



EL CAMINO COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Approved

GENERALCOURSE INFORMATION

Subject: ENGL
Course Number: 90
Descriptive Title: Comics as Literature
Course Disciplines: English
Division: Humanities
Department: English

Catalog Description:

In this course, students will read, learn, and critique how the medium of comics (including graphic novels) works and what the various mechanics of the literary medium are, such as panel design, lettering, gutters, and speech bubbles. Students will read and critique a variety of representative comics from various time periods, cultures, and genres. In addition, the class will explore character, plot, dialogue, setting and other storytelling elements using various literary lenses such as New Criticism, deconstruction, Feminism, and other perspectives to analyze the texts created by comics, graphic novel, graphic memoir, and graphic non-fiction writers and illustrators.

Conditions of Enrollment:

Prerequisite: English 1 or eligibility for English 1A or qualification by appropriate assessment

Course Length: Full Term

Hours Lecture (per week): 3
Hours Laboratory (per week): 0
Outside Study Hours: 6
Total Hours: 54

Course Units: 3

Grading Method: Letter Grade only
Credit Status: Credit, degree applicable

Transfer CSU:

Yes X **Effective Date: 01/19/2021**
No **Effective Date**

General Education

ECC: Area 3 - Humanities

Term: **Other:**

CSU GE:

Term: **Other:**

IGETC:

Term: **Other:**

OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

A. Student Learning Outcomes SLOs (The course student learning outcomes are listed below. Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO #1 Social & Literary Issues

Evaluate works of comics in terms of their significance to broader social and/or literary issues.

SLO #2 Theme, Genre, & Period

Evaluate works of comics as they relate to a particular theme, genre, or period of comics production.

SLO #3 Comics Elements

Demonstrate an ability to analyze basic elements of comics literature such as lettering, panels, gutters, and speech bubbles denoting dialogue, thought, and narration.

B. Course Objectives (The major learning objectives for this course are listed below.) Course Objectives:

1. Evaluate works of comics in broader social and literary contexts.
2. Identify and define major elements of the medium of comics.
3. Analyze the basic techniques used to create comics narratives.
4. Identify major elements that characterize works of comics created within a given time period, genre, or theme or across a given time period.
5. Compose comparative analyses of multiple works of comics within a given genre, period, or from different periods.
6. Evaluate works of comics to assess the strengths and weaknesses of particular works of comics.

OUTLINE OF SUBJECT MATTER

(Topics should be detailed enough to enable an instructor to determine the major areas that should be covered to ensure consistency from instructor to instructor and semester to semester.)

Major Topics:

I. The Craft of Comics (6 hours, lecture)

- A. Core Elements
 - 1. Panel composition, borders
 - 2. Titles, covers
 - 3. Gutters
 - 4. Still images
 - 5. Juxtaposition of image and text

- B. Elements of Comics Creation
 - 1. Penciling
 - 2. Inking
 - 3. Coloring
 - 4. Lettering

II. Comics and Visual Style (2 hours, lecture)

- A. Illustration Style
 - 1. Simple, abstract
 - 2. Rough, sketched
 - 3. Sleek, sophisticated, more photorealistic

III. History of Comics: Foundations in Other Visual Arts (4 hours, lecture)

- 1. Cave paintingsTapestry
- 2. Murals
- 3. Illuminated texts
- 4. Advertising

IV. History of Comics: Comics in the 20th and 21st Centuries (4 hours, lecture)

- 1. Comics strips, “funnies”
- 2. Comic books, “floppies”
- 3. Genre proliferation
- 4. Wertham, comics scare, & Comics Code Authority
- 5. Underground comix
- 6. European internal comics & role in US comics
- 7. Manga
- 8. Postmodern & deconstructionist comics
- 9. Contemporary & mainstreaming of comics

V. Major Themes: Heroes & Villains (4 hours, lecture)

- A. Superheroes as a universal social good
- B. Superheroes as a questionable social good
- C. Myth & religions’ melding

VI. Major Themes: Reality & Fantasy (6 hours, lecture)

- A. Absurdities of war
- B. Science, fantasy, and fact
- C. Complexities of the criminal world
- D. History processed visually and through use of metaphor

VII. Comparative Analysis of the Hero Across Texts and Period (6 hours, lecture)

- 1. Evolution of the hero and superhero
- 2. Hero as a reflection of its period
- 3. Hero as a critique of its period or previous heroes
- 4. Deconstruction of the hero and superhero

VII. Comparative Analysis of Conventions and Disruptions in Other Genre (fantasy, crime, science fiction) Comics (6 hours, lecture)

- 1. Establishment of genre conventions, dynamics
- 2. Use of genre metaphor to critique reality-based, moral, or philosophical problems
- 3. Use of genre metaphor to critique the genre itself

IX. Comparative Analysis of Personal and Social Conflict in Comics (6 hours, lecture)

- 1. The graphic memoir and politics (personal and/or global)
- 2. Graphic novel and/or memoir as historical document or argument

X. Critical Theory Lenses and Analysis Frameworks (5 hours, lecture)

- A. Critical Race Theory
- B. Deconstruction
- C. Feminism
- D. Psychoanalytical
- E. Queer
- F. Post-Colonial
- G. New Criticism

XI. Application of Critical Theory and Analysis (5 hours, lecture)

- A. Literary comics texts
- B. Comics strips
- C. Trade paperbacks
- D. Graphic novels, graphic memoirs, and/or graphic non-fiction

Total Lecture Hours: 54

Total Laboratory Hours: 0

Total Hours: 54

PRIMARY METHOD OF EVALUATION AND SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

A. Primary Method of Evaluation (choose one):

Evaluation 1) Substantial writing assignments

B. Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation

In a three- to five-page written essay, evaluate the use of black and white images and the cat/mouse metaphor in Art Spiegelman's *Maus*.

C. College-level Critical Thinking Assignments

Critical Thinking Assignment 1:

In a five- to six-page written essay, analyze the portrayal of familial and political conflict in Vaughan and Staples' *Saga* and discuss how one type of conflict is a comment on the other.

Critical Thinking Assignment 2:

In a six- to eight-page written essay, analyze two characters in *Watchmen* and discuss how their actions represent a deconstruction of superheroes and the superhero genre within comics.

D. Other Typical Assessment and Evaluation Methods

Completion

Essay Exams

Matching Items

Multiple Choice

Reading Reports

Term or Other Papers

True/False

Written Homework Quizzes

If Other:

Note: In compliance with Board Policies 1600 and 3410, Title 5 California Code of Regulations, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Sections 504 and 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, instruction delivery shall provide access, full inclusion, and effective communication for students with disabilities.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Discussion

Lecture Multimedia presentations

If other:

WORK OUTSIDE OF CLASS

Journal (done on a continuing basis throughout the semester)

Required reading

Study

Written work (such as essay/composition/report/analysis/research)

If Other:

TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- A. Up-to-date Representative Textbooks: (Please use the following format: Author, Title, Edition, Publisher, Year. If you wish to list a text that is more than 5 years old, please annotate it as a “discipline standard”.)**

Chute, Hillary. *Why Comics?: From Underground to Everywhere*. Harper, 2017.

Duncan, Randy, Matthew Smith and Paul Levitz. *The Power of Comics: History, Form, and Culture*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. (Discipline Standard)

Eisner, Will. *Comics and Sequential Art*. WW Norton Company, 2008. (Discipline Standard)

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. HarperCollins Publishers, 1994. (Discipline Standard)

- B. Alternative Textbooks: (Please use the following format: Author, Title, Edition, Publisher, Year. If you wish to list a text that is more than 5 years old, please annotate it as a “discipline standard”.)**

A variety of contemporary texts and articles will be brought in as this field of study is relatively new in postsecondary academic and research institutions. Possible examples of alternative texts include:

Duncan, Randy, Matthew Smith. *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*. First edition. Routledge, 2011. (Discipline Standard.)

Yockey, Matt. *Make Ours Marvel: Media Convergence and a Comics Universe*. First edition. University of Texas Press, 2017. (Discipline Standard.)

- C. Required Supplementary Readings**

Fingeroth, Danny. *Superman on The Couch: What Superheroes Really Tell Us about Ourselves and Our Society*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2004. (Discipline Standard.)

Sabin, Roger. *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels: A History Of Comic Art*. Phaidon Press, 2001. (Discipline Standard.)

- D. Other Required Materials**

Selected novels and collections such as:

Watchmen by Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons

Saga by Brian K Vaughan and Fiona Staples

The Wicked + The Divine by Kieron Gillen and Jamie McKelvie

Maus by Art Spiegelman

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi

March by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell

They Called Us Enemy by George Takei, Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott, and Harmony Becker

Superman: Red Son by Mark Millar et al

Fables: The Good Prince by Bill Willingham and Mark Buckingham

Sandman: Brief Lives by Neil Gaiman et al

My Friend Dahmer by Derf Backderf

Fun Home by Alison Bechdel

A Contract with God and other stories by Will Eisner

Calvin and Hobbes: Lazy Sunday Book by Bill Watterson

Criminal: Coward by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips

Pride of Baghdad by Brian K Vaughan and Niko Henrichon

CONDITIONS OF ENROLLMENT

- A. Requisites (Course Prerequisites and Corequisites) Skills needed without which a student would be highly unlikely to succeed.**

Requisite: Prerequisite

Category: sequential

Requisite course: English 1

Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).

Students need well-developed reading skills in order to understand and interpret information in their textbooks and writing skills to develop essays and projects.

ENGL 1- Summarize, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize college-level texts.

ENGL 1 -Write a well-reasoned, well-supported expository essay that demonstrates application of the academic writing process.

- B. Requisite: (Non-Course Prerequisite and Corequisites) Skills needed without which a student would be highly unlikely to succeed.**

Requisite: Eligibility for English 1A or qualification by appropriate assessment

Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s). if applicable

This course involves reading college level textbooks, developing projects, and answering essay questions. A student's success in this class will be enhanced if they have these skills.

Summarize, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize college-level texts.

Write a well-reasoned, well-supported expository essay that demonstrates application of the academic writing process.

C. Recommended Preparations (Course) (Skills with which a student's ability to succeed will be strongly enhanced.)

Requisite course:

Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objectives under each skill(s).

D. Recommended Preparation (Non-Course) (Skills with which a student's ability to succeed will be strongly enhanced.)

Requisite:

Requisite and Matchingskill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s). if applicable

E. Enrollment Limitations

Enrollment Limitations and Category:

Enrollment Limitations Impact:

Course Created by: Kevin Degan, Matthew Cheung, Stephanie Burnham, Chris Page, and Chris Glover

Date: 11/10/2020

Board Approval Date: 01/19/2021

Last Board Approval Date:

Last Reviewed and/or Revised by:

Date: