

CORE-UA.711

✿ Expressive Cultures: The Graphic Novel ✿ Fall 2015

T-TH 2:00-3:15
19 University Place, 102

Prof. Eliot Borenstein
19 University Place, 210
19 University Place, 503

Office Hours:
(in person in Room 503
and on Skype chat)
Tuesday 12-1
Wednesday 12-1

(212) 998-8676
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Preceptors

Shannon McHugh
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Office Hours Tuesday 3:30-5
King Juan Carlos 507

Danielle Roper
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Tuesday 12-2:00

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?

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

Please keep in mind that, by default, NYU Classes 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.

Course requirements: No knowledge of any foreign 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.

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, giving a presentation on one of the books, writing brief (2-3 page) essays** in advance; on other occasions, there will be **short quizzes**.

You will also have to write two papers (4-6 pages). The first short paper is due on **October 6**, while the second is due on **December 8**. There will be an **in-class midterm exam** on **October 15** and a **final exam** on **Tuesday, December 22, 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 will be made available on NYU Classes prior to the class meeting.

Office Hours. I have set aside office hours to meet with students either in person or on 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.

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

Participation:	25%
First Writing Assignment	20%
Second Writing Assignment:	20%
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* . 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th 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*. 8th ed.

Required Texts, Part One (NYU Book Store)

- *Barry, Lynda. *One! Hundred! Demons!* Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2005.
- *Bechdel, Allison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. New York: Mariner Books, 2007.
- Hanuka, Asaf *The Realist*. Chicago: Archaia, 2015.
- *Mazzucchelli, David. *Asterios Polyp*. New York: Pantheon, 2009.
- *McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. New York: William Morrow, 1994.
- *Miller, Frank. *The Dark Knight Returns*. New York: DC Comics, 1997.
- *Moore, Alan and David Lloyd. *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics, 1994.
- 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.
- *Ulinich, Anya. *Lena Finkle's Magic Barrel*. New York: Penguin, 2015.
- *Ware, Chris. *Jimmy Corrigan, The Smartest Kid on Earth*. New York: Pantheon, 2000.
- Woodring, Jim. *The Portable Frank*. Seattle: Fantagraphics: 2008.

*--On reserve at Bobst

**Non-circulating at Bobst

Required Texts, Part Two (NYU Classes)

- Clowes, Daniel. *David Boring*. New York: Pantheon, 2002.
- 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.

McCay, Winsor. *Little Nemo* (sample cartoons).

---- *Rarebit Fiend* (sample cartoons)

McNeil, Carla Speed. *Finder* (VI): *Mystery Date*.

Milligan, Peter and Duncan Fegredo. *Enigma* 1-8. Vertigo Comics (DC). March - October 1993.

Stacey, 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 NYU Classes. 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.]
*Urasawa, Naoki. *Pluto* Volume 1. San Francisco: Viz Media, 2009.

"Hero's Journey" readings

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.

"Women in Refrigerators" readings

Wonder Woman Volume 1, #1. DC Comics. Summer 1942
Wonder Woman Volume 2, #1. DC Comics. February 1987
Wonder Woman Volume 2, #170. DC Comics. July 2001.
Amazing Spider-Man Volume 1, #121. Marvel Comics. June 1973.
Green Lantern Volume 3, #54. DC Comics August 1994.

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/>

Or you can read them in any jpg or pdf readers.

Comic Strips

Adams, Scott. *Dilbert* (April 4-April 8, 2011)

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).

CLASS SCHEDULE

September 3 (Th) Introduction

September 8 (T) How to

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read McCloud, *Understanding Comics*

September 10 (Th) Paper Movies

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read Eisner, *The Best of the Spirit*

September 15 (T) Winsor McKay

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ *Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend* Samples
- ★ *Little Nemo* Samples

September 17 (Th) The Hero's Journey

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read Wolk (3-28)
- ★ Read *Action Comics* 1
- ★ Read *Detective Comics* 27
- ★ Read *Fantastic Four* 48-50
- ★ Read *Amazing Spider-Man* 33, 96-97
- ★ Read *Strange Tales* 178-179
- ★ Read *Doctor Strange* 4

September 22 (T) Funny Animals (1)

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read Gerber, et al, *Howard the Duck* (5-15, 17-19, 24-27)

September 24 (Th) The Sacred and the Profane

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read Steacy & Motter, *The Sacred and the Profane* (see description under "Required Texts, Part Two")

September 29 (T) Raw Sharks (1)

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read *Watchmen*

October 1 (Th) Raw Sharks (2)

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read *Watchmen*

October 6 (T) Who Was that Masked Man?

- ▼ For Today:
 - ★ Read Milligan and Fegredo, *Engima*
- First Paper Due**

October 8 (Th) The Grim and the Gritty

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read Miller, *The Dark Knight Returns*

October 13 (T) Legislative Day Monday Schedule—No Class

October 15 (Th) MIDTERM EXAM

October 20 (T) Bleeding History

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read Spiegelman, *Maus*

October 22 (Th) The Comic Strip

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read Adams, *Dilbert* (4/4-4/8/11)
- ★ Read Carrier, "Words and Pictures"
- ★ Read Harvey, "Comedy"

October 27 (T) Immigrants and Orphans

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Ulinich, *Lena Finkle*

October 29 (Th) Ruben Bolling

- ▼ For Today:
- ★ Read TBA

November 3 (T) Family Portraits

- ★ Read Bechdel, *Fun Home*

November 5 (Th) Women in Refrigerators

- ★ Read Wolk (60-87)
- ★ Read Exhibit 33
- ★ Read *Wonder Woman* v1 001
- ★ Read *Wonder Woman* v2 001
- ★ Read *Wonder Woman* v2 170
- ★ Read *Amazing Spider-Man* 121
- ★ Read *Green Lantern* v3 56

November 10 (T) Goth Tragedy
▼ For Today:
⊛ Read Gaiman, et al. *A Game of You*

November 12 (Th) Funny Animals (2)
▼ For Today:
⊛ Morrison & Quitely, *We3*

November 19 (T) Art Objects
▼ For Today:
⊛ Read Ware, *Jimmy Corrigan*

November 21 (Th) Pretty Ugly
▼ For Today:
⊛ Read Barry, *One! Hundred!
Demons!*

November 24 (T) Culture/Clash
▼ For Today:
⊛ McNeil, *Finder (VI): Mystery Date*

November 26 (Th) Thanksgiving
▼ NO CLASS:

**December 1 (T) The Monster at the End of
This Book**
▼ For Today:
⊛ Read *Pluto Volume 1*

December 3 (Th) Indie Anomie
▼ For Today:
⊛ Clowes, *David Boring*

December 8 (T) The Unifactor
▼ For Today:
⊛ Read *The Portable Frank*
Second Paper Due

December 10 (Th) Days in the Life
▼ For Today:
⊛ Hanuka, *The Realist*

December 15 (T) Design Flaws
▼ For Today:
⊛ Mazzucchelli, *Asterios Polyp*

December 22 (T) FINAL EXAM
2:00-3:50