

## CORE-UA.711

### ❖ Expressive Cultures: The Graphic Novel ❖ Fall 2021

M/W 2:00-3:15

Prof. Eliot Borenstein  
19 University Place, 210

#### Office Hours:

Wed 12:30-1:30

Or by Appointment

(on Zoom, Skype or in person)

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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?

## Brightspace and the Internet

Brightspace, which is accessible through the "Academics" tab of NYUHome is an important part of the course, facilitating announcements and the distribution of course materials.

Please keep in mind that, by default, Brightspace 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.

Students are expected to attend all lectures and recitations.

## Course requirements

No knowledge of any second language is expected, as all works will be read and discussed in English. It is essential that you keep up with the reading assignments and come to class prepared. Lecture attendance is, of course, mandatory. Sleeping in class is punishable by dismemberment.

## Recording Lectures

Lectures may be recorded for personal use only. Recordings may not be shared with anyone outside of class without my express permission.

## Lecture Attendance

You are required to attend class lectures, and to sign in. **If you miss more than two lectures, your final grade will be docked by a third of a letter** for each unexcused absence.

## Recitation Sections

In addition to the lectures, all students must enroll in a discussion section led by one of the preceptors assigned to this course. This will be an opportunity for you to become actively engaged in the material, as well as simply to ask clarifying questions.

These recitations sections are an integral part of the course and are the **basis of your participation grade**. **More than three absences from recitation will cause you to fail this course.**

## Assignments

Throughout the semester, you will be given **short assignments during your recitation sessions**. At times these assignments will consist of **preparing questions for class discussion**, or **giving a presentation on one of the books**; on other occasions, there will be **short quizzes**.

You will also have to write:

- 1) Short formal analysis of 1-2 comics pages (2-3-page essay).
- 2) Blog entries on Brightspace (around 500 words)
- 3) Two short papers (4-6 pages)
- 4) A midterm exam
- 5) A final exam

The short formal analysis is due on **Friday, October 1**, and will focus on comics pages of your choosing (please include a copy of the pages along with your paper)/.

The course blog entries will be due by midnight before recitation. The schedule for these blog entries will be determined by your recitation leader.

The two short papers will be on topics given to you in advance. The first is due on **October 29**, while the second is due on **December 3**.

There will be an **in-class midterm exam** on **October 13** and a **final exam** on **December 17 from 2:00-3:50**.

### Electronic submission of written assignments

You must submit both hard copies and digital copies of your written assignments. Please send your assignments to your preceptor by email, as attachments. The preferred format is any version of Word (97 or above, any platform)--such documents usually take the "docx" or ".doc" extension. Failing that, .rtf files (which can be generated by most word processing programs) are also fine. We 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 Charles Burns by Scott Baio would be "Baio Final (Burns).doc".

### Lecture Outlines

When appropriate, lecture outlines will be made available on Brightspace prior to the class meeting.

### Office Hours.

I have set aside office hours to meet with students either in person or on Zoom or Skype (by chat, or as a voice call). In-person conversations take precedence over Skype chats. If you want to contact me by Skype, you'll need to add me as a contact.

Because of my administrative responsibilities , the best way to meet with me is by appointment.

### Final Grade

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Recitation (including blog):	19%
First Writing Assignment (page analysis)	10%
Second Writing Assignment:	18%
Third Writing Assignment	18%
Midterm Exam:	15%
Final Exam:	20%

## 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.

## Disability Accommodations

Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities  
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10003-6675  
Telephone: 212-998-4980  
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114  
Web site: [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd)

## Required Texts, Part One

(NYU Book Store)

- Barry, Lynda. *One! Hundred! Demons!* Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly Books, 2017
- Bechdel, Allison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. New York: Mariner Books,
- DeConnick, Kelly Sue and Valentin De Landro. *Bitch Planet Volume 1: Extraordinary Machine*. Portland: Image Comics, 2015
- Hawthorne, Mike. *Happiness Will Follow*. Los Angeles: BOOM!-Archaia, 2020.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. New York: William Morrow, 1994.
- Moore, Alan and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics, 1994.
- Ware, Chris. *Jimmy Corrigan, The Smartest Kid on Earth*. New York: Pantheon, 2000.
- Wilson, G. Willow and Adrian Alphona. *Ms. Marvel Volume 1: No Normal*. Marvel Comics, 2014.
- Yang, Gene Luen. *American Born Chinese*. Square Fish, 2003.

## Required Texts, Part Two

- Goldstein, Sophie and Jenn Jordan. *Darwin Carmichael Is Going to Hell*. 2014.  
<https://gumroad.com/1/dcigh> PDF. (\$9.99)

## Required Texts, Part Three

(Online)

- Scilipoti, Tess. "Barren." <https://tscilipoti.com/barren-1>
- . "Closet." <https://tscilipoti.com/closet-1>
- . "Trans Bee Sex Comic." <https://tscilipoti.com/trans-bee-sex-comic>

## Required Texts, Part Four

(Brightspace)

- Black Panther Volume 3, Issues 1-5
- Doom Patrol Volume 2, Issue 34.
- Doom Patrol Volume 2, Issue 70.
- Eisner, Will. *The Best of the Spirit*. New York: DC Comics, 2005.
- Gaiman, et. al. *The Sandman v.5: A Game of You*. New York: Vertigo, 2011.
- Gerber, Steve, et al. *Howard the Duck*. *Howard the Duck* (Volume 1). Marvel Comics. Issues 1-7 published bi-monthly (January 1976-December 1976). Issues 8-27 published monthly (January 1977-September 1978). *Howard the Duck Annual* 1. Marvel Comics (1977).

These files contain 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: Start with HTD 1-7, and then 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.

- Mazzucchelli, David. *Asterios Polyp*. New York: Pantheon, 2009.

McNeil, Carla Speed. *Finder: Talisman*  
Miller, Frank. *The Dark Knight Returns*. New York: DC Comics, 1997.  
Milligan, Peter and Duncan Fegredo. *Enigma* 1-8. Vertigo Comics (DC). March -  
October 1993.  
Monster, Sfé. *Eth's Skin* Chapters 1-3.  
Morrison, Grant and Frank Quitely, *We3*. New York: Vertigo, 2011.  
Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (Volumes I & II combined). New York:  
Penguin, 2003.  
Steady, Ken and Dean Motter. *The Sacred and the Profane* . This story was originally  
serialized over several issues of *Star\*Reach* in black and white in the 1970s, and  
then redrawn in color for *Epic Illustrated* in the 1980s.

Black-and-white: *Star& Reach* 9-13 Star\*Reach Productions. Issues 9-12  
published quarterly (June 1977-March1978). Issue 13 published in August, 1978.

Color: *Epic Illustrated* 20-26. Marvel Comics. Published bimonthly (October  
1983-October 1984). [Not Required.]

Please read the black and white version, but I am putting both on Brightspace. Also,  
*Star\*Reach* followed the story up with a "coda," in full color. I'm including that as  
well, but not as required reading.

"Coda." *Star\*Reach* 14. Star\*Reach Productions, October 1978. [Not Required.]

### "Hero's Journey" readings

(on Brightspace)

Action Comics Volume 1, #1. DC Comics. June 1938.  
Detective Comics Volume 1, #27. DC Comics. May 1939.  
Fantastic Four Volume 1, #48-50. Marvel Comics. March-May 1966.  
Amazing Spider-Man Volume 1, #33. Marvel Comics. February 1966  
Green Lantern Volume 2, #76. DC Comics. April 1970.  
Amazing Spider-Man Volume 1, #96-97. Marvel Comics May-June 1971.  
Strange Tales Volume 1, #178-179. Marvel Comics February-April 1975.  
Doctor Strange Volume 2, #4. Marvel Comics October 1974.

### Prose

Carrier, David. "Chapter Four: Words and Pictures Bound Together; or,  
Experiencing the Unity of Comics." *The Aesthetics of Comics*. Philadelphia:  
The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000. 61-75  
Exhibit 33 from the transcripts of the 1954 Senate Subcommittee Hearings into  
Juvenile Delinquency with a Special Focus on Comics.  
<http://www.thecomicbooks.com/1954senatetranscripts.html> Last  
accessed March 3, 2008.  
Harvey, Robert C. "Comedy at the Juncture of Word and Image: The Emergence  
of the Modern Magazine Gag Cartoon Reveals the Vital Blend." Varnum,

Robin and Christina T. Gibbons (eds.) *The Language of Comics: Word and Image*. Jackson: The University Press of Mississippi, 2001. 75-96.  
Wolk, Douglas. *Reading Comics. How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean*. New York: Da Capo Press, 2007. 3-28, 60-88.

All of these prose readings are also available as eBooks, in epub format (for virtually every eReading device and/or program besides the Kindle) and mobi format (for the Kindle).

## Reading Digital Comics

These are mostly .cbr and .cbz files, which are simply renamed archive files (.cbz=.zip; .cbr=.rar) containing a series of .jpg files (one for each comics page)

To read these files as is, you'll need to download some software. A good, free program for Mac OS X, iOS, Windows, and Linux is YAC Reader  
<https://www.yacreader.com/>

There are also several readers available for the Android platform, but I don't know enough about them to recommend one.

Or you can expand the .cbr or .cbz archive files and read them in any jpg or pdf readers.



## CLASS SCHEDULE

<p><b>September 6 (M) LABOR DAY</b></p>	<p><b>October 4 (M) Raw Sharks (1)</b>            ▼For Today:            * Watchmen (Chapters 1-6)</p>
<p><b>September 8 (W) Introduction*</b>            *This lecture will also be recorded, because of the holiday that starts in the evening</p>	<p><b>October 6 (W) Raw Sharks (2)</b>            ▼For Today:            * Watchmen (finish)</p>
<p><b>September 13 (M) How To</b>            ▼For Today:            * McCloud, <i>Understanding Comics</i></p>	<p><b>October 11 (M) Fall Break</b>  <div style="text-align: right;"><b>NO CLASS</b></div></p>
<p><b>September 15 (W) Paper Movies*</b>            ▼For Today: RECORD            * Eisner, <i>The Best of the Spirit</i>            *This lecture will also be recorded, because of the holiday that starts in the evening</p>	<p><b>October 12 (T) LEGISLATIVE MONDAY</b>  <b>Who Was that Masked Man?</b>            ▼For Today:            * Milligan and Fegredo, <i>Enigma</i></p>
<p><b>September 20 (M) The Hero's Journey</b>            ▼For Today:            * Wolk (3-28)            * <i>Action Comics</i> 1            * <i>Detective Comics</i> 27            * <i>Fantastic Four</i> 48-50            * <i>Amazing Spider-Man</i> 33, 96-97            * <i>Strange Tales</i> 178-179            * <i>Doctor Strange</i> 4</p>	<p><b>October 13 (W) MIDTERM</b></p>
<p><b>September 22 (W) Catholics in Space</b>            ♦ For Today:            ☺ Read Steacy &amp; Motter,  <i>The Sacred and the Profane</i>            (see description under            "Required Texts, Part Two")</p>	<p><b>October 15 (F) No Recitation</b></p>
<p><b>September 27 (M) Funny Animals (1)</b>            ▼For Today:            * Gerber, et al,  <i>Howard the Duck</i> (5-15, 17-19, 24-27)</p>	<p><b>October 18 (M) Bleeding History</b>            ▼For Today:            * Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i></p>
<p><b>September 29 (W) The Grim and the Gritty</b>            ▼For Today:            * Miller, <i>The Dark Knight Returns</i></p>	<p><b>October 20 (W) Wakanda Forever</b>            ▼For Today:            * <i>Black Panther</i>, Vol 3 1-5</p>
<p><b>October 1 (F) Recitation</b>            ▼For Today:            * Short Formal Analysis Paper Due</p>	<p><b>October 25 (M) Pretty Ugly</b>            ▼For Today:            * Barry, <i>One! Hundred! Demons!</i></p>
	<p><b>October 27 (W) All-American Girl</b>            ▼For Today:            * Wilson, et al. <i>Ms. Marvel</i></p>
	<p><b>October 29 (F) Recitation</b>            ▼For Today:            * Two-Page Paper Due</p>
	<p><b>November 1 (M) Family Portraits</b>            ▼For Today:            * Read Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i></p>

**November 3 (W) Goth Tragedy**

▼For Today:

☼ Gaiman, et al. *A Game of You*

**November 8 (M) Art Objects**

▼For Today:

☼ Ware, *Jimmy Corrigan*

**November 10 (W) Queer as Comics**

▼For Today:

☼ *Doom Patrol* 34, 70

☼ *Eth's Skin* (1-3)

☼ Scilopoti, "Barren," "Closet,"  
"Trans Bee Sex Comic"

**November 15 (M) Funny Animals (2)**

▼For Today:

☼ Morrison & Quitely, *We3*

**November 17 (W) The Outer Boroughs of Hell**

▼For Today:

☼ Jordan & Goldstein, *Darwin Carmichael* (pages 1-180)

**November 22 (M) Behind Bars**

▼For Today:

☼ DeConnick & De Landro,  
*Bitch Planet*

**November 25 (W) Thanksgiving  
NO CLASS**

**November 27 (F) NO Recitation**

**November 29 (M) Finder Talisman**

▼For Today:

☼ McNeil, *Talisman*

**December 1 (W) Immigrants and Orphans**

▼For Today:

☼ Yang, *American Born Chinese*

**December 3 (F) Recitation**

▼For Today:

☼ Two-Page Paper Due

**December 6 (M) Happy Days**

▼For Today:

☼ Hawthorne, *Happiness Will Follow*

**December 8 (W) Ruben Bolling**

**December 13 (M) Design Flaws**

▼For Today:

☼ Mazzucchelli, *Asterios Polyp*

**December 17 (F) FINAL EXAM**

**2:00-3:50**