

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH 422.01

WINTER 2018

COURSE TITLE: Advanced Studies in Comics

Tues/Thurs 9:30 – 10:45, Room: MS 319

Instructor: Dr. Bart Beaty

Office: SS1138
Phone: 220-7246
E-mail: beaty@ucalgary.ca
Office hours: T 14:00 – 15:00

Course description: Prerequisite: 12 units of courses labelled English at 300 level or above. 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.

Texts and readings:

As this course will focus on comic books in the public domain, there is no required text book 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 15% each = 60% of final grade). Students will be responsible for completing the four projects listed below. Projects may be completed individually or in groups of any size. Please note, that projects completed as group work will be graded with higher expectations depending on the size of the group. If students plan to work as a group on a project, they must inform the instructor of this fact in advance. Written projects should be three to five pages, or, if in a format other than a written project (Powerpoint presentation, poster presentation, interpretive dance) should be of a length that is roughly analogous. Students will be presenting one of their four projects to the class, although all projects should be prepared as if they were to be shared with the class. Presentations will be held on the assigned due date.

A) The Random Comic (Due February 1, 2018): Students will be assigned a comic book from the What Were Comics? sampling frame at random by the random integer generator at random.org. Students will report on the formal elements of the work according to the criteria of the What Were Comics? coding protocols. The report should move on to identify degrees of standardization and

innovation within the comic book, proposing an argument as to which elements are the most relevant to understanding the importance of the randomly assigned work.

B) A Single Month (Due 15 February, 2018). Students will be randomly assigned a single month from a single year (1940-1952 inclusive) and required to read as many comic books from that month as are locatable online. Reports should consider the formal elements coded by *What Were Comics?* across the range of titles, but should also focus on the range of commonalities 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 Three Years (Due 8 March, 2018). Students will be assigned an ongoing comic book title and a random month and beginning year. They will then be asked to read the comic books from that title and month for every third year (stopping at 1960). Projects should focus on the formal elements coded by *What Were Comics?* and 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 20 March, 2018). 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.

Oral Presentation (10% of final mark). On each day that a project is due, one quarter of the class will present their findings – either as a series of solo presentations or as a group presentation. Each solo presenter will have five minutes, and groups will be expected to take longer however a group of ten need not use fifty minutes. Groups should discuss timing with the instructor in advance. Presenters wishing to use PowerPoint slides must email these to the instructor no later than 24 hours in advance. Students will be assessed on oral presentation skills including clarity, precision, timing, and the ability to respond to questions and class discussion.

Feedback on Oral Presentations (5% of final mark). After each set of oral presentations, non-presenters will submit short, high-quality feedback to the instructor outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation within 24 hours of the presentations. Comments should focus on ways that students might have improved their presentation, but should not be petty or focused on minor nit-picking. Write the kind of feedback that you would want to receive yourself.

Final Project (25% of final mark). Due 12 April, 2018. Students will produce a final project examining one or more comic books produced during the period. If the project is a written essay, it should be approximately ten pages in length. If the project takes another form, it should be of an analogous length. Final projects may be related to one or more of the earlier projects but need not

be. If the final project is related to an earlier group presentation, please discuss this proposal with the instructor who will consult with the group.

You are not required to complete every assignment in order to receive a passing grade.

Registrar-scheduled final exam. There will not be a registrar-scheduled final exam in this course.

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

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|-----------|----|-----|
| 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-5.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>

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: maboym@ucalgary.ca.

Find The English Pages research guide here:

https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject_id=52619

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>

Student Accommodations:

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

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.