



Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani
Hyderabad Campus

FIRST SEMESTER 2022-2023

Course Handout Part II

Date: 24-08-2022

In addition to Part-I (General Handout for all courses appended to the timetable) this portion gives further specific details regarding the course.

Course No. : HSS F250
Course Title : Comics and Visual Culture
Instructor-in-Charge : Anhiti Patnaik

Course Description:

A historical and cultural examination of popular visual culture; case studies from comic books, manga, graphic novels, memes, and caricatures; transnational approach spanning India, Japan, and America; visual methodologies; critical theory on culture industry, political satire, patriarchy, and public morality; intersections of class, caste, gender, and racial violence in visual media.

Course Objectives:

1. Interpret comic books and graphic novels using visual methodologies.
2. Distinguish between genres and types of graphic storytelling.
3. Learn how popular culture and public morality are produced by popular media.
4. Evaluate critical theories of ideology, class, caste, race, and gender politics.

Learning Outcomes:

On the successful completion of the course and its requirements, students will be well-versed in visual methodologies, Critical Theory, and contemporary debates on mass culture and ideology with respect to class, caste, race, and gender politics.

Textbook:

(TB) Smith, Matthew J., Paul Levitz, and Randy Duncan. *The Power of Comics: History, Form, and Culture*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

Reference Books:

(RB 1) Rose, Gillian. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials* (4th. Ed.). New Delhi and London: Sage Publications, 2016

(RB 2) McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. Harper Collins, 1994.

Online copies of the textbook and reference books will be provided and purchasing physical copy is not mandatory for this course



Group Discussion Material:

Tezuka, Osamu. *Buddha: Vol II. The Four Encounters*

Ito, Junji. *Tomie: Basement*

Vyam, Durgabai and Subash. *Bhimayana*

Patil, Amruta. *Kari*

Hergé. *The Adventures of Tintin: Reporter for “Le Petit Vingtième in the Congo”*

Gaiman, Neil. *The Sandman: Calliope*

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: My Father Bleeds History*

Moore, Alan. *Batman: The Killing Joke*

Online copies of these texts will be provided for group discussions. They will be evaluated only as part of the Assignment component.

Course Outline:

The course will be taught in four modules based on the learning objectives:

MODULE 1: Methods:

1. Spatial versus semantic language of comics
2. Compositional Interpretation
3. Semiological Method

MODULE 2: Genres:

1. Superheroes
2. Satire
3. Horror and Fantasy
4. Cartoons
5. Graphic Novel

MODULE 3: Ideology:

1. Mass culture and mythology
2. Mass culture and morality
3. Dominant and Emergent culture
4. Gender and Queer politics



Course Plan:

Lecture	Learning Objectives	Topics	Chapter Section
1-6	Defining Visual Culture and types of graphic storytelling	Introduction to key concepts and thinkers, problems, methodology	RB 1
7-12	Difference of Genres	Comic book, Comics, Manga, Graphic novel, Cartoon, Meme	RB 2
13-21	History of Popular Visual Culture – Part 1	Europe and America: Superhero Cartoons	TB Pg. 3- 81
22-30	History of Popular Visual Culture – Part 2	India and Japan: Mythology Horror and Fantasy	TB Pg. 355-383
31-36	Visual Methodologies – Part 1	Compositional Interpretation	TB Pg. 137-162 RB 1 Unit 4
37-40	Visual Methodologies – Part 2	Semiology and Semantics	TB Pg. 327-354 RB 1 Unit 6
41-42	Rise of the Graphic Novel Culture Industry today	Political satire, Patriarchy, and Public Morality, Class, Caste, Gender, and Race issues	Lecture Notes

Evaluation Scheme:

Component	Duration	Weightage (%)	Date & Time	Nature of Component
Test	30 mins	10	Sat 24.9.2022 11:00 – 11:30 AM J 206	CB
Mid Sem Exam	90 mins	30	Fri 4.11.2022 3:30 – 5:00 PM	OB
Assignment	Continuous	20	Till Sat 26.12.2022	OB
Comprehensive Exam	120 mins	40	28.12.2022 AN	CB

Consultation Hour: Tuesdays 12-1 PM in Office K 109

Notices: Notices, if any, concerning the course will be displayed on CMS.



Make-up Policy: Students must request alternative dates/modes of evaluation at least a day before the deadline. Last-minute make-up or late submissions will not be considered.

Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy: Academic honesty and integrity are to be maintained by all the students throughout the semester and no type of academic dishonesty or plagiarism is acceptable under any circumstance.



Anhiti Patnaik
INSTRUCTOR-IN-CHARGE

