

Course Syllabus - ENGLISH 2367.02

Language, Identity, and Culture in the U.S. Experience:
"Comics as Literature: Comics in 21st Century American Popular Culture"

SUMMER 2013 – Class Number 4798

The Ohio State University

Instructor: Theresa Rojas

Class Meets: MWF: 10:05-11:55 a.m. (Denney 245)

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Noon-1:00 p.m. and by appointment (Denney 547)

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ARE COMICS SERIOUS LITERATURE?



COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The 1930s to 1950s were considered the Golden Age of American Comic Books. Modern comic books, fueled by the popularity of such superheroes as Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and Captain Marvel, were published and in a generation became iconic symbols. Since this time, we have experienced several “ages” marking turns in the popularity of comics as well as their slow but growing recognition as varied forms of literature.

The Modern Age of Comic Books (roughly from the 1980s to the present day) is highlighted by ever more sophisticated storytelling, complex characters, and a vast expansion of the form into subgenres such as “alternative” comics, autobiographical comics, and medical narrative. The publication of Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992, marked the beginning of a now dramatic boom in scholarship and interest in comics as literary form. In English Studies in particular, interest in the potential of the comic form has been exploding. In fact, The Ohio State University houses the largest special collection of comics in the world. Scholars from around the globe visit OSU to study the form, thus marking the university as a hub of comics studies. This course will explore a small selection of comics and graphic novels and their role as an emerging literature.

In this three-hour, second-level writing course for which English 1110 is a prerequisite, you will continue to develop and refine the skills in analysis, research, and composition that you practiced in English 1110. This course emphasizes persuasive and researched writing, revision, and composing in various forms and media. In addition, you will build upon and improve your mastery of academic writing with and from sources; refine your ability to synthesize information; create arguments about a variety of discursive, visual, and/or cultural artifacts; and become more proficient with and sophisticated in your research strategies and employment of the conventions of standard academic discourses.

In order to further our conversation and critical thinking about the consequences of specific trans-medial rhetorical choices, we will engage with and analyze material that raises sundry issues of identity, nationality, and social diversity, among others.

Goals and Objectives for the OSU General Education Curriculum

As a second-level writing course at OSU, English 2367 fulfills the following GEC categories:

Writing and Communication coursework develops students’ skills in written communication and expression, reading, critical thinking, and oral expression, and visual expression.

Level Two (2367) courses have the following Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Through critical analysis, discussion, and writing, students demonstrate the ability to read carefully and express ideas effectively.
2. Students apply written, oral, and visual communication skills and conventions of academic discourse to the challenges of a specific discipline.
3. Students access and use information critically and analytically

Diversity coursework foster students' understanding of the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States. and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.

Social Diversity in the United States courses have the following Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students describe and evaluate the roles of such categories as race, gender and sexuality, disability, class, ethnicity, and religion in the pluralistic institutions and cultures of the United States.
2. Students recognize the role of social diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values regarding appreciation, tolerance, and equality of others.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

Available at SBX, and campus area bookstores as well as on line. Comics are also available at The Laughing Ogre on High St.:

- Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. W.W. Norton, 2010. **Second Edition**. ISBN: 978-0-393-93361-1 Note: this is the smaller edition with the black cover.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. 1994. ISBN: 978-0060976255
- Wilde, Edgington, and Culbard. *The Picture of Dorian Gray: A Graphic Novel*. New York: Sterling, 2008. ISBN: 978-1-4114-1593-5 [Note that this is the paperback graphic novel and not the full text novel]
- Barry, Lynda. *One! Hundred! Demons!* Sasquatch Books. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1570614590
- O'Malley, Bryan. *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life Vol 1*. Portland: Oni Press, 2004. ISBN: 978-1-932664-08-9 [Volume 2 is also recommended, but optional ISBN: 978-1932664126]
- Abel, Jessica. *La Perdida*. New York: Pantheon, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-375-71471-9

Also:

- Additional readings and links posted to Carmen
- Access to current readings and other assigned material during each class meeting
- Dedicated class binder or sturdy folder

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation (10%)

As a writing community, this class functions best when everyone is present and prepared for class. You must come to each class prepared to discuss the material, with any due assignments in hand, ready to engage as an active community member in the class activities. Your participation includes contributing to in-class and on-line discussions, completing assignments, attendance, peer workshopping, and active involvement in other class activities.

Group Prolusion (15%)

You will sign up to work together and prepare an introduction to the readings for a particular week. Groups will be assigned based on mutual interest.

Critical Analysis Response Papers (3) (10% each = 30%)

Using the rhetorical movies and principles of comics discussed in class, you will develop 800-1200 word analytical essays on three of the four course comics. The essay will include a clear thesis statement that makes a complex claim about the rhetoric of the artifact and a short, concise analysis of rhetorical devices.

Research Conference (10%)

This is a scheduled meeting with me outside of class to discuss plans for research.

Comparative Analysis Paper, 7-10 pages (35%)

You will conduct scholarly research on issues and concepts derived from two contrasting narratives (rhetorical, social, etc.) and put secondary sources (visual, textual, etc.) in conversation with your two primary sources. Option 1: Revise and extend one of your critical analysis papers by choosing an additional graphic novel for comparison. Option 2: Choose a graphic novel that has a film recreation and analyze the implications of contrasting rhetorical choices.

Grading Summary

Participation	10%
Group Prolusion	15%
Critical Analysis Papers	30%
Research Conference	10%
Comparative Analysis Paper	35%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

A	93
A-	90
B+	87
B	83
B-	80
C+	77
C	73
C-	70
D+	67
D	60

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance is important to the success of this class and to your development as a writer. Given our short time together, attendance is critical. Therefore, **this course allows only one unexcused absence without penalty. Each unexcused absence after one will result in the lowering of your final grade by a third of a grade. This also includes missing a scheduled appointment with me.** Excused absences, such as those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for inter-collegiate athletics, will not affect your grade. It is your responsibility to **contact a classmate (preferably someone from your group) for the notes for any missed days**. If your absence is for an excusable reason, it is also your responsibility to contact your instructor as soon as possible (preferably before your absence). **Four unexcused absences will automatically result in failure for the course.**

- **Tardiness** is disruptive to the classroom environment, and prevents you from fully participating and assimilating the information and materials discussed in class. Excessive tardiness will lower your participation grade. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you may be marked as absent.

Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. It is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. Please

remember that at no point during the writing process should the work of others be presented as your own.

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Student Work should be turned in at the time indicated on the syllabus and in the format designated by the instructor. **Late submission of an assignment will result in the deduction of one full letter grade for each day past the due date** (for example, B+ to C+). The grade will not be affected when an assignment is late for reasons that would result in an excused absence. **YOU MAY NOT TURN IN THE FINAL PAPER AFTER THE DUE DATE.**

E-mail Policy: E-mail is my primary method of communication with students outside of class. **Students are expected to check e-mail at least once every 24 hours, including weekends.** You will be held responsible for information that has been sent via e-mail within this time frame.

Class Cancellation Policy: If class is canceled due to emergency, I will contact you via email and request that a note be placed on the door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

Cell Phones, etc.: Set your cell phone on vibrate (or **off**) and restrict computer and tablet use to course-related activities. Failure to do so will affect your participation grade and may cause you to be ejected from that class meeting and marked as absent. Remember that others can see what's on your screen. Disrespectful use of technology disrupts your instructor's ability to teach, your classmates' ability to concentrate, and your ability to succeed in the course.

Resources

The **Ombudsman of the Writing Programs**, Debra Lowry, mediates conflicts between instructors and students in Writing Programs courses. Her summer session 2013 walk-in office hours are Monday 1-3 p.m., and Thursday 9-11 a.m. in Denney Hall 416 until June 18 and subsequently in Denney 441. Other times are available by appointment. Due to a previously planned vacation she will be out of the office July 1-15, but will be available otherwise via e-mail (lowry.40@osu.edu) and during weekly office hours June 1 through the end of the term, July 31. Phone: 614-292-3812. All conversations with the Ombudsman are confidential.

The **OSU Writing Center**. The Center for Study and Teaching of Writing (CSTW) provides free, professional writing tutoring and consultation. You may set up an appointment by visiting <http://cstw.osu.edu/writingcenter>, or by calling 614-688-4291. Services include help with any writing assignment at any stage of the writing process (brainstorming, thesis development, revising, etc.).

Students with disabilities who have been certified by **the Office for Disability Services** will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The ODS is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/> Please contact ODS if you are in need of services.

Your time at Ohio State promises to be exciting and filled with many new experiences, but it can also be overwhelming. **Counseling and Consultation Services** provides a wide range of resources for undergraduate students. For more information call 614-292-5766.

The **Student Advocacy Center** (as they note in their mission statement) is committed to assisting students in cutting through campus bureaucracy. Its purpose is to empower students to overcome obstacles to their growth both inside and outside the classroom, and to help them maximize their educational experience while pursuing their degrees at The Ohio State University. The SAC is open Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. You can visit them in person at 1120 Lincoln Tower, call at (614) 292-1111, email advocacy@osu.edu, or visit their website: <http://studentlife.osu.edu/advocacy>

Formatting and Citation Style for all Papers

Follow the 2009 MLA guidelines for formatting and citation styles. Double space your work and use a 12 point font with one inch margins all around. Left justify and add a title and heading on the first page. YOU MAY NEED TO RESET YOUR DEFAULT SETTINGS, particularly to avoid extra space between paragraphs. Number all of your pages with your last name and page number in the upper right hand corner. For excellent guidelines, see the Purdue OWL: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

COURSE SCHEDULE with DUE DATES

SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NECESSARY

WEEK ONE

M: 6/10 Course introductions

W: 6/12 Cartoon library visit – Meet at Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum

→ **READ BY CLASS TIME:** McCloud Chapters 1 & 2; *They Say/I Say* (TS/IS) Preface and introduction (to page 15) and Chapter 11 “I take your point”; Chapter 12 “What’s Motivating This Writer?”

[Sign up for PROLUSION groups]

F: 6/14 → **READ:** Eisner “Comics as Reading,” (Carmen); Hernandez “The Ghoul Man” (Carmen); TS/IS Part 1 (Chapters 1-3)

WEEK TWO

6/17 **PROLUSION GROUP 1 PRESENTS**

→ **READ:** *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* (all); “How to write a Critical Analysis” (Carmen); “Concision” (Carmen)

→ **WRITING DUE:** Critical Analysis #1 on *Dorian Gray*

6/19 → **READ:** McCloud Chapters 3-4

6/21 → **READ:** TS/IS Part 2 (Chapters 4-7)

WEEK THREE

6/24 **PROLUSION GROUP 2 PRESENTS**

→ **READ:** *One! Hundred! Demons!* (all);

→ **WRITING DUE:** Critical Analysis #2

6/26 → **READ:** McCloud Chapters 5-6

6/28 → **READ:** TS/IS Part 3 (Chapters 8-10)

WEEK FOUR

7/1 **PROLUSION GROUP 3 PRESENTS**

→ **READ:** *Scott Pilgrim Vol 1* (all); Volume 2 is optional but recommended

→ **WRITING DUE:** Critical Analysis #3

7/3 Film: Scott Pilgrim vs. The World

7/5 → **WRITING DUE:** On line discussion for Scott Pilgrim

WEEK FIVE - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7/8 → **READ:** “How to Write a Comparative Analysis” (Carmen link); “Using the OSU Library Web Site for Research” (Carmen Link)

7/10 Guest lecture: Online comics research

7/12 Studio Day – Work on comparative analysis

WEEK SIX

7/15 **PROLUSION GROUP 4 PRESENTS**

→ **READ:** *La Perdida* (all)

→ **WRITING DUE:** Critical Analysis #4

7/17 Discussion continued

7/19 **Research Conferences – 5 sources due**

WEEK SEVEN - WORKSHOPPING

7/22 → **DUE:** Draft of Comparative Analysis with three copies IN CLASS

7/24 → **DUE:** Workshopped papers/feedback

7/26 → **DUE: FINAL PAPER DUE TO CARMEN BY 11:59 P.M.**

Final research questions; Student evaluations; POTLUCK

FINALS – 7/29-7/31
