

# ENGLISH 280

## INTRODUCTION TO COMICS STUDIES

SPRING 2019 | 185 LIL | MW 2-3:20 PM

### Prof. Kelp-Stebbins

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Office: PLC 333

Office Hours: M10:30-1:30pm

Phone: (541) 346-1520

\*she/her

### Required Texts

- \* *Watchmen*, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons
- \* *The Girl from H.O.P.P.E.R.S.*, Jaime Hernandez
- \* *Safe Area Gorazde*, Joe Sacco
- \* *Fun Home*, Alison Bechdel
- \* *The Best We Could Do*, Thi Bui
- \* Other **required readings** are posted to Canvas.

You are responsible for bringing a hard copy of the required reading to class every day.

## Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the analysis of comics and graphic narratives in terms of their poetics, genres, forms, history, and the academic discipline of Comics Studies. Our multifaceted examination will balance close readings of primary texts with in-depth research and analysis of the development of the form in U.S. culture. By reading a range of comic-art forms (the newspaper strip, the comic book, the graphic novel, etc.), informed by several examples of contemporary comics scholarship, we will investigate the medium's complex interplay of word and image as well as the role of cultural factors in the publication history of comics.

## Course Objectives

In this course, we will work together to apply a range of comics-specific reading strategies. 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 a short essay 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 comics and graphic novels with deepened understanding of their conventions.
- Explore relevant information in order to situate comics within their historical, cultural, and political contexts.

- Undertake critical and formal analyses of comics and graphic novels.
- Employ creativity and interpretive skills to write persuasive, original arguments.

## Course Requirements

**Participation and Quizzes:** 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 and your final grade will be reduced by a third of a letter grade. 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. 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.

**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 when they are due.

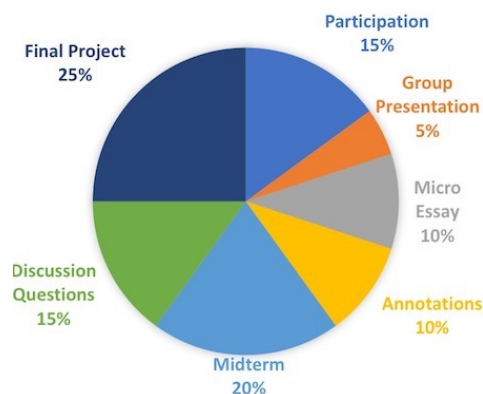
**Reading Annotations:** When a digital secondary reading is assigned, you will be responsible for printing the reading, bringing it to class, and submitting annotations online. Instructions for annotations will be posted to Canvas. You will also annotate one two-page spread from *The Best We Could Do*.

**Micro-Essay:** You will write one short essay and upload it to Canvas.

**Midterm Exam:** We will have a midterm examination at the end of Week 4. This exam will provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your attention to course concepts and materials.

**Final Project:** Your final 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.

### GRADE BREAKDOWN



15% Participation and Quizzes  
 5% Group Presentation  
 15% Discussion Questions  
 10% Annotations  
 10% Micro-Essay  
 20% Midterm  
 25% Final Project

## Course Policies

<b>Respect</b>	<p>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, homophobic, or transphobic comments in class. I reserve the right to ask any student to leave if s/he 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.</p>
<b>Academic Honesty</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Assignments</b>	<p>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 <i>not</i> 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.</p>
<b>Reading</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Sensitive Material</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Contact</b>	<p>I will respond to emails within 48 hours. Feel free to email if you need to make an appointment outside of my office hours.</p>

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.

**Missed Class**

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. For the sake of your grade, please stow all electronic devices during class.

**Cell Phones**

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 [uoac@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoac@uoregon.edu).

**Access**

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/>.

**Writing Associates**

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](http://safe.uoregon.edu).

**Harassment  
Assault  
Discrimination**

## Schedule

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	4/1 Intro	
	4/3 Reading Due: "Hogan's Alley"/"The Yellow Kid" .pdfs* "Little Nemo in Slumberland" .pdfs "Krazy Kat".pdfs	Assignments Due: Discussion board question
Week 2	4/8 Reading Due: "Bringing Up Father" .pdfs Assorted <i>newspaper strips</i> in Canvas folder "Famous Funnies" .pdf Newgarden and Karasik, "How to Read Nancy"	Assignments Due: Discussion board question Newgarden and Karasik annotations
	4/10 Reading Due: "Action Comics" .pdf "Crime SuspensStories" .pdfs "Young Romance" .pdf Assorted <i>genre comic books</i> in Canvas folder	Assignments Due: Discussion board question
Week 3	4/15 Reading Due: Moore and Gibbons, <i>Watchmen</i> (Chapters 1-4) Excerpt from McCloud, <i>Understanding Comics</i>	Assignments Due: Discussion board question McCloud annotations
	4/17 Reading Due: <i>Watchmen</i> (Chapters 5-9)	Assignments Due: Discussion board question
Week 4	4/22 Reading Due: <i>Watchmen</i> (Chapters 10-12)	Assignments Due: Discussion board question
	4/24 <b>Midterm Exam</b>	
Week 5	4/29 Reading Due: Hernandez, <i>The Girl from H.O.P.P.E.R.S.</i> (1-93) Excerpt from Hatfield, <i>Alternative Comics</i>	Assignments Due: Discussion board question Hatfield annotations
	5/1 Reading Due: <i>The Girl from H.O.P.P.E.R.S.</i> (94-202)	Assignments Due: Discussion board question

Week 6	5/6 Reading Due: <i>The Girl from H.O.P.P.E.R.S.</i> (203-284)	Assignments Due: Discussion board question
	5/8 Reading Due: <i>Sacco, Safe Area Goražde</i> (beginning-75)	Assignments Due: Discussion board question
Week 7	5/13 Reading Due: <i>Safe Area Goražde</i> (76-149)	Assignments Due: Discussion board question
	5/15 Reading Due: <i>Safe Area Goražde</i> (150-227)	Assignments Due: Discussion board question <b>Micro Essay Due</b>
Week 8	5/20 Reading Due: <i>Fun Home</i> (1-120) Excerpt from Baetens and Frey, <i>The Graphic Novel: An Introduction</i>	Assignments Due: Discussion board question Baetens and Frey annotations
	5/22 Reading Due: <i>Fun Home</i> (120-end)	Assignments Due: Discussion board question
Week 9	<b>5/27: No Class Memorial Day</b>	
	5/29 Reading Due: <i>The Best We Could Do</i> (1-130)	Assignments Due: Discussion board question Annotated page
Week 10	6/3 Reading Due: <i>The Best We Could Do</i> (131-262)	Assignments Due: Discussion board question
	6/5 Reading Due: <i>The Best We Could Do</i> (263-end)/ Last Day	Assignments Due: Discussion board question
	<b>Final Project Due by 6/11 (before 11:59pm)</b>	

\*All .pdf files are on Canvas unless otherwise specified