**Section D: MWF 8:00-9:20am Joy 110**

**TCORE 124 Introduction to Humanities**



**Section B: MWF 9:30-10:50 am GWP 101**

**Professor Jacob Martens Email:** jacoma@uw.edu

**Cell:** **253-720-1768** I welcome calls or texts between 7am and 10 pm daily

**Office Hours:** 11:00-12:00 MWF & 12:20-1:30 MWF by apt. in BHS 105

*Not so Comic Anymore: Autobiographical Graphic Novels*

This course explores the graphic novel as a visual medium to magnify the power of language. Analyzes use of space, image, color, and text to tell autobiographical narratives. Stories relate to revolution, war, assimilation, and issues of identity.

**Some Big Questions we will address in this class:**

Why do we create art? What is art, anyway?

What is the human condition?

Why and how do images say more than words alone?

Why study the Humanities? What are the Humanities, anyway?

What is an education for?

**Required Course Materials: (in order that we’ll read them).**

**Please purchase your texts immediately.**

Scott McCloud’s *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* 9780060976255

Gene Luen Yang’s *American Born Chinese* 9780312384487

Marjane Satrapi’s *The Complete Persepolis* 9780375714832

Art Spiegelman’s *The Complete Maus* 9780679406419

Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home* 9780618871711

A spiral notebook and pen for in-class reflections and free writing activities

Sticky notes for making notes on the artwork and prepare your thoughts for writing

A ream of copy paper for printing out papers

A reliable computer and method to save files; regular access to a printer and Internet.

A smart phone or camera and the ability to turn photos into images embedded in your papers.

Access to Canvas uw.instructure.com which is an online classroom where you submit homework.

Get [Microsoft Word Download at no additional cost](https://itconnect.uw.edu/wares/uware/microsoft/microsoft-office-365-proplus/)—it is part of your Technology Fee

**Course Learning Goals**

* Read analytically in the graphic text genre; analyze implications and artistic techniques.
* Generate insights on the texts through class discussion
* Write analytically and reflectively, using appropriate language, tone, attention to the detail of text and image, and balancing summarizing with analysis to support literary arguments and analyses.
* Improve research skills, using primary sources and secondary sources and adhering to MLA format, source incorporation, and citation guidelines.
* Develop a deeper understanding of the rhetorical ways writers and artists use text and image together to tell stories and present arguments and messages.
* Strengthen an understanding of how reading and writing are related to analytical thinking, and the place of these skills in the humanities disciplines.
* Pursue a learning orientation rather than a grading orientation to assignments, a philosophy rooted in the arts and humanities, and in the practice of writing to learn and discover.
* edit and proofread texts according to the rhetorical demands of academic writing.

**CORE Learning Goals**

**Inquiry and Critical Thinking**

* inquiry & problem solving: collect, evaluate, and analyze information and resources to solve problems or answer questions.
* research methods & application: approach complex issues by taking a large question and breaking it down into manageable pieces.
* synthesis & context: make meaningful connections among assignments and readings in order to develop a sense of the ‘big picture.’

**Communication/Self-Expression**

* argumentation: formulate an original thesis-driven argument and sustain it in both written and verbal communication.
* analysis: identify, analyze, and summarize/represent the key elements of a text.
* disciplinary awareness: enter/place themselves into an existing dialogue (intellectual, political, etc.).
* expression of ideas: express ideas clearly in writing and speaking in order to synthesize and evaluate information before presenting it.

**Global Perspective-Diversity-Civic Engagement**

* disciplinary perspective: understand events and processes as ‘disciplinarily’ situated.
* global perspective: interact with concepts, ideas, and processes related to the interdependences between personal, local, and global relationships.
* diversity: think outside of cultural norms and values, including their own perspectives, to critically engage the larger world.
* civic engagement: interact with concepts, ideas, and processes related to civic engagement.

**Creating space conducive to civic engagement and positive learning environment**

At times, you may be out of your comfort zone as we discus complex issues that may be very personal issues or potential triggers for people. I expect students to operate in a space of mutual respect regarding differences in class, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, national origin, political affiliation, or any other dimension of diversity. Here are a few ground rules to keep in mind:

* Allow room for mistakes. Sometimes people learn from what they say, especially if it is wrong or wrongly received.
* Pause, listen, and reflect. Restate what you have heard another person say. You may help the speaker think about intent and impact, and give the speaker opportunities for clarifications. Ask clarifying questions.
* Share time and space. There should be only one speaker at a time. Raise your hand. Sometimes, you may not be called on if you are always the one with something to say. Invite quiet people to join the discussion.
* Be aware of intent and impact. Consider one of the impacts as how people see you and all that you represent.
* Replace judgment with curiosity. For example, rather than dismiss someone is a bigot, find out the reasons and evidence why they hold these beliefs.
* Engage from a place of compassion. Learning about new cultures and beliefs can be for the sake of learning to be compassionate with different people with different world views. This is a classroom, a place for learning to interact with difference. Look for opportunities to learn and grow.
* Challenge ideas not people. Sit with discomfort when people are expressing ideas you disagree with, knowing that discomfort is the root of growth and learning.

People affecting the civil discourse of the class (or simply being disruptive in any way), may be asked politely to leave the class for the day, with possible followed up with a conversation with the instructor and/or Ed Mureki, Dean of Student Engagement. According to WAC 478-120-020, section (3)(b): "An instructor has the authority to exclude a student from any class session in which the student is disorderly or disruptive."

**Participation norms**

**What I should expect from students**: Because this is a discussion-based class in which learning, preparing for writing, and working with others becomes a way to meet the learning goals, I expect you to arrive on time having completed your homework and printed out or submitted to Canvas any papers necessary for class according to schedule. You should be ready to engage in and participate in lively small and large class discussions about the readings and the assignments, and this also means that you have brought with you the textbooks from which the homework was assigned. If your books are digital (not recommended but understandable due to savings), I expect that you are only using phones or laptops for activities related to this class. I can tell when you are engaged in side conversations or distracted by other online activities, which is disruptive to me, and disrespectful in so many ways to me and your colleagues. Students not meeting these expectations will be warned of their disruptive behavior, followed by repercussions negatively affecting their participation grades.

**What you should expect from me:** You can expect me to arrive to class on time prepared to facilitate class for the entire class period. I will organize class activities with course and CORE program learning goals, and I will attempt to engage all students through a variety of channels, even if that means getting you out of your comfort zone. As far as feedback on Reading Responses and low stakes assignments, I may not provide written feedback, especially during times when I am focusing on providing feedback on high stakes essays, which I hope to have returned within seven days. In hopes of fostering a learning orientation rather than a grading orientation, which I explain in the next section, I will not ascribe a letter or number grades to any of your writing assignments; rather, your feedback will be written and posted in Canvas and on paper (in the case of major essay), from which you can determine what’s working well or what’s needing revised, if anything, to be satisfactory. You should also expect me to be available to answer questions about this class, your grade, and any concerns you have. I have office hours and contact information at the top of this syllabus, and I would also be happy to chat through social media like Facebook if that is more convenient for you. I will always try to reply to messages or emails to me within 24 hours of receiving it. If you don’t hear from me by then, please resend your message in case I didn’t receive it the first time.

**Learning-focused grading policy**

In Alfie Kohn’s 2011 article “The Case Against Grades,” he shows that when students from elementary school to college are focused on grades, it distracts from their focus on learning. He also shows that when grades are posted online, it further refocuses that anxiety over grades. Research from my own scholarship and practice has reaffirmed Kohn’s claims. In Kohn’s 1999 article, “From Degrading to De-grading,” Kohn discusses strategies for removing grades from papers. I am designing the course grading system around his research. I welcome you to this experiment and I hope you can remain focused on learning, which we will find just happens to be in the spirit of the humanities anyway, and less on grades. Because I must come up with a final course grade, however, I am giving you the following descriptions of work you will produce for the final course grade.

Although we are using Canvas to turn in assignments, I will not be posting grades on any assignments. I will be keeping track of grades and participation on separate spreadsheet. If at any time you would like to know your grade in the class, please make an appointment with me. In Canvas, I will be providing written comments on essays and many of the Reading Responses. I will comment on what’s going well with the writing and make suggestions for improvements. Some improvements and revisions on major essays may be necessary for an essay to be considered complete, so please read peers comments, the assignment, the rubric, and my comments carefully to make sure your work is continually satisfactory. **Papers deemed in need of revision have one chance to be revised**, **due within seven days of receiving my feedback.**

**How final course grades will be determined:** (I reserve the right to assign +/- grades as necessary and depending on grades that do not fit neatly into any one of these categories)

**A. (4.0)** Complete three essays satisfactorily. Do a final project, and all Reading Responses satisfactorily. Drop no more than two Reading Responses.\* Have no more than two late submissions\*\* of any assignments. Actively participate and miss no more than 3 classes.

**B. (3.0)** Write all three essays, but complete two out of three essays satisfactorily. Do a final project and all Reading Responses satisfactorily. Drop no more than three Reading Responses.\* Have no more than three late submissions\*\* of any assignments. Actively participate and miss no more than 5 classes.

**C. (2.0)** Write all three essays, but complete one out of three essays satisfactorily. Do a final project and all Reading Responses satisfactorily. Drop no more than four Reading Responses.\* Have no more than four late submissions\*\* of any assignments. Actively participate and miss no more than 7 classes.

**D (1.0)** Write all three essays, but complete zero out of three essays satisfactorily. Do a final project and most Reading Responses satisfactorily. Drop no more than five Reading Responses.\* Have no more than five late submissions\*\* of any assignments. Irregularly participate and miss no more than 9 classes.

**F (0.0)** Fail to complete course requirements as listed above. Intentional, deceptive plagiarized paper without completing a successful and correctly cited rewrite.

\*You still need to complete the reading in order to complete other assignments. See Caveat on next page.

\*\*Submissions are considered late if marked late by Canvas, without excuse. **Late major essays must be submitted within 48 hours of the due date/time or automatically forfeit as an unsatisfactory essay.**

**Caveat:** Since you are allowed a certain number of allowances (missed classes, late submissions, or dropped RR assignments) please save these for true emergencies. There may be a benefit associated with NOT using all of your allowances. If you have further extenuating circumstances, please consult with me.

If you would like to read more about Kohn’s research and my rationale for setting up the grading like this, here are links to the two articles (<https://www.alfiekohn.org/article/case-grades/>) (<https://www.alfiekohn.org/article/degrading-de-grading/>). Ultimately, I hope you can enjoy focusing on the learning.

**Plagiarism & Academic Honesty**

[**http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/38211**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/38211)

A major part of your experience at UW Tacoma will be reading, synthesizing, and using the knowledge and ideas of others. To plagiarize is to use the ideas––or unique phrasing of those ideas––without acknowledging that they originate from someone or someplace other than you. Attributing where you get your information builds your own authority to speak on that topic and provides valuable backing to the arguments you make. Attribution also distinguishes your ideas and words from those of others who came before you. At the University of Washington, plagiarism is a violation of the student conduct code, and the consequences can be serious. Initial cases of plagiarism, whether intentional or accidental, will be approached as learning opportunities for re-writing the paper and learning from the mistake. Intentional, deceptive plagiarism such as using an essay off of the Internet, even if you change some of the wording, especially for the final project when we are out of revision time, will result in a 0.0 in the class along with referral to the University for support.

Though citing, quoting, and paraphrasing can be confusing at first, it is essential for your success at UWT that you familiarize yourself with these important conventions of academic writing. Additionally, plagiarism can be understood differently in various disciplines. For instance, the ways in which one summarizes others’ ideas in texts, or attributes information from texts in one’s own paper, are not the same in the sciences as they are in the humanities, or the social sciences. This means it is vital that you understand the specific expectations and guidelines for writing that will help you avoid plagiarizing in this class. If you have questions about what amounts to plagiarism, you are strongly encouraged to seek guidance from faculty and the Teaching and Learning Center as soon as possible.

[**Incomplete**](http://www.washington.edu/students/gencat/front/Grading_Sys.html#I)

An 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. Please see me or contact me immediately at 253-720-1768 if this is the case so that we can make arrangements for an I grade rather than a 0.0 grade.

[**Disability Support Services (Office of Student Success)**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss_about.cfm.html) **-** The University of Washington Tacoma is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs accessible to students with disabilities. Disability Support Services (DSS), located in MAT 354, functions as the focal point for coordination of services for students with disabilities. If you have a physical, emotional, or mental disability that "substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working]," and will require accommodation in this class, please contact DSS at 253-692-4508, email at [dssuwt@uw.edu](mailto:dssuwt@uw.edu), [uwtshaw@uw.edu](mailto:uwtshaw@uw.edu) or visit [tacoma.uw.edu/dss](http://tacoma.uw.edu/dss) or [http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss\_about.cfm.html for assistance.](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss_about.cfm.html%20for%20assistance.)

[Counseling Center (Office of Student Success)](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/scc_about.cfm.html) –Stress due to juggling work, family, friends, and school can get the better of any of us, especially if we feel overwhelmed or face hardships like abuse, loss, or depression. Free, confidential counselors are available to help students. To schedule an appointment, please call 253-692-4522, email [uwtshaw@uw.edu](mailto:uwtshaw@uw.edu), or stop by the Student Counseling Center (SCC), located in MAT 354. For more information, visit [www.tacoma.uw.edu/counseling](http://tacoma.uw.edu/counseling).

[**The Pantry**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/thepantry) provides supplemental, nutritional, and culturally relevant food as well as hygiene items to all UWT students and their families. For more information, visit [tacoma.uw.edu/thepantry](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/thepantry)

**Course Schedule.** Always bring the book/essay we are discussing in class. Items on the calendar are due the day scheduled. RR= Reading response, which entails a written reflection on the reading

| **week** | **Monday** | **Wednesday** | **Friday** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| W1 | March 26  Introductions to the syllabus | March 28  **RR1**: Understanding Comics Ch. 1(1-23) due. Write a response. | March 30  **RR2:** Understanding Comics Ch. 2 (24-59) due |
| W 2 | April 2  **RR3**: American Born Chinese through page 106 | April 4  **RR4**: American-Born Chinese 107 through 233 | April 6  In-class workshop for getting started on paper 1. |
| W3 | April 9  **Paper 1 due; bring two copies of your final draft to class for peer review**  Bring American Born Chinese and Persepolis | April 11 **RR5:** Two letters due, one for each peer. Bring a copy of each and post a copy in Canvas.  **Post your final draft of paper 1 in Canvas by 6am Thursday, 4/12.**  Bring Persepolis to class | April 13  **RR6**: Persepolis Intro - 153 due |
| W 4 | April 16  **RR7**: Persepolis 155-end | April 18  **RR8:** Understanding Comics Ch. 3 (60-93) | April 20  **RR9:** Understanding Comics Chs. 4 and 5 (94-137) |
| W5 | April 23 **Paper 2 due; bring two copies of your final draft to class for peer review**  Bring Persepolis and Maus | April 25 **RR10**: Two letters due, one for each peer. Bring a copy of each and post a copy in Canvas.  **Post your final draft of paper 1 in Canvas by 6am Thursday, 4/26.**  Bring Maus to class | April 27  **RR11:** Maus 1-71 |
| W 6 | April 30  **RR12:** Maus 73-161 | May 2  **RR13:** Maus 164-234 | May 4  **RR14:** Maus 235-to end |
| W7 | May 7  **Paper 3 due; bring two copies of your final draft to class for peer review**  **Bring Maus** | May 9 **RR15:** Two letters due, one for each peer. Bring a copy of each and post a copy in Canvas.  **Post your final draft of paper 3 in Canvas by 6am Thursday, 5/10.**  **Bring Maus and Undrstd Comics** | May 11  **RR16:** Understanding Comics Ch. 6 (138-161) |
| W 8 | May 14  **RR17:** Understanding Comics Ch. 7 (162-184) | May 16 **RR18:** Understanding Comics Ch. 8 and Ch. 9 (185  Bring Fun Home | May 18  **RR19:** Fun Home 1-54 Assign final project |
| W 9 | May 21  **RR20:** Fun Home 55-120 | May 23  **RR 21:** Fun Home 123-end | May 25 In class workshop: final project |
| W 10 | May 28 Memorial Day. No Class | May 30 **Final projects due**  Celebration and presentations of final creative projects | June 1 Celebration and presentations of final creative projects continued |
|  | No final for this class or final meeting. Optional conferences during finals week available. | | |

**How to do a Reading Response (and why do them)**

Reading responses are a way to think about what you have read, and they help prepare you for writing your major papers. They are also almost daily practice for the kind of writing you need to do when you analyze sources in your major essay. To begin, review these prompts in the syllabus and begin thinking about which prompt you will address. Some readings will lend themselves better to specific prompts. Then enjoy reading the assigned section. As you read the comics, keep track of your thoughts. If there is something especially thought-provoking, make an annotation in the text, or slap a sticky note on the page and capture that thought for when you return to do the Reading Response. When you finish reading, get started on your response. Each response should be at least between 200-300 words, but you can go longer.

Getting the response started is easy if you make a habit of introducing a brief summary the main idea of the reading and what you have to say about it. Don’t assume readers know what reading it is that you are responding to—tell readers. For example, in chapter 2 of Scott McCloud’s Understanding Comics, [next would come the main idea you are focusing on as a paraphrase or summary]. You would also describe the text, what’s going on in that section of the text, and what you have to say about it [your analysis]. This should include a direct quote of the text and a page number. The introduction and direct quote should help to address the prompt you set out to answer. Finally, use your smart phone to include a photograph of a particularly pithy section of comics that relates to your analysis. Lastly, be sure to cite outside sources and images like I have here in the image to the right:

Figure 1: Kitler (Spiegelman 139)

**RR Prompts for *Understanding Comics***

Please use each prompt only once, in any order. Fill in the bullet once you have written on that prompt. **Refer to the prompt number in your forum posts.**

* **Prompt 1**. Scott McCloud often explains art of comics alongside other art forms or mediums, such as in the bottom left panel on page 6. Considering that this class is called Introduction to Humanities, I’d like you to have a good understanding of the humanities. So Google “the humanities” to find out more about them and relate what you find about why study the humanities to whatever point McCloud is making about studying comics. Be sure to cite your source and include a work cited page.
* **Prompt 2.** McCloud’s comics have a kind of playfulness to them. Analyze a specific example of this playfulness. How is he playful? What is he accomplishing? Why is this significant? What’s the bigger take away?
* **Prompt 3.** McCloud often drops a name of someone special to exemplify the point he is making. Do outside research on the person and find out more. How does what you find further relate to McCloud’s point. Cite your source and include a work cited page.
* **Prompt 4.** McCloud often makes philosophical comments about art, image, language, communication, or what it means to be human. Meditate on what he’s writing about. How do you see this philosophy at work in your own life, your own practices in the humanities, or the life of someone you know?
* **Prompt 5**. Paraphrase one of McCloud’s theory about comics—the way they work, the different mechanisms—and then find that theory at work in American Born Chinese, Persepolis, Maus, or Fun Home, and explain how it is working in that story. Be sure to cite the page references for both the Understanding Comics and the other comic text as well.
* **Prompt 6.** McCloud calls comics “the invisible art” as a subtitle to his book. Do you like what you are reading about comics or cartoons? What are you reading, and why do you like it? How might it fit into what he means by “invisible art”?
* **Prompt 7**. Visual rhetoric is a powerful form of communication. Locate an example of McCloud’s theorizing that benefits greatly from being told in a visual medium. Describe what effect it would have if was only told in words. How is McCloud able to establish his ethos, also known as his credibility? How does he use visuals to make an appeal to logic? And finally, how does his imagery and text appeal to readers’ emotions?

**Reading Response Prompts for *American Born Chinese, Persepolis, Maus,* and *Fun Home***

* **Prompt 8.** Some of our reading is told from the view of a child witnessing traumatic events. How does the author’s artwork depict firsthand trauma through her or his eyes as a child? What, in effect, is the author demanding of the reader? Why?
* **Prompt 9.** More of our reading is second generation witness of trauma, such as a parent telling the child narrator about traumatic events. How are the child’s and readers’ imaginations left to process that trauma? How does the artwork help interpret the second-generation trauma?
* **Prompt 10.** Describe a transformation in identity that you find particularly significant?
* **Prompt 11.** Many of these stories provide allusions that give religious, philosophical, historical, political, or literary insights to the character or family environment. Look up an allusion and do outside research. Then explain what you found out and how this new information increases your understanding of the text or the character’s worldview.
* **Prompt 12.** Writing and telling stories allows us to experience and empathize with others’ hardships. Explain a section of text where you feel empathy. Analyze why you are able to connect. Is it the use of words, comics, or something else? Explain.
* **Prompt 13.** There is a sense of timelessness in family relationships, meaning family is universally important. Pick a two-member relationship you find particularly interesting and analyze something about what makes it tick, what’s tearing it apart, or any other observations you would like to make.
* **Prompt 14.** Flying Monkey god and talking mice! The common thread between all these readings is that they are autobiographical, which suggests the stories are nonfiction. How do you reconcile the author’s decision to include fantastical elements in a true story, and to what effect?
* **Prompt 15.** Analyze how masking is being used in the story by a single character. What are the character’s motivations for masking? Do you support the characters’ actions? Why or why not?
* **Prompt 16.** Summarize a section that reveals important personal information about the author’s life, and then do outside research on the author’s life to see if you can find more information about this time in the author’s life. What does your discovery add to the story. This could include videos, interviews, etc. Cite your source(s) and include a work cited page.
* **Prompt 17.** A common theme for these stories is that they are coming of age stories, and the character rebels against his or her parents, or others. Argue how or if the character is being moral or justified in his or her rebellion, and what does that say about the parents or the character?
* **Prompt 18.** Adichie’s TED talk “TheDanger of a single story” warns against using one story to become representative of all stories for that people group. Identify which aspect of the story you are analyzing and what the dangers are of seeing that aspect as the only story.
* **Prompt A (optional).** Freewrite a response, make your own prompt, or repeat one of the above.

**The COIL initiative.** The COIL initiative seeks to provide study abroad-like experiences in First Year classes without the cost. There is a limited volunteer opportunity for students in this class to partner one-on-one with students studying English at the Universidad Veracruzana in Coatzacoalcos, Mexico. If you are interested in Study Abroad, this COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) opportunity may be for you. Because this is voluntary (and free), the benefits may be feeling like a good person helping another person study, and coincidently, having another audience will most likely help improve your writing for this class. The tasks involve creating short videos or having online/social media contact with your partner, essentially explaining your Reading Responses and papers, and seeing where the conversations take you. During the week of 4/2, I will be working to set teams. Are you in?