

**MAP-UA.711**

**\* Expressive Cultures: The Graphic Novel \***  
**Fall 2011**

**MW 12:30-1:45**  
**Silver 713**

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

**Office Hours:**  
**Wednesday 2-3**  
**Thursday 1-2**

**(212) 998-8676**  
**eb7@nyu.edu**

**Preceptors**

**Michiel Bot**  
**mtb250@nyu.edu**

**Kyle Johnson**  
**kpj204@nyu.edu**

**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?

**Blackboard and the Internet.** Blackboard, 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, Blackboard 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 enrol 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, writing brief (2-3 page) essays** in advance; on other occasions, there will be **short quizzes**. These assignments will, along with your level of participation, determine the recitation portion of your grade. In addition, you will also write **one longer, more formal essay (5-7 pages)** on topics assigned in advance, or on a topic of your choice that has been approved in advance. There will also be an **in-class midterm exam on October 26** and a **final exam on Wednesday, December 21, from 12:00-1:50**.

**Electronic submission of written assignments.** You must submit both hard copies and digital copies of your written assignments. Blackboard has a "digital drop box" feature, but I have not found it to be particularly reliable. Therefore, 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 ".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 Blackboard prior to the class meeting.

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

Participation:	20%
2 Short Writing Assignments:	20%
Longer Writing Assignment:	15%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Exam:	25%

**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*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> 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*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed.

**Required Texts, Part One**  
**(NYU Book Store)**

Barry, Lynda. *One! Hundred! Demons!*  
Bechdel, Allison. *Fun Home*  
Clowes, Daniel. *David Boring*.  
Eisner, Will. *The Best of the Spirit*.  
Hernandez, Gilbert. *Heartbreak Soup*  
Mazzucchelli, David. *Asterios Polyp*  
McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*  
McNeil, Carla Speed. *The Finder Library*. Volume 1.  
Miller, Frank. *The Dark Knight Returns*.  
Moore, Alan and David Lloyd. *Watchmen*.  
Morrison, Grant and Frank Quitely, *We3*.  
Satrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis*  
Spiegelman, Art. *Maus*  
Tomine, Adrian. *Shortcomings*  
Ware, Chris. *Jimmy Corrigan, The Smartest Kid on Earth*.

**Required Texts, Part Two**  
**(Blackboard)**

Gerber, Steve, et al. *Howard the Duck*. These files complain 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.

Milligan, Peter and Duncan Fegredo. *Enigma* 1-8.

Wagner, Matt. *Grendel: Devil by the Deed*.

"Hero's Journey" readings  
(September 19)

Action Comics 1  
Detective Comics 27  
Fantastic Four 48-50  
Amazing Spider-Man 33  
Green Lantern v2 76  
Amazing Spider-Man 96-97  
Strange Tales 178-179

Doctor Strange 4

"Women in Refrigerators" readings  
(September 28)

*Wonder Woman* v1 001  
*Wonder Woman* v2 001  
*Wonder Woman* v2 170  
*Amazing Spider-Man* v1 121  
*Green Lantern* v3 56

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/>

**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.thecomicsbooks.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.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

**September 7 (W) Introduction**

**September 12 (M) How to**

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

**September 14 (W) Paper Movies**

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

**September 19 (M) 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 21 (W) Funny Animals (1)**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Gerber, et al *Howard the Duck*

**September 26 (M) The Grim and the Gritty**

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

**September 28 (W) 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

**Short Paper # 1 Due**

**October 3 (M) Raw Sharks (1)**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read *Watchmen* (Chapters 1-5)

**October 5 (W) Raw Sharks (2)**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read *Watchmen* (finish)

**October 10 (M) NO CLASS**

**October 12 (W) Goth Tragedy**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Gaiman, et al. *A Game of You*

**October 17 (M) Who Was that Masked Man?**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Milligan and Fegredo, *Engima*

**October 19 (W) Funny Animals (2)**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Morrison & Quitely, *We3*

**October 26 (M) The Comic Strip**

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

**October 26 (W) MIDTERM EXAM**

**October 31 (M) Pretty Ugly**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Barry, *One! Hundred! Demons!*

**November 2 (W) Ruben Bolling**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read TBA

**November 7 (M) Bleeding History (1)**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Spiegelman, *Maus* Book I

**November 9 (W) Bleeding History (2)**

- ▼ For Today:
  - ✦ Read Spiegelman, *Maus* Book II
- Short Paper # 2 Due**

**November 14 (M) Family Portraits**

- ✦ Read Bechdel, *Fun Home*

**November 16 (W) (Counter) Revolutions**

▼ For Today:

✦ Read Satrapi, *Persepolis*

**November 21 (M) Art Objects**

▼ For Today:

✦ Read Ware, *Jimmy Corrigan*

**November 23 (W) Children of the Bomb:  
Manga's Post-Nuclear Worlds**

▼ For Today:

✦ TBA

**November 28 (M) Aboriginal Science  
Fiction**

▼ For Today:

✦ Read McNeil, *Finder (Sin Eater,  
Talisman)*

**November 31(W) Shortcomings**

▼ For Today:

✦ Read Tomine, *Shorcomings*

**December 5 (M) Human Diastrophism**

▼ For Today:

✦ Hernandez, *Heartbreak Soup*

**December 7 (W) Deco-Dence**

▼ For Today:

✦ Read Wagner, *Grendel: Devil by the  
Deed*

**Longer Paper Due**

**December 12 (M) Design Flaws**

▼ For Today:

✦ Mazzucchelli, *Asterios Polyp*

**December 14 (W) Indy Anomie**

▼ For Today:

✦ Clowes, *David Boring*

**December 21 (W) FINAL EXAM**

**12:00-1:50**