ENG 607: Non-Fiction Comics
FALL 2020 | REMOTE M 5-8PM | CRN 16909
OCTOBER 5-DECEMBER 1

Instructor:
Prof. Kelp-Stebbins (she/her/hers)
Contact: kkelp@uoregon.edu
Secondary:
https://uoregon.zoom.us/my/kkelp
Office Hours: M 2-5pm, and by appointment. Email me to schedule a Zoom meeting.

Land Acknowledgement
The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon, and continue to make important contributions in their communities, at UO, and across the land we now refer to as Oregon.

Course Description
In a letter demanding that his Holocaust account *Maus II* be moved from the *New York Times* “fiction” list, Art Spiegelman allowed that the book created a “problem of taxonomy” through its visuals of animal-headed characters in a historical narrative. In the spirit of comics’ “problem of taxonomy,” this course will explore a number of primary texts including graphic memoirs, comics journalism, and other genres to consider how graphic narratives intervene in the dialectical structures of art and representation--e.g. subject and object, true and false, analog and digital--delimiting “nonfiction.” How do comics, with their material correlation to the eye and hand of the artist(s), challenge conventions of “objective truth” as well as the ethics of witnessing and what Hillary Chute terms “the risk of representation”? As we will theorize through secondary sources, the conventions of truth are themselves fundamentally contingent, categorized by genre, aesthetics, and differential negotiations of the real. By considering how graphic narratives render history, memoir, journalism, and autobiography otherwise, we will develop a theoretical framework for negotiating the limits of nonfiction in image/texts.
**Required Texts**
- Lynda Barry, *What It Is*
- Art Spiegelman, *Maus I* and *Maus II*, or *The Complete Maus*
- Bishakh Som, *Spellbound*
- Mira Jacob, *Good Talk*
- Ho Che Anderson, *King*
- Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Goražde*
- Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, *Red: A Haida Manga*

Other required texts posted to Canvas.

All of our books are available at the Duck Store, which is now offering free shipping. Because this is an online course, you will need reliable access to the internet. If you need to request a laptop on loan for the term, please visit the UO Loaner Laptop Request site. UO also has resources for low-cost and free internet options. If you require further assistance, please contact the College of Arts and Sciences IT.

**Learning Objectives**
1) Read graphic narratives and theoretical texts with deepened understanding of their conventions. 2) Explore relevant academic sources in order to situate comics within their historical, cultural, and political contexts. 3) Perform formal analyses of a narrative medium that combines visual and verbal elements in a unique way. 4) Employ creativity and interpretive skills to write persuasive, original arguments. 5) Utilize a diverse array of primary and secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, to generate a persuasive article-length paper.

**Course Requirements**

**GRADE BREAKDOWN:**

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>15% Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>25% Discussion Posts</td>
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<td>10% Class Facilitation</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5% Graphic bio</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5% Paper Abstract</td>
<td>40%</td>
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**Participation:** You are expected to have read the assigned texts carefully before class and to “arrive” with insights, comparisons, and lines of inquiry. The success of our seminar will depend largely upon students’ contributions to the discussions, whether they be written or spoken. Participation is a vital part of the class and will be graded. The participation grade will take both quality and quantity of participation into account.

**Discussion Board Posts:** We have a course discussion board on our Canvas site. You will post weekly reading responses prior to our meeting based on guidelines provided on Canvas; posts are due by 3pm Monday.

**Class Facilitation:** Working with a partner, you will facilitate discussion of the readings for a given week once during the quarter. You will sign up for presentations during the first week of the course. Your facilitations should last between 20-25 minutes in length and demonstrate close attention to and engagement with the assigned primary and secondary materials. You may draw from the discussion board in order to develop questions for further analysis. You are also encouraged (but not required) to supplement your facilitation with visual material. You will be evaluated on how your facilitation engages with the assigned readings, as well as the engagement that you generate among your peers.
Graphic Bio: You will compose and upload a one-page minimum graphic autobiography in week 4. Instructions will be posted on Canvas.

Final Paper: For your final paper, you will write a paper that critically engages with the concepts of the course using close-reading and secondary sources. Based on submission limits from relevant journals, your paper should be article-length: 4,000-7,000 words, with in-text citations and a Works Cited. Your paper must draw from and cite course readings, although the number of readings will vary depending upon your topic and focus. As an option that you must discuss with me, you may compose a graphic essay along the lines of *Sequential* submissions.

You will upload a paper abstract to Canvas and present it in class in week 8. You will receive feedback on this abstract. You are also encouraged to discuss possible paper topics and approaches with me during my office hours.

GRADING SCHEMA
A 100 % to 93.5%  A- < 93.5 % to 89.5%  B+ < 89.5 % to 86.5%  B < 86.5 % to 83.5%
B- < 83.5 % to 79.5%  C+ < 79.5 % to 76.5%  C < 76.5 % to 73.5%  C- < 73.5 % to 69.5%
D+ < 69.5 % to 66.5%  D < 66.5 % to 63.5%  D- < 63.5 % to 60.0%  F < 60.0 % to 0.0%

Accessible Education Statement of Support
The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Course Policies
RESPECT, TOLERANCE, AND DIFFICULT CONTENT
A respectful environment is essential to facilitate discussions and to create a safe space for students to share their thoughts. Everyone in our class—regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, class status, education, physical features, political belief, or religious belief—is worthy of respect as a human being. Our diversity is our strength. We don’t always have to agree, and genuine ignorance can be an opportunity for personal and communal growth.

It is necessary that we keep these practices in mind given the traumatic content of some of our texts. We will critically engage with these texts and their underlying ideologies in online discussions based on mutual respect and understanding. You may wish to further interrogate these issues in your writing as well. Regardless of your personal beliefs, disagreement and ignorance are never excuses for cruelty or intolerance. 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 our class platforms and interactions. I reserve the right to sanction students if they do 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. Additionally, if you are
having particular difficulty with a text, or feel especially troubled by a specific discussion, please let me know.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND 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.

**HARRASSMENT, ASSAULT, 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 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 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.

**Course Schedule**
Subject to change....it is 2020. Readings must be completed before our meeting on the date they are listed. Most required and recommended readings are on Canvas.

| Week 1 (10/5): What the Image Is... | Read: Lynda Barry, *What It Is*  
W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology*, excerpts (Canvas)  
Recommended: Roland Barthes, “The Rhetoric of the Image”  
Gérard Genette, *Fiction and Diction*,  
----- *Paratexts*  
Nina Mickwitz, “The Truth Claims of Images,” *Documentary Comics: Truth-Telling in a Skeptical Age*  
Due: Discussion Board Post due by 3pm |
| Week 2 (10/12): Nonfiction Comics as a Problem of Taxonomy | Read: Art Spiegelman, *Maus I*  
Scott McCloud, Chapters 3 and 4 from *Understanding Comics* (Canvas)  
Charles Hatfield, “An Art of Tensions: The Otherness of Comics Reading,” from *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature* (Canvas)  
Johanna Drucker, “What Is Graphic About Graphic Novels?” (Canvas)  
Recommended: Thierry Groensteen, *The System of Comics*  
Due: Discussion Board Post due by 3pm |
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| Week 3 (10/19): Comics, History, and Testimony | Read: Art Spiegelman, *Maus II*  
Hillary Chute, *Disaster Drawn*, Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 4 (Canvas)  
Recommended: Marianne Hirsch, “Family Pictures: Mourning and Postmemory”  
Hillary Chute, “History and Graphic Representation in *Maus*”  
Due: Discussion Board Post due by 3pm |
| Week 4 (10/26): The Verbal/Visual Self—Comics and Memoir | *In-Class Discussion with Bishakh Som*  
Read: Bishakh Som, *Spellbound*  
Michael Chaney, “Introduction,” *Graphic Subjects* (Canvas)  
Elisabeth El Refaie, “Life Writing from the Colorful Margins,” *Autobiographical Comics* (Canvas)  
Recommended: Hillary Chute, “Introduction,” *Graphic Women*  
Due: Graphic Bio  
Discussion Board Post due by 3pm |
| Week 5 (11/2): Comics, Colorism, Race, and Identity | Read: Mira Jacob, *Good Talk*  
Ronald Wimberly, “*Ligheten Up*”  
Sarah Ahmed, “Recognising Strangers,” *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (Canvas)  
Recommended: Elisabeth El Refaie, “Picturing Embodied Selves,” *Autobiographical Comics* (Canvas)  
Derek Parker Royal, “Coloring America”  
Due: Discussion Board Post due by 3pm |
| Week 6 (11/9): The Content of Our Caricature | Read: Ho Che Anderson, *King*  
Rebecca Wanzo, *The Content of Our Caricature*, excerpts (Canvas)  
Jorge Santos, *Graphic Memories of the Civil Rights Movement: Reframing History in Comics*, excerpts (Canvas) |
| **Recommended** | Michael Chaney, “Drawing on History in Recent African American Graphic Novels”  
Qiana Whitted, “King,” *Encyclopedia of Comic Books and Graphic Novels* |
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| **Week 7 (11/16): Comics Journalism** | **Read:** Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Goražde*  
Joe Sacco, “A Manifesto, Anyone?” (Canvas)  
Daniel Worden, “Introduction” from *The Comics of Joe Sacco: Journalism in a Visual World* (Canvas)  
Lan Dong, “Inside and Outside the Frame: Joe Sacco’s *Safe Area Goražde,*” ibid. (Canvas)  
**Recommended:** Judith Butler, “Photography and the Ethics of Torture,” *Frames of War*  
Hillary Chute, Chapter 5, *Disaster Drawn*  
Amy Kiste Nyberg, “Theorizing Comics Journalism” |
| **Due:** | Discussion Board Post due by 3pm |

| **Week 8 (11/23): Graphic Objectivity** | *Abstract Symposium*  
**Read:** *The Nib* (excerpts)  
*Drawing the Times* (excerpts)  
*Cartoon Movement* (excerpts)  
*Sequentialis* (excerpts)  
**Due:** Paper Abstract  
Discussion Board Post due by 3pm |

| **Week 9 (11/30): Once Upon a Time...—Temporalities of Non/Fiction** | **Read:** Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, *Red: A Haida Manga*  
Miriam Brown Spiers, “The Formline of Social Responsibility” (Canvas)  
**Recommended:** Nicola Levell, *The Seriousness of Play,* excerpts |
| **Due:** | Discussion Board Post due by 3pm |

| **12/10** | Final Paper Due by 10pm |