**Office of undergraduate education**

**TCORE 114D: INTRODUCTION TO HUMANITIES (Winter 2015)**

**It’s Not Just Your Little Brother’s Comic Book:**

**Understanding the Graphic Narrative**

**M/W 1:30-3:35**

**WCG 103**

***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

Dr. Andrea Modarres

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Office: KEY 204

 253-692-5732

Office hours: M/W 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and by appointment

(Consider using the Canvas “Chat” feature as well)

The term “graphic narrative” can refer to texts as disparate as superhero stories, personal memoirs, war narratives, and dystopian novels. Despite its growing readership, the form is often regarded as simplistic and below the notice of “serious” readers and intellectuals. In this course, we will foreground the graphic text as a genre worth analyzing, asking what it offers us that other texts cannot. What ideas can authors explore by using image and text in conjunction with each other? How do readers interpret these conjoined images and words in ways that are similar to or different from their analysis of prose or illustration by themselves?

This course is an introduction to the humanities, academic disciplines that examine the human condition in part through the cultural, philosophical, and historical construction of values and artifacts. By considering the graphic text as a product of culture, as well as a literary and artistic practice, we can explore some of the ways words and images can be used together to communicate and construct meaning. We will consider how the terms “graphic novel” or “comic book” contribute to ideas about the genre, and supplement our primary readings with theoretical and critical analyses of the texts and of the concepts of popular and so-called “high” culture.

Through close reading of our primary texts, we will learn how authors and artists draw upon history and current social issues, and consider the ways in which analysis of popular culture contributes to the humanities as a discipline, taking into account issues of power and its relationship to knowledge and culture. Students will use critical reading, discussion, and written analysis to study how our increasing interaction with graphic material is shaping our experience of the world. The course will include lectures by the instructor and seminars involving whole-class discussions of assigned readings. Students should read the assigned texts and be prepared to have an informed participation in these discussions.

***STUDENT LEARNING GOALS***

The Core program emphasizes several areas of broad study, each with specific learning objectives; those related to this course are:

* *Inquiry and Critical Thinking* - collect, evaluate, and analyze information and resources to solve problems or answer questions; approach complex issues by taking a large question and breaking it down into manageable pieces; make meaningful connections among assignments and readings in order to develop a sense of the ‘big picture.’
* *Communication/Self-Expression* - formulate an original thesis driven argument and sustain it in both written and verbal communication; identify, analyze, and summarize/represent the key elements of a text; enter into an existing dialogue, such as an intellectual or political debate; express ideas clearly in writing and speaking in order to synthesize and evaluate information before presenting it.
* *Global Perspective – Diversity – Civic Engagement*- understand events and processes as ‘disciplinarily’ situated; interact with concepts, ideas, and processes related to the interdependences between personal, local, and global relationships; think outside of cultural norms and values, including personally-informed perspectives, to critically engage the larger world; interact with concepts, ideas, and processes related to civic engagement.

Learning objectives specific to this course include:

* Read analytically in the graphic text genre, as well as traditionally-written critical studies; analyze implications and artistic techniques, using specialized vocabulary.
* Write analytically and reflectively, using appropriate language and tone.
* Improve research skills, using primary sources and academic databases and adhering to MLA format and citation guidelines.
* Develop a deeper understanding of the ways writers and artists use text and image together to tell stories and present arguments.
* Strengthen an understanding of how reading and writing are related to analytical thinking, and the place of these skills in the humanities disciplines.

***TEXTS AND MATERIALS***

Please plan on consistent, reliable access to a computer with a word processing program, printer, and some kind of backup method, and to the class Canvas site, which will contain assignments, certain readings, and course materials (including the syllabus and schedule of assignments), many of which will be provided as Adobe (.pdf) files.

Abel, Jessica. *Life Sucks*. ISBN #1596431075

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home*. ISBN #0618871713

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics* ISBN #006097625X

Moore, Alan. *V for Vendetta*. ISBN #140120841X

Satrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis*. ISBN# 0375714839

You can buy or rent used copies of these books online or in the bookstore. When we are discussing a reading in class on a given day, you should have **HARD COPIES** with you.

If you wish to have an all-purpose writing handbook (not required), I recommend *Rules for Writers, 7th edition*, by Diana Hacker (ISBN #978-0-312-64736-0).



***ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION***

Your final course grade will be derived from essays, homework, and participation. The emphasis in this course on analysis and critical thinking will be reflected in the evaluation process. Grades will be calculated as follows:

Textual Analysis Essays (4 @ 15% each): 60%

Final Essay: 30%

Participation (in-class and homework): 10%

You will be required to submit essays to Turnitin using the class Canvas site, in part as a tool for learning some of the conventions of academic writing. For more information about the process, see <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/teaching-learning-technology/turnitin-students>.

***GRADING POLICIES***

* In general, late assignments, if accepted, will incur a 10% late penalty, and will be accepted up to one week past the due date.
* Essays will be due via Canvas before class on the appropriate due date. If you cannot upload your essay by the time class begins on the due date, you may bring a hard copy to class, but there will be a homework point penalty.
* **No in-class activities can be made up,** and I do not generally assign extra credit.
* Unless arranged ahead of time for very special circumstances ONLY, **I will accept NO work via email**.
* Students dissatisfied with their first 3 essay grades can rewrite them **under the following conditions only**: the essays must have been turned in on time; no plagiarized work can be rewritten or resubmitted; significant revisions (not just "proofreading" corrections) are required. **There is no guarantee** that revising an essay will improve its final grade, but the grade will never go lower as a result of revision. Revised essays must be accompanied by a cover page outlining all changes made and why, and will be due two weeks after the grades are released on Canvas.
* I strongly recommend that you take advantage of the help provided by UWT’s Teaching and Learning Center; please see more information at the end of this document.
* If you would like a hard copy of your final essay back after it is graded, you may arrange to pick it up next quarter. Do **NOT** plan to pick up any assignments in the IAS office.
* Per UWT policy, “a grade of Incomplete is given only when the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work until within two weeks of the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control.”
* The grading scale is shown below:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 100 | A | 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 99 | A | 4 | 89 | B+ | 3.4 | 79 | C+ | 2.4 | 69 | D+ | 1.4 |
| 98 | A | 4 | 88 | B+ | 3.3 | 78 | C+ | 2.3 | 68 | D+ | 1.3 |
| 97 | A | 3.9 | 87 | B+ | 3.2 | 77 | C+ | 2.2 | 67 | D+ | 1.2 |
| 96 | A | 3.9 | 86 | B | 3.1 | 76 | C | 2.1 | 66 | D | 1.1 |
| 95 | A | 3.9 | 85 | B | 3 | 75 | C | 2 | 65 | D | 1 |
| 94 | A | 3.9 | 84 | B | 2.9 | 74 | C | 1.9 | 64 | D | 0.9 |
| 93 | A | 3.8 | 83 | B- | 2.8 | 73 | C- | 1.8 | 63 | D- | 0.8 |
| 92 | A- | 3.7 | 82 | B- | 2.7 | 72 | C- | 1.7 | 62 | D- | 0.8 |
| 91 | A- | 3.6 | 81 | B- | 2.6 | 71 | C- | 1.6 | 61 | D- | 0.7 |
| 90 | A- | 3.5 | 80 | B- | 2.5 | 70 | C- | 1.5 | 60 | D- | 0.7 |
| 59 and lower = 0.0 |

* The UWT catalog defines plagiarism as the act of “using the creations, ideas or words of someone else without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references and the like.” I take cheating and plagiarism very seriously and will fail any work that has been plagiarized, copied, or “cut and pasted,” in full or in part, from another source. I may also report such behavior to the appropriate college authorities and, in certain cases of extreme or repeated academic dishonesty, assign a failing grade in the course. We will spend time in class learning how and when to appropriately document sources, and if you have any questions about how to avoid plagiarism, I am happy to help you outside of class.

Please see <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/uwt/sites/default/files/global/documents/14-15_uwt_catalog_policies.pdf> for information on the school’s academic and grading policies.

***CLASSROOM POLICIES***

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This course relies heavily on discussion and in-class work; missing excessive classes or arriving late on a regular basis will affect your grade negatively even if you turn in all required essays. Please do not make a habit of arriving to class after the scheduled start time, as it is extremely disruptive. If you think you will consistently have a problem arriving on time, you should strongly consider a different class schedule.

I expect all students to approach the class with a sense of commitment, responsibility, and respect for each other; if you are not serious about learning, you do yourself and everyone else in the class a disservice. Therefore, I expect all students to observe the following basic guidelines:

* Unless you have obtained prior permission from me, silence and put away all electronic devices for the duration of class. Please do not keep your cell phone anywhere visible to the rest of the class.
* In most cases, I do not allow students to use their computers in class except on days when the whole class is working on essay drafts.
* The educational process can only take place in an environment of reasoned discussion, intellectual honesty and respect for others. All students are expected to abide by the university’s Student Conduct Code, which you can find here: <http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SI/conduct_code.cfm>
* Any behavior considered disruptive or threatening will not be tolerated. We will treat each other with respect for diverse views and beliefs and refrain from any inappropriate remarks, either spoken or written. I will require you to leave the classroom if your activities are disruptive, distracting, or disrespectful to me or to your classmates.

If you ever have any questions or concerns about this course, please let me know in person or via email. Students should treat emails to instructors as professional writing: include a formal salutation of some sort, state the reason for emailing professionally and carefully, and always include full name and class section or time. I will answer as soon as I can, but please do not expect a response over the weekend, in the evenings, or very early in the morning.

***ADDITIONAL CAMPUS RESOURCES AND INFORMATION***

* The **Counseling Center** **(Student Health and Wellness - SHAW)** offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UW Tacoma students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students. To schedule an appointment, please call 253-692-4522 or stop by the Student Counseling Center (SCC), located in MAT 253. Additional information can also be found by visiting <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/counseling>
* **Disability Support Services** **(Student Health and Wellness - SHAW):** In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any enrolled student at UW Tacoma who has an appropriately documented physical, emotional, or mental disability that "substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working]," is eligible for services from Disability Support Services (DSS). If you are wondering if you may be eligible for accommodations on our campus, please contact the DSS reception desk at 692-4522, or visit <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/dss>
* The **Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)** offers free academic support for students at all levels. For writing, reading, learning strategies and public speaking needs, please make an appointment online at: [http://uwttlc.mywconline.com](http://uwttlc.mywconline.com/index.php) and see <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/teaching-learning-center> for more details. The TLC provides assistance with writing assignments, reading strategies and general study skills, through individual tutoring, online consultations, workshops, and more. Writing support is also available at the online writing center at: uwtwrite@uw.edu.
* The **UW Tacoma Library** provides resources and services to support students at all levels of expertise. Librarians can guide students through the research process, helping them learn how to develop effective research strategies and find and evaluate appropriate resources. For assistance or to schedule an appointment, visit the Reference Desk in the Library, email tacref@u.washington.edu or phone 253-692-4442. For more information about the Library and its services, see [www.tacoma.uw.edu/library](http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/library/)
* **Inclement Weather Policy:** Call 253-383-INFO or check the UW Tacoma homepage to determine whether campus operations have been suspended or delayed. If not, but driving conditions remain problematic, call the professor's office number or check Canvas. These resources should provide information on whether class will be held or not, and/or the status of pending assignments. If still unable to determine after taking the above steps whether a class(es) will be held, call the program office number. Information on inclement weather, including how to sign up for text alerts, can be found at <http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/security/alert/students.cfm>

* **Campus Safety Information: Escort Service:** Safety escorts are available Monday - Thursday 5 - 10:30 p.m. They can be reached either through the duty officer or by dialing #300 from a campus phone. **In case of a fire alarm:** Take your valuables and leave the building. Plan to return to class once the alarm has stopped. Do not return until you have received an all-clear from somebody "official," the web or email. **In case of an earthquake:** DROP, COVER, and HOLD. Once the shaking stops, take your valuables and leave the building. Do not plan to return for the rest of the day. Do not return to the building until you have received an all-clear from somebody "official," the web or email.

For more information: [Campus Safety's "What to do in an emergency" website](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/4534) or [SafeCampus website](http://www.washington.edu/safecampus/uwt/)

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| ***TENTATIVE* SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS (Subject to Revision)**All readings and assignments should be completed *before class* on the date listed.Be ready to discuss all readings and turn in all assignments at the beginning of class. |
|  | **READINGS/TOPICS**(be prepared for frequent reading quizzes) | **ASSIGNMENTS DUE** |
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| Mon. 1/5 | Intro and definitions |  |
| Weds. 1/7 | **Read** *V for Vendetta* pps 9-86  | Discussion questions (Group A) due in class |
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| Mon. 1/12 | **Read**  McCloud Chapters 1, 2, and 3 **AND**Martin, “Graphic Novels or Novel Graphics?” (find on Canvas) |  |
| Weds. 1/14 | **Read** *V for Vendetta* pps 89-179  **AND**McCloud Chapters 4, 5, and 6 | Discussion questions (Group B) due in class |
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| Mon. 1/19 | **NO SCHOOL - MLK DAY** |
| Weds. 1/21 | **Read**  *V for Vendetta* pps 182-288 **AND**Chute, “Comics as Literature?” (find on Canvas) | Discussion questions (Group C) due in class |
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| Mon. 1/26 | **Read** McCloud Chapters 7, 8, and 9 |  |
| Weds. 1/28 | **Read** Little, “Constructing the Reader’s Perspective in *V for Vendetta*” (find on Canvas) | *V for Vendetta* essay due on Canvas |
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| Mon. 2/2 | **Read** *Life Sucks* pps. 5-67 | Discussion questions (Group A) due in class |
| Weds. 2/4 | **Read** *Life Sucks* pps. 68-120 | Discussion questions (Group B) due in class |
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| Mon. 2/9 | **Read** *Life Sucks* pps. 121-186 | Discussion questions (Group C) due in class |
| Weds. 2/11 | Read supplemental articles (TBA) on Canvas | Article synopses and evaluation due on Canvas |
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| Mon. 2/9 | **Read** *Persepolis 1* | *Life Sucks* essay due on Canvas |
| Weds. 2/11 | **Read** *Persepolis 1* | Discussion questions (Group A) due in class |
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| Mon. 2/16 | **NO SCHOOL – PRESIDENTS’ DAY** |
| Weds. 2/18 | **Read** *Persepolis 2* | Discussion questions (Group B **AND** Group C) due in class |
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| Mon. 2/23 | **Read** *Persepolis* articles (TBA) on Canvas | Article synopses and evaluation due on Canvas |
| Weds. 2/25 | **Read** *Fun Home* Chapters 1 – 4 | Discussion questions (Group A) due in class*Persepolis* essay due on Canvas |
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|  | **READINGS/TOPICS**(be prepared for frequent reading quizzes) | **ASSIGNMENTS DUE** |
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| Mon. 3/02 | **Read** *Fun Home* Chapters 5 –7 | Discussion questions (Group B **AND** Group C) due in class |
| Weds. 3/04 | **Read** *Fun Home* articles (TBA) on Canvas | *Fun Home* essay due on Canvas |
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| Mon. 3/9 | Review for final essay | Thesis statement and outline due |
| Weds. 3/11 |  | Draft final essay due on Canvas **AND** bring 2 hard copies to class |