

**ENGLISH 2118  
COMIC BOOKS AND  
GRAPHIC NOVELS  
SECTION B, WINTER 2016**

Instructor: Dr. Sean Moreland

Office Hours: Tue 1630-1800 or by appointment

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Classes held Tue 1130-1300, Fri 1300-1430

in MCD 146

This course offers an introductory survey of selected comic books, graphic novels and related forms of sequential narrative art. Our focus will be primarily on extended narratives (as suggested by the terms *book* and *novel*) by English-language writers/artists, but we will also discuss closely related forms including *bandes dessinées*, manga and comic strips (including web-comics.) We will study contemporary texts, situating them in terms of their historical precursors and influences, their cultural context, and their narrative and visual characteristics. Students are advised that several of the required readings involve subject matter and themes that may disturb some readers.

**EVALUATION**

10% Online Topic Post/Participation

20% Mid-term

10% Proposal for final essay

30% Final Essay

30% Final Exam

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

(Required texts are available, at U.S. cover prices, at The Comic Book Shoppe 2, 228 Bank St.)

De Connick and De Landro, *Bitch Planet V. 1: Extraordinary Machine*  
Delisle, *Pyongyang*  
Kelly and Nimura, *I Kill Giants*  
McNeil, *Finder: Voice*  
Moore and Lloyd, *V for Vendetta*  
Morrison and McKean, *Arkham Asylum*  
Nicholson, ed., *Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection*  
Stark and Cooke, *Parker V. 1: The Hunter*  
Vaughn and Staples, *Saga: V.1*  
Wilson and Alphona, *Ms Marvel V.1: No Normal*

## **RESERVE READING**

Links to or PDFs of a number of additional recommended readings will be posted on the Blackboard site for the course.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:** While there is no grade specifically allotted for attendance, it is **mandatory**. Students are responsible for acquiring lecture notes and materials from any classes they may be forced to miss, and students who miss more than one third of the classes during the term risk receiving an incomplete for the course.

In addition to contributing in-class by sharing ideas and posing questions, students are encouraged to make use of the Blackboard Learn discussion area as much as possible to share ideas, ask questions, recommend readings, post links to online sources, and anything else related to the course or materials. They are also required to post a minimum of two relevant observations, links, questions, or participatory comments on the discussion board, and to respond to at least two questions/comments by other students. These requirements must be met before the last week of class in order for the 10% participation mark to be gained.

Essays must be submitted in typed hardcopy at the beginning of the class in which they are due, except in cases of documented emergency or prior agreement. Late assignments will be docked 10% per day beginning at midnight on the day in which they were due (meaning if you submit the essay even a few minutes after midnight, it counts as a day late.) This includes week-ends and holidays. A medical certificate validated by University of Ottawa Health Services is required for any exemption, extension, make-up test, etc., — or else, in the case of a personal crisis, a letter from the University's counseling service. Give your professor the official University of Ottawa medical

certificate or counselor's letter. Do not bring notes from your family doctor to the professor; please take them to the University Health Service. This way your personal details remain confidential, and your professor can treat all students equally by accepting all official UO certificates.

Failure to submit all the major required assignments (test, final exam, essay) will result in an incomplete for the course. Submission of plagiarized material will result in a failing grade and possibly further consequences at the University's discretion. Documentation for papers must follow MLA guidelines. More information on what constitutes plagiarism, as well as on proper citation and other issues of format and style can be found on the English Department's style-guide at:

[http://arts.uottawa.ca/english/sites/arts.uottawa.ca.english/files/style\\_guide\\_2011.pdf](http://arts.uottawa.ca/english/sites/arts.uottawa.ca.english/files/style_guide_2011.pdf)

## **SCHEDULE**

(Lecture titles/topics are marked in **bold**; due assignments in **BOLD CAPS**, and book titles in *italics*.)

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|---------------|---|
| <b>JAN 12</b> | <b>Introduction: Definition and (pre)history of sequential art.</b> Syllabus, aims of the course.   |
| <b>JAN 15</b> | <b>Staring at the Gutter: On Reading Comics.</b>  |
| <b>JAN 19</b> | <b>A Reign of Capes: A brief history of superhero comics</b><br><i>Ms Marvel: No Normal</i>   |
| <b>JAN 22</b> | <b>(Dis)embiggen! Identity and Transformation</b><br><i>Ms. Marvel: No Normal</i>   |
| <b>JAN 26</b> | <b>Crooks and Creeps: An Unseemly History of Crime Comics</b><br><i>Parker: The Hunter</i>  |
| <b>JAN 29</b> | <b>Stark Visions: The Graphic Noir</b><br><i>Parker: The Hunter</i>   |
| <b>FEB 2</b>  | <b>“The Multiplying Villainies of Nature:” Moore, Literary Modernism and Intertextuality</b><br><i>V for Vendetta</i>   |
| <b>FEB 5</b>  | <b>Revolution and/in comics: Anarchy and Anonymous</b><br><i>V for Vendetta</i><br>(Guest Speaker: Derek Newman-Stille, doctoral candidate at Trent University, creator of multi-Aurora-Award winning website Speculating Canada, <a href="http://speculatingcanada.ca/">http://speculatingcanada.ca/</a> ) |
| <b>FEB 9</b>  | <b>Joker and his Relation to the Unconscious: (Super)sanity, Psychoanalysis and <i>Arkham Asylum</i></b><br><i>Arkham Asylum</i>  |
| <b>FEB 12</b> | <b>MID-TERM TEST (in class)</b>   |

- FEB 16**      **Reading Week – No classes**
- FEB 19**      **Reading Week - No Classes!**
- FEB 23**      **Comics and (as) Magic: Moore, Morrison, and the Occult Arts**  
*Arkham Asylum*  
(Guest Speaker: Bob D'Errico, Algonquin College)
- FEB 26**      **The Art in Arkham: McKean's Achievement and Influence**  
*Arkham Asylum*  
(Guest Speaker: Dominic Bercier, Aurora-nominated writer/artist/designer, principal at Mirror Comics Studios, <http://www.mirrorcomics.com/>)
- MAR 1**      **“Star Wars for Perverts”**  
*Saga V.1*
- ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE**
- MAR 4**      **Obscenity and Identity**  
*Saga, Bitch Planet V.1*
- MAR 8**      **“So my daughter won’t have to:” De Connick, Feminism, Comics**  
*Bitch Planet*
- MAR 11**      **“Aboriginal Science Fiction:” McNeil’s *Finder***  
*Finder: Voice*
- MAR 15**      *Finder: Voice*  
(Guest Speaker: Bob D'Errico, Algonquin College)
- MAR 18**      **Individual Essay Research Period**
- MAR 22**      **The Graphic Uncanny and the Uses of Fantasy**  
*I Kill Giants*
- MAR 25**      **Easter Friday– no classes**
- MAR 29**      **Cultural Continuance and Graphic Storytelling**  
*Moonshot*  
**FINAL ESSAYS DUE**
- APR 1**      *Moonshot*  
(Guest Speaker – Jay Odjick, writer/artist/TV producer from the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg community, creator of *Kagagi: The Raven* <http://aptn.ca/kagagi/> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay\\_Odjick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay_Odjick))
- APR 5**      **“The Challenge is not to explain too much:” Delisle and the Graphic Travelogue**  
Delisle, *Pyongyang*.
- APR 8**      *Pyongyang*, continued.  
**Closing discussion; exam review**

