compositions is necessary and expected. Feel free to consult me for help interpreting difficult texts or completing course assignments. If I am not in my office when you drop by, tack a message to my office door, C419. Whenever necessary, email or phone me to discuss any difficulties that you encounter completing this course. If I am not available to take your call, please leave your name, a brief message and a phone number where you can be reached. Whenever possible, I check my voice mail and office e-mail messages from home.

### **Final Note**

Students absent from class for any reason are responsible for mastering all the material covered during their absence. As well, if you miss a class, contact another student in EN 4103G in order to learn about any important announcements, including, whenever necessary, adjusted due dates; extra readings assigned; handouts distributed; and so on.

