



DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS

COURSE OUTLINE - ID 2020 -

Interdisciplinary Topics in Contemporary Media A2

FALL 2014 SEPTEMBER 4 – DECEMBER 10

DIGITAL LAB L207B

WEDNESDAY: 1:00 PM – 2:20 PM & FRIDAY, 8:30 AM. TO 9:50 AM.

INSTRUCTOR: Edward Bader

PHONE: 780-539-2013

OFFICE: L217

E-MAIL: ebader@gprc.ab.ca

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday and Thursdays: 1:00 -2:00 p.m. By appointment

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: None.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS:

The Power of Comics: History, Form and Culture, Randy Duncan and Matthew J. Smith, 2009.

Understanding Comics, Scott McCloud, 1994.

Watchmen by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, DC Comics, 1995.

Black Hole by Charles Burns, 2008.

Blankets by Craig Thompson, 2003

The Sandman: Dream Country- Vol. 3, by Neil Gaiman, 1994

Scott Pilgrim Vol.1 by Bryan Lee O'Malley, 2004.

SUPPLIES: Drawing materials for those executing autobiographical story.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: The course uses an interdisciplinary approach to explore on a rotating basis various topics that examine the relationship between various forms of mass media and popular culture, e.g. communication media, novels, comic books,

films, video games, music videos and the internet. Course content will vary on a yearly basis depending upon student interest and the availability of faculty and expertise.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3(0-0-3) UT 15 Weeks, 45 Hours.

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture/Lab

OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course will offer a broad understanding of the medium of comic books and provide students with a coherent and comprehensive explanation of comic books, graphic novels, including coverage of their history, their communication techniques, research into their meanings and effects, the industry practices and the fan culture.

TRANSFERABILITY: University of Calgary, University of Alberta, Athabasca University

**** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions.**
Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability

GRADING CRITERIA:

Mid-term Exam: 20% Grade **TBA.**

Final: 30% Grade based on final exam **TBA.**

Comic Book Responses: 10% Grade: **Ongoing**

Class Presentations: 10% Grade: **Ongoing**

Research Paper/Comic Book: 20% Grade Due: Friday, Dec.12th , 2014

Involvement: 10% grade based on participation and class attendance.

You may choose for the major project of the term between the following:

A. Research Paper:

1500 word type-written double spaced paper that is a historical or critical analysis of some aspect of comic books or comics culture and its role as a mass medium. Possible topics or discuss with your instructor a possible topic:

1. What role do comics play in contemporary youth culture verses comics' historical role in the mid-20th century?
2. What has been the impact of "anime" on contemporary youth culture?

3. Since the 1990s the Comics Code Authority Seal of Approval has not been found on most comics. Do you think comics need external regulation in terms of depictions of violence, race, gender and subject matter?
4. Superhero comics are no longer a mass medium phenomenon but instead the domain of “fan boys”. Do you agree or disagree?

Outline: Friday, September 12th, 2014

Bibliography: Friday, October 10th, 2014

First Draft: Friday, November 7th, 2014

Final Draft: Friday, December 12th, 2014

Comic Book: If you have artistic or literary aspirations you may write and illustrate a 6 page autobiographical black and white comic book that is print ready. You are asked to work in your own style and not appropriate existing styles such as “anime”.

Outline: Friday, September 12th, 2014

Script: Friday, October 10th, 2014

Page Thumbnails: Friday, November 7th, 2014

Final Comic Book: Friday, December 12th, 2014

Comic Book Response Papers

Response Paper:

Should be two to three pages (typed, double-spaced).

Response Paper 1: LibriCon: Comic Con:

Saturday, September 20th, 2014

11:00 am to 4:30 p.m. in UTC-06

Grande Prairie Public Library

101, 9839 - 103 Avenue, Grande Prairie, Alberta T8V 6M7

Visit the Grande Prairie Public Library's first Comic Con and discuss your impressions of the event. What events stand out in your mind as being unique to this event? What demographic was in attendance? If you have attended other Comic conventions how does this event compare?

Response Paper 2: Textual or Visual Analysis: *Spirit* story by Will Eisner

Textual Analysis:

Based upon your reading of Scott McLeod's *Understanding Comics*: Chapters 1 to 5 you are asked to do analysis of how meaning is developed in one of the stories included in this collection.

You might consider these questions:

1. What is the meaning/subtext that you derive from this work?
2. How do **layout** (arrangement of panels on the page), **composition** (elements within the panel), **encapsulation** (breaking down the narrative into panels) and **closure** (meaning created by the combination of panels) contribute to the meaning? The language of cinematography is suited to the analysis of panel composition.
3. Are there other reasons why the work is significant?
4. Be cognizant of the material properties of the graphic novel. It's overall design in terms of "it's size, shape, paper and binding" may reinforce or work against its content and should be considered.

Visual Analysis:

I

f you have artistic aspirations or talent you may do a 5 page visual analysis by copying and studying how the artist has laid out the graphic novel. Provide notes regarding composition, angles, points of view, transitions between pages and scenes.

Spirit Stories are posted on Moodle as PDFs.

Comic Book Response Papers

You can refer to character traits and actions to support the points you are making, but there is no need to describe all the characters or summarize the plot of the book. Your overall aim is to illuminate how content and form combine to create the substance (meaning) of the work. As the semester progresses and you learn more about these concepts your book responses should become more sophisticated.

Response Paper 3: Compare/Contrast Black Hole and Blankets: Critically examine how these two graphic novels depict adolescence and themes of transformation.

Response Paper 4: Sandman: Dream Country: Discuss how the story *A Midsummer Night's Dream* references the works of William Shakespeare.

Response Paper 5: Compare/Contrast the Comic vs. Movie: Watchmen or Scott Pilgrim Saves the World

#2: Individual Auteurs Presentations:

You will research and present information on an important historical figure in the history of comics and discuss their lives, influences upon their work, their impact and importance to the development of the comics medium or discuss comics in other countries.

Your presentation should be 10 minutes in length. You should use a minimum of six sources in addition to your textbook. You may not use the Internet for all of these sources. Your topics are visual in nature, so make sure you have plenty of visual support in your presentation. Make a handout for the class (I can copy it and distribute it next class meeting) You should begin your research early, as much of the information is challenging to locate. You will need to consult a minimum of six (6) sources in researching your figure. Of these, only a third may come from the internet (e.g., two of six); however, you can consult primary works of the figures among your sources. I will ask you two to submit a working bibliography by the end of the second week of classes to be sure that you are working diligently on this research.

Topics:

Auteurs:

Will Eisner
Jack Kirby
Harvey Kurtzman
Robert Crumb
Jamie Hernandez
Chris Ware
Osamu Tezuka
Herge
Mebius

Trina Robbins
Art Spiegelman
Frank Miller
Neal Adams
Seth
Julie Doucet
Yoshihiro Tatsumi
Joe Kubert
Neil Gaiman
Alan Moore

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE			
GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A ⁺	4.0	90 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	85 – 89	
A ⁻	3.7	80 – 84	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B ⁺	3.3	77 – 79	
B	3.0	73 – 76	GOOD
B ⁻	2.7	70 – 72	
C ⁺	2.3	67 – 69	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	63 – 66	
C ⁻	1.7	60 – 62	
D ⁺	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. The level of creativity demonstrated.
2. The degree of knowledge and understanding of the elements and principles of this studio discipline.
3. Portfolio presentations will be required throughout the duration of this course.
4. Professional orientation as indicated by enthusiasm, commitment, involvement and flexibility in collective and individual critiques.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

You are expected to arrive on time and remain for duration of class and related activities. See GPRC Admissions Guide 2011-12 p. 49.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM:

All cell phones must be turned off and stored away from view. ***Students found checking messages or texting in class will be asked to leave.***

No IPOD or MP3 players allowed with out permission!!!! You must have your own headphones to listen to music during work periods.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Refer to the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at

https://www.gprc.ab.ca/files/forms_documents/Student_Misconduct.pdf

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available at

<https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Students can expect to put in a minimum of 4 hours per week on out-of-class work. Assignments will be expected on the date required.

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| F Sept 5 | Introduction to the course
Lecture 1: Defining the Comics Medium
Readings: <i>Power of Comics</i> : Chapter 1
<i>Understanding Comics</i> : Chapter 1 |
| W Sept 10 | Research Paper/Comic Book
Lecture 0: Writing about Comic Books
Lecture 2: What are Comics? |
| F Sept 12 | Lecture 3: Comics as Communication
Readings: <i>Understanding Comics</i> : Chapter 2 -6
Bibliography: Auteur Presentation |
| W Sept 17 | Group Presentation: #1: <i>Understanding Comics</i> |
| F Sept 19 | Lecture 4: Comics as Communication
Readings: <i>Power of Comics</i> : Chapter 2 |

- W Sept 24 Lecture 5: Origins of Comics
Response Paper 1 - Visual Analysis: Spirit
- F Sept 26 Lecture 6: Comics and Commerce
Research Paper Outline/Comic Book Outline
- W Oct 1 Lecture 7: The Adventure Strips
- F Oct 3 Lecture 8: Birth of the Comic Book & The Superhero
Readings: *Power of Comics*: Chapter 10: Comic Book Genres: The Superhero
Response Paper 2 - Visual Analysis: Spirit
- W Oct 8 Lecture 9: The Superhero Narrative
- F Oct 10 Lecture 10: Mid-term Review
Research Paper: Bibliography
Comic Book: Script
- W Oct 15 Mid-term (Material covered will be lectures, readings and presentations).
Readings: *Power of Comics*: Chapter 5: The Comic Book Creators
- F Oct 17 **Individual Presentations: Auteurs**
- W Oct 22 Lecture 11: Comics of Post WW2 Era
- F Oct 24 Lecture 12: New Genres
Readings: *Power of Comics*: Chapter 3: Maturation of a Medium
- W Oct 29 Lecture 13: Censorship and The Comics Code Authority
Readings: *Power of Comics*: Chapter 3: Maturation of a Medium
- F Oct 31 Lecture 14: The Silver Age: Rebirth
Response Paper 3 – Compare/Contrast Black Hole and Blankets

Readings: *Power of Comics*: Chapter 4: The Comic Book Industry

- W Nov 5 Lecture 15: Mainstream Comics in the 70s.
Readings: *Power of Comics*: Chapter 13: Comics Cultures around the World
- F Nov 7 Lecture 16: Underground Comics
Research Paper: First Draft/Comic Book: Thumbnails
- W Nov 12 Lecture 17: The Direct Market Emerges & The Dark Age
- F Nov 14 Lecture 18: Alternative Comics and the Graphic Novel
Readings: *Power of Comics*: Chapter 8: The Comic Book Readers
Response Paper 4 – Sandman: Dream Country
- W Nov 19 Lecture 19: Fandom and subcultures
- F Nov 21 Lecture 20: Comics and Movies
- W Nov 26 **Watchmen:** Screening
- F Nov 28 **Scott Pilgrim:** Screening
Readings: *Power of Comics*: Chapter 13: Comics Culture Around the World
- W Dec 3 Lecture 21: Comics as Cultural Artifacts
Response Paper 5 – Compare/Contrast the Comic vs. Movie
- F Dec 5 Class presentation on research/ critique on comic book
- W Dec 10 Lecture 22: Review for final
Research Paper: Final Draft/Comic Book: Final Version due