

TCORE 104: INTRODUCTION TO HUMANITIES (AUTUMN 2014) It's Not Just Your Little Brother's Comic Book: Understanding the Graphic Novel

M/W 1:30-3:35
JOY 106

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Office hours: T 10:30 – 1:30 and by
appointment

(Consider using the Canvas “Chat”
feature)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The term “graphic novel” 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?

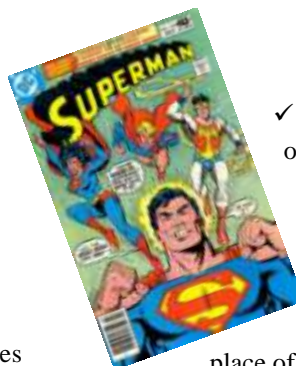
This course is an introduction to the humanities, academic disciplines that examine the human condition in part through the cultural, philosophical, and historical construction of values and artifacts. By considering the graphic text as a product of culture, as well as a literary and artistic practice, 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

- ✓ 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

Abel, Jessica. *Life Sucks*. ISBN #1596431075
Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home*. ISBN #0618871713
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.

You will also have assigned readings from Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* (ISBN 006097625X), which will be available on Canvas and on reserve in the library.

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.

If you wish to have an all-purpose writing handbook, 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, a midterm exam, 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:

Short Essays (4 @ 10% each):	40%
Midterm:	20%
Final Essay:	30%
Homework & Participation:	10%

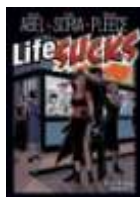
You will be required to submit essays to Turnitin using the class Canvas site, in part as a tool for learning some of the conventions of academic writing. For more information about the process, see <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/teaching-learning-technology/turnitin-students> and <http://turnitin.com/>.

GRADING POLICIES

- Late rough drafts of essays will incur a homework point penalty; if rough drafts of essays are not turned in at all, the essay grade will **also** be lowered by half a grade (5 points).
- Final drafts of essays submitted after the due date will lose a full grade (10 points) per class period (not per day); **no final drafts will be accepted more than one week late**.
- 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**.
- Your written work will be evaluated according to criteria that we will review in class; as a general rule, you should keep all graded work handed back to you until after final grades are filed. If there is a question about a grade, this will be your backup. Without proof, I will adhere to the grade (or lack thereof) recorded in my grade book.
- 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 OR provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your final draft. 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 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” (see [http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/enrollment-](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/enrollment-services/catalog)

[services/catalog](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/enrollment-services/catalog)). 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.



The grading scale is shown below:

100	A+	4									
99	A+	4	89	B+	3.4	79	C+	2.4	69	D+	1.4
98	A+	3.9	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	3.8	86	B	3.1	76	C	2.1	66	D	1.1
95	A	3.8	85	B	3	75	C	2	65	D	1
94	A	3.7	84	B	2.9	74	C	1.9	64	D	0.9
93	A	3.7	83	B	2.8	73	C	1.8	63	D	0.8
92	A-	3.6	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											

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Missing excessive classes or arriving late on a regular basis will affect your grade negatively even if you turn in all required assignments. 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.



Electronic devices (including, but not limited to, cell phones, tablets and laptops, or e-readers) may only be used in the classroom with the permission of the instructor. Activities that are not relevant to the course, such as checking/sending email, playing games and surfing the web, are considered disruptive activities when class is in session.

In most cases, students should not plan to use their computers in class except on days when the whole class is working on essay drafts. Please keep all computers closed during class discussions

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/SC/conduct_code.cfm

Any behavior considered disruptive or threatening will not be tolerated. The class atmosphere depends upon a basic foundation of respect for diverse views and beliefs; 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 try to answer within about 48 hours, not including the weekend or evenings. I may be online during those times, but you cannot count on it. I am here to help you all I can, but please remember that the final responsibility for your success as a student lies in your hands.



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> 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
- **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](#) or [SafeCampus website](#)

For a list of Core learning objectives, please see the Canvas website.

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	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
W 9-24	Intro and definitions	
M 9-29	Read <i>V for Vendetta</i> pps 9-86 AND Chapter 1 selections from McCloud (find on Canvas)	Discussion questions (Group A)
W 10-01	Read <i>V for Vendetta</i> pps 89-179 AND Chapter 3 selections from McCloud (find on Canvas)	Discussion questions (Group B)
M 10-6	Read <i>V for Vendetta</i> pps 182-288 AND Chapter 4 from McCloud (find on Canvas)	Discussion questions (Group C)
W 10-8	Read Little, “Constructing the Reader’s Perspective in <i>V for Vendetta</i> ” (find on Canvas)	Short essay on <i>VFV</i>
M 10-13	<i>V for Vendetta</i> film	Comparative paragraph
W 10-15	Read <i>Life Sucks</i> pps. 5-67	Discussion questions (Group A)
M 10-20	Read <i>Life Sucks</i> pps. 68-120	Discussion questions (Group B)
W 10-22	Read <i>Life Sucks</i> pps. 121-186	Discussion questions (Group C)
M 10-27	Read articles on Canvas (TBA)	Short essay on <i>Life Sucks</i>
W 10-29	Read <i>Persepolis 1</i>	Midterm Exam
M 11-03	Read <i>Persepolis 2</i>	Discussion questions (Group A)
W 11-05	Read <i>Safe Area Gorazde</i> Preface through – p. 119	Discussion questions (Group B)
M 11-10	Read <i>Safe Area Gorazde</i> pps. 120 – end	Discussion questions (Group C)
W 11-12	Read <i>Persepolis</i> articles on Canvas	Article synopses
M 11-17	Read <i>Fun Home</i> Chapters 1 – 3	Short essay on <i>Persepolis</i> OR <i>Safe Area Gorazde</i>
W 11-19	Read <i>Fun Home</i> Chapters 4 – 5	Discussion questions (Group A & half Group B)
M 11-24	Read <i>Fun Home</i> Chapters 6 – 7	Discussion questions (Group C & half Group B)
W 11-26	Read <i>Fun Home</i> articles on Canvas	Short essay on <i>Fun Home</i>
M 12-01	Mandatory conferences for Group A, half of Group B	Draft final essay
W 12-03	Mandatory conferences for Group C, half of Group B	Draft final essay

Final Essay due via Canvas on Monday, December 08, 2014, no later than 3:35 p.m.