

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 388.04-01
COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS

WINTER 2015

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Course description: Topic in Popular Genres. No prerequisites. This course will introduce the scholarly study of comic books and graphic novels, with a particular focus on the formal elements that differentiate comics from other forms of literature (poetry, prose), and the history of the comic book format as it has evolved in the United States from the 1830s to today.

Texts and readings:

Scott McCloud. *Understanding Comics* (Avon, 1994).

Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*. (DC Comics, 1986)

Daniel Clowes. *The Death Ray*. (Drawn and Quarterly, 2011)

Brian K. Vaughn and Fiona Smythe. *Saga* v1. (Image Comics, 2012)

Joe Sacco. *Safe Area Gorazde*. (Fantagraphics, 2002).

Alison Bechdel. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (Wadsworth, 2007)

Bryan Lee O'Malley. *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life*. (Oni, 2004)

Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki. *Skim*. (Groundwood, 2010)

All of the above are required for this course, and are available in the bookstore.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Annotation Project #1 (February 2, 2015). Pick a page that you find interesting in a comic book and trace it. Do not attempt to recreate the original page, but attempt to distill its main features in a simplified drawing. If text appears on the page you should trace the captions or balloons, but do not fill in the text. When this is complete, annotate the page that you have created in the empty spaces (balloons, captions, gutters) in order to highlight the important features. You might consider: colour, shading, line styles, shapes, sizes, angles, placement, perspective, framing, layering, blocking. Consider the relationship between elements and the overall layout. Please provide a photocopy of the original page with your tracing. You might consider photocopying your tracing before annotating it as this will allow you to make corrections. This assignment is worth 10% of the final grade in this course.

Midterm Exam (February 11, 2015). The first mid-term examination will take place in class on February 24, 2014. This exam will cover all of the readings and lecture material from the first five weeks of the term. The exam will be a mixed format, incorporating short and long answers. Please note that material may be presented on slides as part of this exam. This exam is worth 20% of the final grade in this course.

Annotation Project #2 (March 2, 2015). The same as the first annotation project, but using a different page FROM THE SAME WORK. Ideally, you will choose a page that evinces a strong contrast with the first page. This assignment is worth 10% of the final grade in this course.

Synthesis Essay (March 23, 2015). This paper should be five or six pages in length (1,500 – 1,800 words). This paper should reflect upon your process in creating the two tracings. What did you leave out, and why? What did you include, and why? What did your tracings reveal about the book that you chose? How does the art contribute to the overall operation of the work as a whole? This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade in this course.

Registrar-scheduled final exam. The final examination will be scheduled by the registrar. This exam will cover all of the readings and lecture material from the entirety of the course. The exam will be a mixed format, incorporating short and long answers. The exam will include at least one essay question. Please note that material may be presented on slides as part of this exam. This exam is worth 30% of the final grade in this course.

There will be a registrar-scheduled final exam in this course. The exam period this term runs from April 18 to 29, and students must be available for examinations up to the last day of the examination period. There will be no extra-credit assignments in this course. Students must complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade on the course. Assignments submitted after the deadline has passed will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (on A- to a B+) for each business day that the assignment is overdue.

Please make every effort to take assignments directly to the instructor. If it is not possible to do so, take your assignment to SS 1152 and put it in the dropbox. Your assignment will be date-stamped and placed in the instructor's mailbox. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all assignments in case of loss by any cause. Assignments cannot be returned by staff in the Department office.

Grading system:

In this course, all essays, exams, and presentations will be marked on the University of Calgary's four-point Undergraduate Grading System, as described in the Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-2.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)

All midterms will receive a numerical grade, to be converted using the following scale:

90 + %	A+	4.0
85 – 89 %	A	4.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7
67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
64 – 66 %	C	2.0
60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
50 – 54 %	D	1.0
0 – 49 %	F	0

Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1), 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 4-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.

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:

The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club (SMRWC) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. We strive to enhance the academic and social experience of undergraduate students by promoting academic excellence and interaction between students, faculty, and the community, through social, cultural, and academic events

<http://english.ucalgary.ca/scribe-and-muse-english-club>.

Our email address is smecuofc@gmail.com.

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

Writing support:

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

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:

<http://www.enough.utoronto.ca/computeruse/eetiquette.htm>

Library and Research Support:

Melanie Boyd, Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact: maboyn@ucalgary.ca

Find *The English Pages* research guide here: <http://libguides.ucalgary.ca/english>

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:**Academic regulations and schedules:**

Consult the Calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the University Calendar is

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/index.htm>

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

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 form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>,

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

Academic Accommodation:

It is the students' responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodations and have not registered with Student Accessibility Services, please contact them at 403-220-6019. Students who have not registered with Student

Accessibility Services are not eligible for formal academic accommodations. More information about academic accommodations can be found at www.ucalgary.ca/access.

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>;

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Arts Students’ Centre (ASC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at

ascarts@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at

<http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3rd Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Contact for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Contact for Students Ombudsman’s Office: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses (www.ucalgary.ca/usri). Your responses make a difference - please participate in USRI Surveys."

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar, (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>) "The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community". The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a "positive and productive learning and working environment." This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that "seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff". Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.