UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FACULTY OF ARTS
Department Of English

ENGL 422: Advanced Comics Studies
Fall 2021
Asynchronous Online

Instructor	Bart Beaty
Email:	beaty@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	https://d2l.ucalgary.ca/d2l/home/399920
Office Hours:	Zoom office hours will be scheduled each week to allow maximum flexibility. Links will be posted to the course site every week.

Course description:

This course will introduce the scholarly study of comic books in the United States, with a particular focus on the period commonly referred to as "the Golden Age", roughly 1934 to 1960. Students will study the major genres of the period in an effort to historicize the rapid development of a new publishing format: the comic book.

This course will be fully asynchronous. This course will take place **online** via Desire2Learn (D2L). To best succeed in the course, students are encouraged to participate in the asynchronous learning tasks using the D2L learning environment.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate a knowledge of the early history of the comic book in the United States
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the formal properties of comics
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the way formal change occurs in media industries
4. Demonstrate an understanding of how media industries challenge and support authorial understandings of culture

Texts and readings:

As this course will focus on comic books in the public domain, there is no required textbook for this course.

Readings from scholarly journals are accessible online through the University of Calgary library. A complete list of readings will be provided in the first class.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Short Projects (4 x 10% each = 40 % of final grade). Students will be responsible for completing the four projects listed below. Written projects should be three to five pages, or, if in a format other than a written project (Powerpoint presentation, poster presentation, Excel data sheet, interpretive dance) should be of a length that is roughly analogous. Projects should be uploaded to the appropriate Dropbox for the course on D2L by 9:00am on the day that they are due. Additionally, for each of these four projects one quarter of the class will be asked to share their findings with the class by posting their report to the Discussions forum (see below).

A) The Random Comic (Due: 28 September, 2021): Students will be assigned a comic book from the What Were Comics? carpus at random. Students will report on the formal elements of the work. Reflections should consider formal elements that may or may not appear to be outliers and the relevance of various formal elements in the overall analysis of the work.

B) A Single Month (Due: 14 October, 2021). Students will be randomly assigned a single month from a single year (1940-1952 inclusive) and should examine as many comic books from that month as are locatable online. Reports should focus on the range of commonalities and differences across the randomly assigned works. Students should consider to what degree we could plausibly make an argument for the presence or absence of authorial voice (whether at the individual or corporate level) by noting strong similarities and differences in the works.

C) Every Year (Due: 28 October, 2021). Students will be assigned an ongoing comic book title and a random month. They will then be asked to read the comic books from that title and month for every second year (stopping at 1960). Projects should focus on changes within the title over time. To what extent can it be said that the comic book format "evolved" over time? Did that evolution occur seamlessly or does there appear to be abrupt shifts in publishing format and intention that are tied to notable historical markers? How is the earliest comic book in the randomly assigned series the same as, or different from, the last one?

D) Horror (Due: 18 November, 2021). Students will be assigned a corpus of horror comic books that will be assessed in relation to the arguments advanced by Fredric Wertham in his book *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954). To what extent is your understanding of Wertham's argument shaped by reading these comic books? To what extent does he exaggerate or under-play the aesthetic contributions of horror comic books? In short, evaluate the accuracy of Wertham's writing through a close-reading of the texts that he was reading but did not cite.

Presentation of Short Project (Due Date Same as Project Listed Above; 10% of final grade). At the end of the add/drop period, students will be randomly assigned to present one of their four short projects so that one-quarter of the class is presenting their work at each due date. Students will share their presentation by posting it to the appropriate Discussion Forum on D2L (use the "Stuff" button on the top left corner in order to upload a file). Students will also be responsible for responding to questions and comments from their peers about their findings.

Discussion Contributions (throughout the term; 20% of final grade). While discussion forums have been created for each lecture and reading in this course and will be monitored throughout. All students are expected to provide a substantive contribution to the discussion in these forums (NO

MORE THAN 200 words of writing) that shows attention to earlier contributions and which extends and expands the discussion, or which begins a new discussion line entirely. Students will be graded on the quality of their contribution to the online discussions and their twenty highest grades will be counted towards their final grade. Each of these twenty contributions are worth one per cent of the grade in this course, for a total of twenty per cent

Final Project Due 9 December, 2021. (30% of final grade). The final project can be an essay (8 – 10 pages) or take on another form (film, data set, creative project). If a student opts to proceed with a project that is not an essay, this should be discussed with the professor so that the project can be calibrated as representing an equivalent amount of work as the paper.

- **There is no Registrar scheduled exam for this course. There are no extra-credit assignments for this course. You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course.**

- **Assignments submitted after the deadline will be graded with no loss of marks, but will receive no written comments.**

Learning technology requirements:

There is a D2L site for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see d2L.ucalgary.ca).

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:
- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.

Attendance and participation expectations:

As this is an asynchronous course, there are no attendance and participation expectation.

Conduct:
Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at: **http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html**

Policy on use of electronic devices:

The use of laptop and mobile devices is acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities. Please refrain from accessing websites and resources that may be distracting to you or for other learners during class time. Students are responsible for being aware of the University's Internet and email use policy, which can be found at **https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/electronic-communications-policy.pdf**

- **Grading system:**
  The University of Calgary's four-point Grading System, as described in the Calendar;) will be used in this course. https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html

  A+/A (4.0); A- (3.7); B+ (3.3); B (3.0); B- (2.7); C+ (2.3); C (2.0); C- (1.7); D+ (1.3); D (1.0); F (0)

  Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1) https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1.html, instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.
  Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

Academic Integrity:
This course, like all courses at the University of Calgary, holds students to high standards of honest and responsible scholarship. Please consult the Academic Integrity website for a detailed description of university policies, which will be enforced in this course. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Associate Dean of Arts for a ruling.

Plagiarism is a type of academic misconduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of another person as their own. Another equally serious form of plagiarism occurs when a student submits something they have written themselves for credit in two or more courses without first securing written permission from all those course instructors. Consequences for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

Deferral of term work and final examinations:
Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations.

Grade appeals:

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment, Consult the University Calendar and request advice from the English Department at engl@ucalgary.ca. Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

English Department Website:
For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English.

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:
The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. Our email address is smecuofc@gmail.com.

Writing support:
The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

Academic regulations and schedules

Student Academic Accommodations:
The Student Accessibility Services website is available here. University accommodation policies can be found at the following links:
https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html
https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html
https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html

Program Advising and Student Information Resources is done through the Faculty of Arts Students' Centre. Office location: SS102; phone: 403-220-3580; email: ascarts@ucalgary.ca
Website: http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate

Instructor's Intellectual Property
Course materials created by instructors, including presentations, posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams, remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may not be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy
Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

Research Ethics [delete section if not applicable]
- If a student is interested in undertaking an assignment that will involve collecting information from members of the public, they should speak with the course instructor and consult the CFREB Ethics (http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/researchers/ethics-compliance/cfreb) before beginning the assignment.
- If students are going to be used as research subjects or expected to conduct research (such as interviews), a statement about this expectation must be included. Please note that if you plan to have students conduct research for class, you must get ethics approval for the course.

Sexual violence policy:
https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf

Other important information:
- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):
Please participate in USRI Surveys toward the end of the course. The feedback they provide helps us evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.