Course Description:

Home and Away

Comics and graphic narratives are uniquely suited to exploring cultural location because they transform the storytelling unit of the page into a space of representation. The comics page graphically negotiates dynamics of home and away, self and other, as well as race and culture. In this course, we will read a number of graphic narratives—such as *Fun Home*, *The Arab of the Future*, and this year’s Common Reading, *The Best We Could Do*—and theoretical texts that provide a framework for considering comics in terms of location. Recent attention to comics as a global or transnational medium invites analysis of how comics shape our understanding of “home” and its attendant positions of “out,” “in transit,” “im/migrant,” “lost,” “exiled,” or “displaced.” What are the borders of “home” as represented in comics and graphic narratives? Which characters and subjects have the privilege of feeling at home in the comics page? How do comics frame the world as it is encountered “away” from home?

Course Objectives

In this course, we will work together to develop and apply a range of comics-specific reading strategies and to critically consider the cultural context of comics. In addition to class time, you are expected to spend 10-14 hours on the course each week. You will critically read and post questions about each assigned reading; you will annotate secondary texts; you will write short essays and a longer final project in which you demonstrate your understanding of course materials and concepts; you will also work with a group in order to present on a designated reading and lead the class in discussion of the work.

Student Learning Outcomes

✦ Read graphic narratives and theoretical texts with deepened understanding of their conventions.

✦ Explore relevant information in order to situate comics within their historical, cultural, and political contexts.

✦ Perform formal analyses of a narrative medium that combines visual and verbal elements in a unique way.

✦ Employ creativity and interpretive skills to write persuasive, original arguments.

✦ Utilize a diverse array of primary and secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, to generate a persuasive written argument.
CRN 16083

Grade Breakdown

- Participation and Group Presentation: 15%
- Discussion Questions: 10%
- Annotations and Quizzes: 10%
- Micro Essays: 35%
- Final Project: 30%

Required Texts

- Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*
- Tom King and Gabriel Hernandez Waltla, “The Vision: Little Worse Than a Man”
- Zeina Abirached, *A Game for Swallows*
- Gilbert Hernandez, *Blood of Palomar*
- Riad Sattouf, *The Arab of the Future*
- Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do*

Course Requirements

**Participation and Group Presentation:** It is essential that you attend every meeting and show up to class on time, ready to contribute to discussion. More than two unexcused absences will result in a failing participation grade. An excused absence requires written documentation of the illness or legal obligation that kept you from class. Repeated tardiness will negatively affect your participation grade.

Participation requires both physical and mental presence; if you are texting or otherwise engaged in non-course related activities, you will be considered absent for the day. Similarly, if you come to class unprepared, you will be considered absent for the day. Participation grades are based on three components: 1) attendance—both your physical presence in class as well as your preparedness; 2) contributions to class discussion—these may be questions that you ask, points you make about readings, as well as your contributions to group work; 3) group presentation—over the course of the term every member of our class will conduct a group presentation; we will discuss the guidelines for these presentations in more detail, and instructions are available on Canvas.

**Discussion Questions:** We have a course discussion board on our Canvas site. You are expected to post regularly to our board based on the instructions on the syllabus and Canvas. Make sure that you complete your postings at least four hours before class.

**Reading Annotations and Quizzes:** When a digital theoretical reading is assigned, you will be responsible for printing the reading, bringing it to class, and submitting annotations. Instructions for annotations will be posted to Canvas. To perform well in this course, you must complete required readings when they are due. In order to facilitate this requirement, we will have a number of unannounced reading quizzes that may not be retaken. Reading quizzes are an opportunity for you to demonstrate that you are keeping up with the reading for the course.

You are responsible for reading and complying with the information in this document.
Micro-Essays: Over the course of the term, you will write three short essays and upload each to Canvas. These essays will help you to develop your ideas and work on writing strategies. We will discuss specific prompts and guidelines.

Final Project: Your final project for the class will be a short creative work with an accompanying analysis. You will not be graded on your artistic skills; instead, the project asks you to apply the concepts from the course and to analyze the choices that you make. Your project should reflect everything that you have learned in the course. We will spend a lot of time in class working on this project. You are also expected to spend time developing and writing your project outside of class.

Course Policies

- **Respect:** A respectful environment is essential to facilitate discussions and to create a safe space for students to share their thoughts. Part of being an active participant is listening to others’ ideas and being considerate with your own comments. At times, discomfort can be productive when our ideas are challenged, but at no time will we tolerate sexist, racist, or homophobic comments in class. I reserve the right to ask any student to leave if he or she does not adhere to these guidelines. Furthermore, the UO Student Conduct Code provides clear guidelines regarding student behavior. You are responsible for acting in accordance with this code or you will be subject to disciplinary action.

- **Academic Honesty:** The UO Student Conduct Code defines plagiarism as: “using the ideas or writings of another as one’s own.” Plagiarism is not only detrimental to your own development as a scholar and a writer; it is also a serious violation of UO policy. Any plagiarized assignment will result in a failing assignment grade, the threat of a failing course grade, and academic sanctions as determined by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Please contact me with any questions about how to avoid plagiarism.

- **Assignments:** You are responsible for reading and understanding all assignments. I am always available to answer any questions that you have about a given assignment. However, if you ask a question that is clearly answered in the assignment description I will assume that you have not read the assignment, and your grade will reflect this inattention to the course requirements. You are also responsible for noting the word count requirements for all assignments. Do not submit an assignment that does not meet the minimum word count requirements; you may submit an assignment that exceeds the maximum word count requirements if you feel it is necessary for preserving your ideas and argumentation.

- **Reading:** Assigned readings are due on the day they are listed on the syllabus. We will build on the ideas from the reading during class, and a thorough understanding of the reading will be necessary in order to complete the class activities. Feel free to ask questions about a reading if there are any aspects that you do not understand. Do not come to class if you have not completed the assigned reading.
• **Sensitive material**: Many of the readings for this class feature disturbing language and images. You are responsible for all course readings; there are no substitute readings. Take the time to look over the course material and ensure that the violence, sexuality, and mature themes included in many readings will not prevent you from succeeding in the course.

• **Missed Class**: All information regarding the course and scheduled assignments is on Canvas and the syllabus. Do not ask me to summarize what you missed if you do not attend any portion of class. Make sure that you have contact information for other students so that you can ask questions regarding anything covered in class.

• **Outside of class contact**: I will respond to emails within 48 hours, feel free to email if you need to make an appointment outside of my office hours.

• **Cell Phones**: Cell phones are to be turned off during class. If you are checking your phone during class you will be marked absent for the day.

• **Access**: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first two weeks of the quarter. Students are encouraged to register with the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

• **Writing Associates**: Writing Associates are available to help students with any aspect of their writing for this course. They are peer tutors who can work with you one-on-one on your writing assignments. They are advanced English majors who have been trained to tutor writing. They can help you understand the process of writing about literature and criticism and show you how to make your written work for this class more clear, correct, and effective. To make an appointment with a Writing Associate, go to [http://english.uoregon.edu/writingassociates/](http://english.uoregon.edu/writingassociates/).

• **Harassment, Assault, and Discrimination**: UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender-based stalking. If you have experienced or experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, getting academic and housing accommodations, getting legal protective orders, and accessing other help. If you tell me about harassment or assault, I am not required to report this information to anyone unless you request that I do so. I am required to consult with a confidential UO employee (someone with legal confidentiality, such as a counseling professional or a crisis center advocate) to ensure that you are supported. If you decide to make a report, I and other UO employees will help you to do so. My goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available and that you have access to the resources you need. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options or visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.

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Readings and writings are due on the day they are listed. *Schedule subject to change*—I will post any changes to our Canvas site. You are responsible for checking Canvas for updates.

| Week 1 | 9/24         | Intro                   | 9/26 Reading Due:  
|        |              |                    | Hatfield—“The Otherness of Comics Reading”  
|        |              |                    | McGuire—“Here”  
|        |              |                    | Assignments Due:  
|        |              |                    | Discussion board  
|        |              |                    | question  
|        |              |                    | Hatfield annotations  
| Week 2 | 10/1 Reading Due:  
|        |              |                    | Bechdel—*Fun Home* (1-86)  
|        |              |                    | Assignments Due:  
|        |              |                    | Discussion board  
|        |              |                    | question  
|        | 10/3 Reading Due  
|        |              |                    | Bechdel—*Fun Home* (87-150)  
|        |              |                    | Assignments Due:  
|        |              |                    | Discussion board  
|        |              |                    | question  
| Week 3 | Monday 10/8  
|        |              |                    | Bechdel—*Fun Home* (151-end)  
|        |              |                    | Excerpt from Chute—“Animating the Archive”  
|        |              |                    | Assignments Due:  
|        |              |                    | Discussion board  
|        |              |                    | question  
|        |              |                    | Chute annotations  
|        | 10/10 Reading Due:  
|        |              |                    | King and Walta—*Vision* (1: “Visions of the Future” and 2: “Everything Slips Through Their Fingers”)  
|        |              |                    | Assignments Due:  
|        |              |                    | Discussion board  
|        |              |                    | question  
|        |              |                    | Micro-Essay #1  
| Week 4 | 10/15 Reading Due:  
|        |              |                    | King and Walta—*Vision* (3: “In and Out” to end)  
|        |              |                    | Assignments Due:  
|        |              |                    | Discussion board  
|        |              |                    | question  
|        | 10/17         | No Class: Read Miller—“The Codes and Formal Resources...” |  
|        |              |                    | Assignments Due:  
|        |              |                    | Miller annotations  
| Week 5 | 10/22 Reading Due:  
|        |              |                    | Abirached—*A Game for Swallows* (1-100)  
|        |              |                    | Abirached—“Artist’s Statement”  
|        |              |                    | Assignments Due:  
|        |              |                    | Discussion board  
|        |              |                    | question  
|        |              |                    | Abirached  
|        |              |                    | annotations  
|        | 10/24 Reading Due:  
|        |              |                    | Abirached—*A Game for Swallows* (100-end)  
|        |              |                    | Monroy—“Creating Space”  
|        |              |                    | Assignments Due:  
|        |              |                    | Discussion board  
|        |              |                    | question  
|        |              |                    | Monroy annotations  
|        |              |                    | Micro-Essay #2  
|        |              |                    | (due 10/26)  

You are responsible for reading and complying with the information in this document.
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<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>10/29 Reading Due: Hernandez—Blood of Palomar (1-75)</th>
<th>Assignments Due: Discussion board question</th>
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<td>10/31 Reading Due: Hernandez—Blood of Palomar (76-end) Hatfield—”A Broader Canvas”</td>
<td>Assignments Due: Discussion board question Hatfield annotations</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>11/5 Reading Due: Sattouf—The Arab of the Future (1-44)</td>
<td>Assignments Due: Discussion board question</td>
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<td>11/7 Reading Due: Sattouf—The Arab of the Future (47-100)</td>
<td>Assignments Due: Discussion board question</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>11/12 Reading Due: Sattouf—The Arab of the Future (100-end) Excerpt from Francis—”Trauma in Arab Graphic Novels”</td>
<td>Assignments Due: Discussion board question Francis annotation Micro-Essay #3</td>
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<td>11/14 Reading Due: Sacco—”The Unwanted” Parts 1+2 Said—”Reflections on Exile”</td>
<td>Assignments Due: Discussion board question Said annotations</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>11/19 Reading Due: Bui—The Best We Could Do (1-130)</td>
<td>Assignments Due: Discussion board question Creative project draft due in class</td>
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<td>11/21 Conferences and project workshop</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>11/26 Reading Due: Bui—The Best We Could Do (131-262) Earle—”A New Face for an Old Fight”</td>
<td>Assignments Due: Discussion board question Earle annotations</td>
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<td>11/28 Reading Due: Bui—The Best We Could Do (263-end)/</td>
<td>Assignments Due: Discussion board question</td>
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<td><strong>Final Project Due 12/3</strong></td>
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