



MASTER COURSE OUTLINE

Prepared By:

Date: September 2017

COURSE TITLE

Graphic Novel as Literature

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Dept.: ENGL

Course Num: 272

(Formerly:)

CIP Code: 23.1401

Intent Code: 11

Program Code:

Credits: 5

Total Contact Hrs Per Qtr.: 55

Lecture Hrs: 55

Lab Hrs: 0

Other Hrs: 0

Distribution Designation: Humanities HU

COURSE DESCRIPTION (as it will appear in the catalog)

Though once condemned as “low brow” literature and “badly drawn, badly written, and badly printed...pulp-paper nightmares” certain to turn young readers into juvenile delinquents, comics have forever been on the cutting edge of counterculture and alternative movements. Only in recent years have comics and their book-length counterparts, graphic novels, started receiving serious attention from adult audiences in the U.S. This course traces the comic tradition from comic book superheroes to Japanese manga to poignant autobiographies, examining the literary merit and legitimacy of the graphic novel along the way.

PREREQUISITES

None

TEXTBOOK GUIDELINES

5 or more adult-content graphic novels, including at least one fiction and one nonfiction book, at least two books offering a “minority” or international perspective, at least one book by a woman, and at least one chapter from either Scott McCloud’s *Understanding Comics* or Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester’s *A Comic Studies Reader*.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to demonstrate the following knowledge or skills:

1. Comprehend graphic novels and identify the themes presented using textual, critical, and social or historical analysis
2. Define the graphic novel as a literary medium in terms of both its visual and textual elements
3. Identify literary devices as well as literary elements unique to comics and analyze their effect on readers
4. Identify cultural “difference” and classify a variety human experiences/narratives according to their cultural contexts with the goal of speaking and writing with a nuanced sensitivity to multiculturalism
5. Develop a central claim (thesis) in response to a literary text and support/illustrate their central claim (thesis) clearly and logically

6. Situate their ideas as related to, but clearly distinguished from, the ideas of others (including the ability to paraphrase, summarize, and correctly cite and document borrowed material) and recognize their place as a participant in an academic “conversation” about a particular text.
7. Accurately proofread their own writing in order to produce writing that maintains the conventions of published English
8. Develop and improve habits of lifetime literacy

INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES

IO1 Communication: Students will be able to communicate clearly and effectively.

COURSE CONTENT OUTLINE

1. Historical contextualization (in the US and abroad). Examine the relationship of the American graphic novel to its:
 - New York Jewish roots,
 - European (bande dessinée) and Japanese (manga) influences, and
 - innate subversive and anti-censorship stance as a literary medium.
2. Reading strategies specific to comics. Provide instruction on:
 - defining techniques of the medium,
 - the variety of styles within the larger category of “graphic novels,” as well as
 - the terminology used to talk about comics
3. Discussion of the selected graphic novels as literature will be directed toward:
 - elements of theme, characterization, authorship and reflection (for nonfiction texts),
 - use of figurative language,
 - tension built via the relationship between text and image,
 - the passage of time as indicated by panels, and
 - what the author leaves “unsaid” in the gutters between panels.

DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES *(optional)*

1. Students will write at least two formal literary analysis essays (in response to two of the five graphic novels) and one in-class essay exam. Essays may focus on a variety of modes of literary analysis, but each of the following must be considered at some point throughout the term:
 - a) creating and sustaining an argument about the meaning of a work of literature using evidence taken from the text
 - b) describing technical aspects of written texts as stylistic choices made by authors
 - c) articulating ways in which the conventions of literary texts affect interpretation
 - d) appreciating and using a vocabulary which supports and encourages detailed analysis of comics
 - e) recognizing and appreciating existing critical readings of literary texts produced by experts in the field of literary criticism and comics
2. One of the literary analysis essays can be replaced with a compare-contrast essay analyzing a graphic novel and a film adaptation, a creative (emulation) assignment, or a service-learning experience.
3. Instructors may choose to replace one of the five required graphic novels with a pictureless canonical text for comparison (e.g., R. Crumb’s *The Book of Genesis* can be taught alongside the NKJV of Genesis).
4. One YA graphic novel (e.g. Gene Luen Yang’s *Boxers & Saints*) may be taught in place of one of the five adult-content graphic novels as instructor sees fit.
5. One film may be used in the course in addition to the five (minimum) graphic novels.
6. Grades will be established through consideration of the two essays, one essay exam, reading quizzes, and attendance. At least 75% of the overall grade will be based on the two essays and essay exam.

PO4 should be assessed: Students will be able to recognize or articulate personal/interpersonal aspects of, or connections between, diverse cultural, social, or political contexts.

PO5 should be assessed: Students will be able to solve problems by gathering, interpreting, combining and/or applying information from multiple sources.

DIVISION CHAIR APPROVAL

DATE