University of Oregon (Spring 2022)
ENG 106: Introduction to Literature (Poetry)
Introduction to Comics Poetry
Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00-1:20 p.m.
CRN 33619, 146 HEDCO Education Bldg.

Instructor: Christopher Roethle
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Office: 213 PLC
Email: croethle@uoregon.edu

Office Hours (Day / Time):
MW: 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
F: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
And by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
It may seem strange to think of comics and poetry in connection with one another. Yet comics, in their way, have always been an intensely poetic medium even when no outright poetry has been involved. The increasing number of scholarly papers and web articles on the subject confirm the appeal of this comparison -- as does the growing field of contemporary American “comics poetry,” which despite some print anthologies and an occasional presence in journals is developing largely in the micro-press world and alongside other forms of webcomics.

This class will explore the basis for the comparison of comics to poetry and will attempt to demonstrate the usefulness of poetry and poetic theory as a way to understand the formal considerations that make even mainstream American superhero comics tick. In the second half of the class, we will turn our attention to the hybridization of these forms in work ranging from William Blake’s engravings, to the haiga of Yosa Buson, to the collaborations of New York School poets with Joe Brainard in the 1960s. We will then consider the contemporary comics poetry of artists such as Bianca Stone, Paul K. Tunis, Alexander Rothman, Warren Craghead, Matt Madden, Derik Badman, Andrea Tsurumi, Mita Mihato, and more. In discussing these artists, we will make a case for our comparison as the beginning of a critical language uniquely suited to a form that blends verse and sequential art.

During the course, students will be introduced to current artistic and academic debates surrounding comics poetry. Special attention will be paid to Rachel Blau Duplessis’s theory of “Segmentivity” and the terminology we use to talk about this hybrid form, as the difference between “Poetry Comics” and “Comics Poetry” can imply a great deal about what the person using that term values in the medium. At the end of the class, students will create their own comics poetry and explain its formal features in a short essay. (Note: No special artistic talent required.) Note: This class examines materials with adult themes and language.
LEARNING OUTCOMES:
The English department’s assessment procedure for undergraduates is built around six desired learning outcomes. By the end of this course, you should be able to do the following with regard to poetry, comics, and poetry comics:
• Read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and an understanding of their conventions
• Draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts
• Perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts
• Write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose
• Employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments
• Employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay’s thesis

REQUIRED TEXTS:
• Guardians of the Galaxy (2020) v. 1: Then It’s Us  
  Al Ewing and Juann Cabal
• Guardians of the Galaxy (2020) v. 2: Here We Make Our Stand  
  Al Ewing and Juann Cabal
• Daredevil: Parts of a Hole (any version)  
  David Mack and Joe Quesada
• Above the Dreamless Dead: World War I in Poetry and Comics  
  Ed. Chris Duffy
• Poetry Comics from the Book of Hours  
  Bianca Stone
• Comics as Poetry  
  Ed. Franklin Einspruch

ATTENDANCE & LATENESS:
Consistent attendance is crucial to your success in this course. Therefore, your attendance and involvement are mandatory. Missing more than two (2) classes will negatively affect your final course grade. Excused absences will be granted only with proper documentation for medical and/or family emergencies.
• 3rd unexcused absence: final grade drops a half letter (5% out of 100%)
• 4th unexcused absence: final grade drops another half letter (and so on with 5th, 6th, 7th, etc.)

Lateness is distracting and inconsiderate to everyone. Please make every effort to arrive on time. Continual lateness will affect final class participation grades. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late or leave prior to dismissal (or the end of the period, whichever comes first) will not be counted as present for that day’s class. If you know that attendance will be an issue throughout the quarter, please consider that this may not be the course for you.

REQUIREMENTS & POLICIES:
1. Engagement: I expect students to complete their readings and any necessary assignments prior to class and to participate in classroom discussions about the work. I reserve the right to withhold participation points for reasons including, but not limited to: lack of participation in discussion, failing a reading quiz (if given), showing up late, or bringing incomplete work on assignment due dates. Please speak with me if you are having difficulty attending class or completing your assignments for any reason. Participation will count for 10% of the final grade.

2. Reading: Read essays or comics listed for each meeting prior to class and show up ready to discuss them. Some readings will come from our printed texts, others will be posted to Canvass, linked there, or given as handouts. Always bring your book and/or printouts of online readings to class. Not doing so limits your ability to participate and will result in you being marked absent for the day.
The original versions of some required readings and various non-required readings that may be helpful to you in your assignments will be available on Reserve at the Knight Library. These materials will include harder-to-find micro-press poetry comics, often by artists from *Ink Brick* or *Comics as Poetry*, which may be featured in lecture throughout the term. Examples range from the full text of Warren Craghead’s adaptations of poetry by Guillaume Apollinaire in *How to Be Everywhere*, to Matt Madden’s sestina mini-comic *Walker*, to work by artists such as Kimball Anderson and Simon Moreton, who we will not have time to cover in depth.

3. Poetic Analysis of a Traditional Comic: Drawing on concepts covered in reading and discussion, conduct a poetry-centered formal analysis of a two-to-three-page sequence from a “traditional” comic. The comic could be anything from this month’s issue of an ongoing superhero series like *Green Lantern* to a former Comics and Cartoon studies textbook like Lynda Barry’s *One Hundred Demons!* Students may also use any material from our shared *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2020) or *Daredevil* readings so long as the analysis differs substantively from what we said about that sequence in class.

“Formal analysis” implies a discussion not just of what your selection means but how it is built to embody that meaning. In this case, you will be viewing the form (or grammar) of comics through the lens of poetry and poetic theory, explaining the specific ways your comics selection is built like a poem in order to achieve its goals. For example, how might Charles Olsen’s theory of Projective Verse explain the visual rhythms of speech bubble placement in an excerpt from Brian Bendis’s *Jinx* or the design of various sound effects in Bendis’s more superheroic Marvel work? Might Projective Verse provide a rationale for doing away with panel borders and treating the entire page as a “field of composition,” as in some works by comics legends Will Eisner and Gene Colan? Alternately, do you see similarities in the structure of lyric-narrative poetic sequences from Derek Walcott’s *Omeros* and the arrangement of comics panels into a sequential narrative? Etc.

In general, you may write about whatever you wish so long as you do the following:

a) Draw on ideas from reading and/or unit discussion
b) Include a strong, argumentative thesis statement at the beginning or end of the essay.
c) Back up all your assertions with clear / concise reasoning, examples from the text or other reputable outside sources (not Wikipedia), and proper MLA citation.

**NOTE:** Whether intentional or unintentional, submitting work that is not your own without properly crediting its source is plagiarism and grounds for immediate course failure. Work for this class must be produced specifically for this class. Recycling work from previous courses is also a form of academic dishonesty and may result in course failure.

The assignment must cite the source of information or examples brought in to support the essay’s claims. Consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab (*Purdue O.W.L*) website for questions about MLA citation format. If you cannot determine how to cite something properly, feel free to ask me, either in person or via e-mail. **The essay must be at least four to five pages,** typed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman (or other serif-based) font. Correct in-text citations and MLA Works Cited Page required.

*If you choose a comic outside of our required readings, please clear it with me before you start writing (and staple a black and white printout of your selection to the back of the finished essay for reference).*
I do not accept emailed papers unless there are extraordinary circumstances and I've given prior approval. It is your responsibility to upload your work to Canvas or bring it to me during my office hours. Please do not leave papers on or next to my office door. Late penalties are generally -1 point per weekday for late assignments accepted without prior approval. The Poetic Analysis of a Traditional Comic will count for 30% of the final grade.

4. Formal Analysis of a Poetry Comic: Drawing on concepts covered in lecture or prior course reading, conduct a formal analysis of one complete poetry comic. Your selection must come from one of the following sources: Comics as Poetry, Above the Dreamless Dead, Poetry Comics from the Book of Hours, How to Be Everywhere, or one of the non-required readings on Reserve at the Knight Library.

As with the last assignment, “formal analysis” implies a discussion not just of what your selection means but how it is built to embody that meaning. In this case, you will be analyzing work that consciously fuses two preexisting forms of literature and which, for those reasons, may not fit neatly with our understanding of either poetry or comics. In some respects, the success of the piece as a “poetry comic” may be tied to the ways in which it conveys ideas in a manner that would be difficult, if not impossible, to replicate in poetry or comics alone.

For example, your paper might discuss the various visual symbols in Paul K. Tunis’s “Avenge Me, Eavesdropper” (originally published in Ink Brick #1) and how they work with the wording of the piece to shape the piece’s overall meaning. Does the cartooning answer, visually, what the text leaves out and vice versa, or do both words and pictures build upon one another to point at something else, something vital, that exists only by inference? How does the piece employ, or not employ, Scott McCloud’s ideas about panel transitions from Understanding Comics? Alternately, you could investigate the almost metrical visual structures in L. Nichol’s “9 Weeks” (also from Ink Brick #1) and discuss the roles played by textual silence, the panel gutter, and other forms of interstitial space in guiding the reader’s experience. The poetry comics artist Alexander Rothman has noted cubist influences in Warren Craghead’s How to Be Everywhere; where do you see this observation play out, and does the addition of this representational strategy transform How to Be Everywhere from a mere visual adaptation of Apollinaire’s poetry into something new, something more? Etc.

In general, you may write about whatever you wish so long as you do the following:

a) Draw on ideas from reading and/or unit discussion
b) Include a strong, argumentative thesis statement at the beginning or end of the essay.
c) Back up all your assertions with clear / concise reasoning, examples from the text or other reputable outside sources (not Wikipedia), and proper MLA citation.

NOTE: Whether intentional or unintentional, submitting work that is not your own without properly crediting its source is plagiarism and grounds for immediate course failure. Work for this class must be produced specifically for this class. Recycling work from previous courses is also a form of academic dishonesty and may result in course failure.

The assignment must cite the source of information or examples brought in to support the essay’s claims. Consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab (Purdue O.W.L.) website for questions about MLA citation format. If you cannot determine how to cite something properly, feel free to ask me, either in person or via e-mail.

The essay must be at least four to five pages, typed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman (or other serif-based) font. Correct in-text citations and MLA Works Cited Page required.
I do not accept emailed papers unless there are extraordinary circumstances and I've given prior approval. It is your responsibility to bring a hard copy of your paper to class or to me during my office hours. Please do not leave papers on or next to my office door. Late penalties are generally -1 point per weekday for late assignments accepted without prior approval. *The Formal Analysis of a Poetry Comic will count for 30% of the final grade.*

5. **Original Poetry Comic & Reflection:** For your final assignment, you will design and draw a poetry comic of your own, whether that means an adaptation of an existing poem like the work from *Above the Dreamless Dead* or a wholly original hybrid work of the sort found in *Ink Brick* and *Comics as Poetry*. The poetry comic, which may be completed in any format and any medium, must be accompanied by a **three-to-four page reflection** detailing how the forms of both comics and poetry are productively blended, counterpointed, or brought into outright conflict with one another. Alternate versions of this assignment are also available for those who may feel nervous about their writing or drawing skills. See Canvas for more info! *The Original Poetry Comic & Explanatory Essay will count for 30% of the final grade.*

6. **Grading:**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
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<td>Essay #1 (Poetic Analysis of Trad. Comic)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
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<td>Essay #2 (Formal Analysis of Poetry Comic)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
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<td>Original Poetry Comic &amp; Explanatory Essay</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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7. **Late Assignments:** Assignments are due at the start of class on the date specified in the class calendar. Assignments turned in late will lose one point off of their final grades per day until turned in. Students who foresee a problem turning in an assignment on time should contact me immediately.

8. **Grammar and Mechanics:** Solid, grammatically correct writing is expected on all work. I don’t expect written work to be perfect, but I do expect everyone to strive for error-free prose. Yes, grammar counts in this course. We will be exploring various aspects of grammar and mechanics as a class, but if you are unsure about something, please either look it up or ask me. Do not rely on your word processor’s spelling and grammar checkers alone to catch your errors, as these are very limited tools. Instead, you should get into the habit of carefully proofing your work or having someone look over your work for errors before you submit.

9. **Academic Honesty:** All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please consult *The Little Duck Handbook* for a definition of plagiarism and information on documentation, and refer to the *Student Conduct Code* on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. In cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the Composition Program. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

10. **Food/Drink/Cell Phones/Computers:** Food and drink are not permitted in Smart classrooms. In most other situations, I am OK with the careful use of sealable water bottles at your table or desk as long as you clean up any spills. Cell phones, laptops, and tablet devices are all permitted, provided that you are using them for classwork.
11. **Inclement Weather/Class Cancellation:** If for any reason I need to cancel class, I will notify students via email and post a cancellation notice outside the classroom. As far as inclement weather is concerned, use your best judgment. In cases of severe weather, I will make every effort to notify students about class cancellations.

12. **Communication:** I encourage all students to meet with me outside of the classroom during the term. The best way to reach me is via email. I will also be holding office hours. Since I do not often check my voicemail or messages sent through Canvas, please send email whenever possible to ensure a speedier reply.

13. **Access:** The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

14. **Class Visitors:** Because visitors could impact the learning environment and comfort level of students who have registered for the class, it is University policy that classroom time and space are reserved only for students who are officially enrolled. Guests, children, babies, and pets (excepting service animals) are not permitted. This policy extends also to unenrolled students looking to add the course during the first week of term.

15. **Territorial Acknowledgment:** 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, Kalapuya descendants are primarily citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and they continue to make important contributions to their communities, to the UO, to Oregon, and to the world. In following the Indigenous protocol of acknowledging the original people of the land we occupy, we also extend our respect to the nine federally recognized Indigenous nations of Oregon: the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Coquille Indian Tribe, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Klamath Tribes. We express our respect to the many more tribes who have ancestral connections to this territory, as well as to all other displaced Indigenous peoples who call Oregon home. (*Thanks to the IRES Department for crafting this Acknowledgment.*)
ENGLISH 106, SPRING 2022
CLASS CALENDAR
Subject to change with notice / Assignments & Readings due at start of class on days listed

COMICS & POETRY

3/29 (T) – Syllabus, Course Description; Comics and Poetry: Two Arts of Juxtaposition and Attention
   Review: All “Start Here” Module Pages on Canvas & Purchase Textbooks
   Read: “Mental Reactions” (Meyer & de Zayas) [Before class Tuesday]
         “Colletta Suite” Parts I and IV (Badman) [Before class Tuesday]

3/31 (R) – Analogous Units & Some Theories of “Line”
   Read: Guardians of the Galaxy v. 1 (Ewing and Cabal)
          Introductory Material from Over the Line (Williams)
          “The Jabberwocky” (Carroll)
          “You Fit Into Me” (Atwood)
          “American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin (Hayes)
          “Swan and Shadow” (Hollander)

4/5 (T) – Adventures in Time and Space
   Read: Guardians of the Galaxy v. 2 (Ewing and Cabal)
          Canvas Page on the Origin of Peter Quill: Star-Lord
          Chapter 4: “Time Frames” (McCloud)
          “Young Sycamore” (W.C. Williams)
          “My Life According to You” (Morrissey)
          “Dusting” (Dove)
          “A Supermarket in California” (Ginsberg)

4/7 (R) – Classical Controls: Rhythm & Meter
   Read: Guardians of the Galaxy v. 2 (Ewing and Cabal) [Review]
          Canvas Page on Prosody featuring . . .
          “Junk” (Wilbur)
          “Thimble City” (Coulette)
          “The Fish” (Moore)
          “Mending Wall” (Frost)
          Excerpt from Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare)
          Comics Poems on Canvas (Nichol, Hewage/Tennekoon, Robbins)

4/12 (T) – Comics Haiku
   Read: Chapters on Haiku Form (Hass)
          Canvas Page on Poetic Haiku (Bashō and Buson) + Buson’s “Haiga”
          Comics Haiku (Madden, Lasky)
          Selections from Un Poco Low Coup (Baraka)

4/14 (R) – Comics Sestina
   Read: Short Essay on Sestina Form (Nester)
          “Sestina” (Bishop)
          “The Book of Yolek” (Hecht)
          “Farm Implements and Rutabagas in a Landscape” (Ashbery)
“Looking to See How the Eyes Inhabit Dark, Wondering about Light” (Smith)
Comics Sestinas “Walker” and “The Six Treasures of the Spiral” (Madden)

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<tr>
<th>4/19 (T) –</th>
<th>Charles Olson’s Projective Verse (pt. 1): Snowblind in an Open Field</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read: “Projective Verse” (Olson)</td>
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<td>“Carson’s Inlet” (Ammons)</td>
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<td>“In Golden Gate Park One Day” (Ferlinghetti)</td>
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<td>“I Know a Man” (Creeley)</td>
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<td>“The Torso” [Passages 18] (Duncan)</td>
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<td>from “Snowblind” (Alpha Flight v.1, #6) (Byrne)</td>
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<th>4/21 (R) –</th>
<th>Comics as Projective Verse (pt. 2): Echoes in the Stream</th>
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<td>Read: Daredevil: Parts of a Hole (Mack and Quesada)</td>
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<td>“Comics as Poetry: An Interview with David Mack” (Jenkins)</td>
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<td>Additional Pages from Echo: Vision Quest (Mack) [Skim]</td>
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<td>Poetic Analysis of a Mainstream Due</td>
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### COMICS POETRY

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<th>4/26 (T) –</th>
<th>Adaptations (pt. 1): From Classics Illustrated to The Dreamless Dead</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read: “Sonnet 130” (Shakespeare/Morice)</td>
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<td>“To Celia” (Jonson/Morice)</td>
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<td>“This Living Hand” (Keats/Morice)</td>
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<td>“The Adventures of Whitman” (Whitman/Morice)</td>
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<td>“Buffalo Dusk” (Sandberg/Peters)</td>
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<td>“Those Winter Sundays” (Hayden/Peters)</td>
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<td>“Conscientious Objector” (Millay/Peters)</td>
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<td>“Before the Battle” (Sassoon/Peters)</td>
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<td>“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (Eliot/Peters)</td>
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<td>Begin Above the Dreamless Dead: WWI in Poetry and Comics (Ed. Duffy)</td>
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<th>4/28 (R) –</th>
<th>Adaptations (pt. 2): Comics Poetry from the Trenches</th>
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<td>Read: Above the Dreamless Dead: World War I in Poetry and Comics (Ed. Duffy)</td>
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<th>5/3 (T) –</th>
<th>Spotlight: The New York School and Joe Brainard</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Read: New York School Poetry Sampler [TBD] (Ashbery, O’Hara, Guest)</td>
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<td>Excerpts from C Comics #1-2 (Brainard et al.) [See Canvas for directions]</td>
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<th>Two</th>
<th>Importance of the Possible, by Kenneth Koch</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Read: Two Poems by Kenneth Koch (“Fresh Air” and “One Train May Hide Another”)</td>
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<td>Introduction to The Art of the Possible (Lehman)</td>
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<td>Excerpts from The Art of the Possible (Koch)</td>
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<th>5/5 (R) –</th>
<th>Ink Brick and the Comics Poetry Wave</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Read: “What is Comics Poetry?” (Rothman)</td>
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<td>“The New York Comics Symposium: On Comics Poetry” (Rothman et al.)</td>
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<td>“Keeping Time” (Rothman)</td>
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<td>“How To” (Rothman)</td>
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<td>“The Thing in the Wall” (Rothman)</td>
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“Kōjō No Tsuki” (Rothman)
“Avenge Me, Eavesdropper” (Tunis)
“Paper Mice” (Tunis)
“Bruises” (Tunis)

2/12 (R) – Ink Brick Spotlight: Bianca Stone
Read: “A Bianca Stone Interview” (Dueben)
Selections: Someone Else’s Wedding Vows; The Moebius Strip Club of Grief
Poetry Comics from the Book of Hours

5/17 (T) – Warren Craghead (Featuring Rachel Blau Duplessis’s Theory of “Segmentivity”)
Read: “Narrativity and Segmentivity, or, Poetry in the Gutter” (McHale) [read pp. 27-27, skim the rest]
“Gloucester is a Colony” (Craghead) [In Comics as Poetry textbook]
“Golden Smoke” (from Ley Lines) (Craghead)

5/19 (R) – Craghead and Apollinaire on How to Be Everywhere
Read: “Interview: Warren Craghead” (Spurgeon)
“Zone” and “The Harvest Month” (Apollinaire, trans. Donald Revell)
“Introduction” to How to Be Everywhere (Craghead)
Excerpts from How to Be Everywhere (Craghead)

5/24 (T) – Badman Returns
Read: “Comics Poetry, Poetry Comics, Graphic Poems” + ALL COMMENTS (Badman)
Two short essays on Vince Colletta [TBD]
“I Mustn’t Love You, My Darling!” (Lee, Lieber, Giordano)
“Colletta Suite” (Sections I-VI) (Badman)

5/26 (R) – Student-Led Discussions of Katz, Tsurumi, Mihato, Delporte
Read: TBD (Katz)
TBD (Tsurumi)
TBD (Mihato)
TBD (Delporte)

Formal Analysis of a full Comics Poem Due

5/31 (T) – Student-Led Discussions of Moreton, Anderson, White
Read: TBD (Moreton)
TBD (Anderson)
TBD (White)

6/2 (R) – Where Do We Go from Here? And One Last Reading . . .
Read: “Right of Spring” (Moore, Bissette, Totleben)
Also: Come to class ready to talk about your plans for the Original Poetry Comic (and Explanatory Essay) assignment. Visual aids encouraged.

FINALS WEEK

6/10 (F) – No lecture! No Final Exam! Just turn in your final assignments on Canvas and you’re done.
Original Comics Poem and 3-4 pp. Explanatory Essay due to Canvas.
Grading Rubric for Essays

I will use the following to help me grade your essays. Please use it as a rough guide in the writing process and do not hesitate to ask if you have questions as you write. I am happy to explain what I am looking for in greater detail.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Grading Scale:</th>
<th>Percent of Total:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27-30: A</td>
<td>90-100%: A</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-26: B</td>
<td>80-89%: B</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-23: C</td>
<td>70-79%: C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20: D</td>
<td>60-69%: D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-17: F</td>
<td>0-59%: F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Question at Issue / Thesis Statement:
Your thesis statement is the culmination of a reasonable argument: the answer to a ‘Question at Issue’ boiled down to one statement you claim as credible or true. Are your QAI and thesis statement identifiable and clearly stated? Is your thesis statement’s claim likely to be true and arguable? Does the thesis appear at a logical point and does the rest of the essay work to make the statement believable?

2) Structure / Coherence / Logical Flow of Argument:
Good arguments are also good pieces of communication designed to impress your thought process and its justification on readers in a way that makes sense. Are the steps leading to your thesis statement logical and easy to follow? Does the essay move between thoughts and paragraphs in a natural manner using transition words or sentences?

3) Statements Backed by Examples, Quotations, and Statistics:
To convince an audience your argument has merit and a basis in fact, examples from credible sources and clear reasoning are required. Are all statements backed by enough evidence to guard against reasonable criticism?

4) Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation:
Again, argumentative writing is a form of communication. Correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation help you communicate more accurately. Neglecting this small but important aspect of writing can actually damage a paper’s credibility since, right or wrong, shoddy spelling, grammar, and punctuation imply similarly shaky reasoning. If needed, please consult Purdue O.W.L. for a refresher.

5) Proper MLA Format (In-Text Citations and Works Cited Page):
Neglecting to cite sources or properly and acknowledge that certain words and ideas that are not your own, even accidentally, is plagiarism and leads to an immediate course grade of “F.” Please document all sources. Since final essays are submitted for a grade, I reserve the right double-check the validity of any source in your list of Works Cited. Be prepared, if asked, to provide a working web-link that will direct me to your source or a full text printout of the essay or article in question. In the event that your source is a book, I will accept excerpts that provide the context of the material you quote or paraphrase. My definition of plagiarism also extends to whole, properly documented essays that are (A) not your original work or (B) your work, but originally written for another class. Plagiarism is easy to detect on my end. The small amount of time saved by committing it is not worth the headache it becomes.