

V55. 0700

✱ Expressive Cultures: The Graphic Novel ✱  
Summer 2012 - Session II

MWTh 9:30-11:30

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**Course Description:** This course examines the interplay between words and images in the graphic novel (comics), a hybrid medium with a system of communication reminiscent of prose fiction, animation, and film. What is the connection between text and art? How are internal psychology, time, and action conveyed in a static series of words and pictures? What can the graphic novel convey that other media cannot?

**Blackboard and the Internet.** Blackboard, which is accessible through the "Academics" tab of NYU Home, is an important part of course, facilitating announcements and the distribution of course materials.

Please keep in mind that, by default, Blackboard uses your NYU email account. Many of you may have other email accounts that you use. If so, it is a quite simple matter to arrange for your email from one account to be forwarded automatically to the other. I strongly urge you to do so. It is **your responsibility** to make sure that you are receiving official email sent to your NYU account.

**Writing Assignments:** There will be two short papers, a midterm paper (6-8 pages), and a final paper (10-12).

The *short analysis papers* may be no longer than *three* pages, and they can be about any of the works we are reading. These papers are a tool to help you think about an aspect of the text that interests you, and any ideas you generate in the course of these assignments would be welcome contributions to class discussion. You must turn in the short paper by the beginning of the last class during which the text is being discussed, and you must show up for that class. That is, if you want to write a short paper about *The Spirit*, you must turn this paper in no later than July 9. If we are only spending one class period on the work, then you must turn in the short paper at the beginning of that class. **Late short papers will be lowered by one letter grade. Short papers turned in on a day you are absent will also be lowered one letter grade.**

You may not wait until the end of June to turn in two short papers. The term has been divided into two parts, and you must write one short paper by each of these two deadlines. That is, your first short paper must be turned in no later than **July 16** and your second is due no later than **August 2**. Though you are not allowed to wait to do all the short papers until the end of the course, if you feel you would rather do your short papers earlier (turning two short papers during the first segment of the course), you are free to do so.

The topics of your *midterm paper* and *final paper* are yours to choose, but you must come talk to me about them in advance. It is hoped that the short papers will lead you toward topics for your longer papers. Both your mid-semester and your final papers can be based on two-page papers, as long as you are not tapping the same paper for both longer works.

The midterm paper is due on **July 23**, and the final must be turned by **August 9**.

I welcome full or partial drafts of any of these writing assignment. Drafts of the papers must be shown to me no later than one week before the due date..

**Electronic submission of written assignments.** You are welcome to submit hard copies of your short and long papers. However, I prefer to receive students' papers electronically. Blackboard has a "digital drop box" feature, but I have not found it to be particularly reliable. Therefore, please send me your assignments by email, as attachments. The preferred format is any version of Word (97 or above, any platform)--such documents usually take the ".doc" extension. Failing that, .rtf files (which can be generated by most word processing programs) are also fine. I can open most other formats as well, including Word Perfect (.wpd), but this requires some extra effort on my part. Please feel free to consult with me about file format questions.

When you submit a paper electronically, please give it a descriptive filename. I have dozens of students, and if all of you send me files called "Comics Assignment" or "Spiegelman Paper," this will be confusing and frustrating. After the first time you make this mistake, I will not accept another paper with an unidentifiable file name.

The preferred (but not required) format for file names is <Student last name> <Type of assignment> <Assignment number> <Topic >. Examples: if Bonnie Tyler has written a second short paper on Alison Bechdel, the file should be something like "Tyler Short Paper 2 (Bechdel).doc". If Eric Roberts has written a midterm paper on Chris Ware then the file should be something like "Roberts Midterm (Ware).doc". A final paper on Jaime Hernandez by Scott Baio would be "Baio Final (Hernandez).doc".

Finally, please note that I have two different email accounts ([eb7@nyu.edu](mailto:eb7@nyu.edu) and [eliotb2002@me.com](mailto:eliotb2002@me.com)). The NYU account automatically forwards mail to the me.com account. Please do not send email to both accounts at once ("cc"); if you do, I will end up with three copies of your message.

**Final Grade.** Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Class participation:	20%
Two-page papers:	30%
Midterm paper:	20%
Final paper:	30%

**Class participation.** Most class periods will be a mix of lecture and discussion; only occasionally will I spend the entire class giving a lecture. Everyone is encouraged to participate in discussion, which will be facilitated by questions that I will be distributing in advance over electronic mail, and by the short papers.

Active and constructive class participation can significantly improve your final grade. Frequent absences can have a negative effect on your final grade.

**Useful Reference Material:**

For writing papers and citation formats (you may choose any citation format so long as you use it consistently):

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

\*\* This site reproduces much of the information located in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.

Strunk, William & White, E.B. *The Elements of Style*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon, 2000)

Williams, Joseph. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed.

**Required Texts, Part One  
(NYU Book Store)**

- \*Barry, Lynda. *One! Hundred! Demons!*
  - \*Bechdel, Allison. *Fun Home*
  - \*\*\*Clowes, Daniel. *David Boring*.
  - Eisner, Will. *The Best of the Spirit*.
  - Gaiman, Neal, et al. *Sandman: A Game of You*
  - \*Hernandez, Gilbert. *Heartbreak Soup*
  - \*Mazzucchelli, David. *Asterios Polyp*
  - \*McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*
  - \*Miller, Frank. *The Dark Knight Returns*.
  - \*Moore, Alan and David Lloyd. *Watchmen*.
  - Morrison, Grant and Richard Case. *Doom Patrol (2): The Painting that Ate Paris*
  - Morrison, Grant and Frank Quitely, *We3*.
  - \*\*Spiegelman, Art. *Maus*
  - \*Ware, Chris. *Jimmy Corrigan, The Smartest Kid on Earth*.
- \* On 2-hour reserve at Bobst  
\*\*Volume 2 on reserve at Bobst; Volume 1 is non-circulating in the Fales Collection at Bobst  
\*\*\*In Special Collections, PN6727.C565 D38 2000 Oversize

**Required Texts, Part Two  
(Blackboard)**

- Gerber, Steve, et al. *Howard the Duck*. These files complain Gerber's complete Howard the Duck comics. You're encouraged to read the entire thing, of course, but here's what you have to read for the purposes of our class:  
*Howard the Duck* 5-15, 17-19, 24-27
- If you do want to read all of *Howard*, this is the best reading order:  
Read HTD 1-7, and then the main story in the Treasury Edition. Then read HTD 8-14, followed by HTD Annual 1. Then read HTD 15. HTD 16 is a weird, text-based fill-in issue. Then go on to HTD 19-27.
- Milligan, Peter and Duncan Fegredo. *Enigma* 1-8.
- Morrison, Grant and Richard Case. *Doom Patrol* 19-22, 26-30, 34.

To read these files, you'll need to download some software. A good program for Mac OS X is Comic Book Lover:  
<http://www.bitcartel.com/comicbooklover/>

For Windows, there is ComicRack:  
<http://comicrack.cyolito.com/>

## CLASS SCHEDULE

**July 2 (M) Introduction**

**July 5 (Th) How to**

▼ For Today:

✪ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*

**July 9 (M) Paper Movies**

▼ For Today:

✪ Eisner, *The Best of the Spirit*

**July 11 (W) The Grim and the Gritty**

▼ For Today:

✪ Miller, *The Dark Knight Returns*

**July 14 (Th) Goth Tragedy**

▼ For Today:

✪ Gaiman, et. al *A Game of You*

**July 16 (M) Raw Sharks**

▼ For Today:

✪ Moore & Gibbons, *Watchmen*

**Final Deadline for First Short Paper**

**July 18 (W) Personal Histories**

▼ For Today:

✪ Bechdel, *Fun Home*

**July 19 (Th) Funny Animals (1)**

▼ For Today:

✪ Gerber, et. al, *Howard the Duck*

**July 23 (M) Who Was That Masked Man?**

▼ For Today:

✪ Milligan & Fegredo, *Enigma*

**Midterm Paper Due**

**July 25 (W) Art History Can Kill**

▼ For Today:

✪ Morrison, *Doom Patrol*

**July 26 (Th) Funny Animals (2)**

▼ For Today:

✪ Morrison & Quitely, *We3*

**July 30 (M) Art Objects**

▼ For Today:

✪ Ware, *Jimmy Corrigan*

**August 1 (W) Design Flaws**

▼ For Today:

✪ Mazzucchelli, *Asterios Polyp*

**August 2 (Th) Pretty Ugly**

▼ For Today:

✪ Barry, *One! Hundred! Demons*

**Final Deadline for Second Short Paper**

**August 6 (M) Funny Animals (3)**

▼ For Today:

✪ Spiegelman, *Maus*

**August 8 (W) Human Diastrophism**

▼ For Today:

✪ Hernandez, *Heartbreak Soup*

**August 9 (Th) Indy Anomie**

▼ For Today:

✪ Clowes, *David Boring*

**FINAL PAPER DUE**