ENG 381: Art, Comics, and Transformative Journalism Syllabus

Dates: 10/26/2015 – 11/18/2015
Meeting Times: M, W, F 9 – 11AM and 1PM – 3PM; T and TR 9AM – 11PM
Location: South Hall, Room 100

Instructor: Jackie Roche
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Office: South Hall, Room 209
Office Hours: T, TR, 1 – 3 PM or by appointment
Office phone: 319-895-4584

Description

Students should come away from the course with a strong understanding of visual storytelling techniques, confident in their ability to research, conduct interviews, use primary sources, and integrate information from different sources into a cohesive, engaging, narrative with proper citations. With the combined tools presented and practiced in the course, students should have a foundation of skills to produce original comics, visual, and multimedia journalism.

Students will need to follow the nonfiction motive, uphold journalistic standards, and express their story using the best practices of visual storytelling. This is a dense and challenging task, but the reward is immersive, engaging, empathy-inspiring nonfiction. Students on a path to creating this type of work professionally should come away with a project for their portfolio, and students taking the course purely out of curiosity can use the skills from the course to think critically about the narrative and visual journalism around them, and analyze the way stories are told.

Educational Priorities and Outcomes Summary

This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, inquiry, and communication.

Course Learning Objectives

Knowledge: Comics in general, journalism comics and multimedia are multidisciplinary fields that require a variety of skills to create effective, original work. In this course, students will study topics including research, interviewing subjects, writing a nonfiction narrative, and visual storytelling. Students will integrate practice these skills in their course work, and integrate them into a cohesive story in their Capstone project.

Inquiry: Students will develop a research question into a pitch for their Capstone project, and use creative problem-solving skills to work through the process of developing their pitch into an original comics or multimedia journalism script.

Communication: Students will fulfill the communication objective by reading and analyzing works of comics journalism and the work of their peers, verbally and in writing. Students will give and receive constructive criticism throughout the course, following group critique guidelines to create a productive, supportive, and honest environment.

Do I need to Know How to Draw?

Students do not need to know how to draw to take this course, but they will need to draw anyway.[1]

Required Texts

- Scott McCloud, *Making Comics*,
  ISBN-10: 0060780940, **ISBN-13:** 978-0060780944
- John Lowe, *Foundations in Comic Book Art: SCAD Creative Essentials (Fundamental Tools and Techniques for Sequential Artists),*
  ISBN-10: 077043696X, **ISBN-13:** 978-0770436964
- Jessica Abel, *Out on the Wire,*
  ISBN-10: 0385348436, **ISBN-13:** 978-0385348430
- Emmanuel Gilbert, *The Photographer*,
  ISBN-10: 1596433752, **ISBN-13:** 978-1596433755

Additional reading will be assigned throughout the course, in the form of links to online content or excerpts in PDF or paper form. (None of these additional readings will require students to purchase anything.)

Required Materials

- Pencils and pens
- Sketchbook for class notes and sketches
- White rubber pencil eraser
- Straight edge or ruler
- Access to a printer and scanner

Materials needed for each student's capstone project will differ, depending on their preferred medium.

Grading

Grades for this course will be calculated according to the following percentages:

Capstone project Part A: Pitch and Annotated Bibliography	20%
Capstone Project Part B: Script and Visual Draft	20%

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[1] Based on a similar sentiment in Lynda Barry's *Syllabus,* (Drawn & Quarterly, 2014), 37.

Capstone Project Part C: Script and Visual Final	20%
Project 1: Keckley Primary Source Adaptation	10%
Project 2: Analysis Paper	10%
In-class exercises	10%
Participation and attendance	10%
Total	**100%**

See individual project handouts for grading criteria and rubrics.
Late work will be deducted one letter grade for each day it is late.

Course Work and Deadlines

Individual information sheets and rubrics will be handed out and posted on Moodle for each project. In-class exercises are graded as pass/fail, and are due at the end of class or, if specified, at the beginning of the next class.

Projects for this course:
- Project 1: Adapt a primary source (provided) into a 2 – 3 page comic script and thumbnail layouts.
- Project 2: Analyze the work of a comics journalist of your choice based on the elements of visual storytelling, documentation, and reporting that we've discussed in class in a 5-page paper.
- Capstone project: Original script and visual component for a work of comics journalism or multimedia journalism that uses visual storytelling principals.
  - Part A: Pitch, project description, and annotated bibliography
  - Part B: Draft: script and visual component
  - Part C: Final script and visual component (thumbnail layouts, storyboards, etc.)

Academic Honesty

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source.

If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty.

The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading "Academic Honesty."

Students with Disabilities

Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information see cornellcollege.edu/disabilities/documentation/index.shtml

Students requesting services may schedule a meeting with the disabilities services coordinator as early as possible to discuss their needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan. Ideally, this meeting would take place well before the start of classes.

At the beginning of each course, the student must notify the instructor within the first three days of the term of any accommodations needed for the duration of the course.

Additional Course Policies

Participation

Student participation is crucial to this course. You and your classmates will benefit most from this course if everyone contributes. I expect at least some of the material to be new, strange, and difficult, and we're going to create a positive environment of support and honesty to work through it. Hostile or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

Attendance

Come to class on time, always! If you come in after I take roll at the begging of class, it's disruptive and annoying to everyone, and I will be very sad. You will also be marked as absent for the day.

If you are very ill or have an emergency, let me know what's going on, and we'll talk about how to get you back on track when you return, or your options for a withdrawal or incomplete.

Critiques and Constructive Feedback

We will be workshopping projects in this course because peer critique and collaboration is a valuable learning tool. Students in this course must adhere to Jessica Abel's critique Guidelines, because they represent best practices for giving and receiving constructive feedback: http://jessicaabel.com/podcast/critique-guidelines/.

Don't be a Hero!

If you are struggling, ask for help. My office hours are listed above, and you can also make an appointment.

Additional resources:
- Cornell College Writing Studio
- Academic Technology Studio: Use computers, scanners or tablets in the studio, software/hardware training available by appointment.
- Cole Library consulting librarians: Consulting librarians, including Jennifer Rouse, who you will meet, are available for individual appointments.

Your classmates are also resources, and I hope that you will make yourselves available to each other outside of class. As you know, blocks are very short. If you fall behind, it may be difficult to catch up. It is your responsibility to be proactive, and use the resources available to you.

Devices
Please use common sense and put your phone away for the duration of class. If you use a laptop or device in class, I expect you to use it for class work only, and stay present and engaged in class. Students using devices as a distraction will be given one warning and then asked to leave for the remainder of the class and will have their in-class participation grade reduced by a letter grade.

Course Schedule*

Week 1

Class 1, Monday, Oct. 26: Introduction to Comics Journalism
> *Discuss: Syllabus and course expectations, what is comics journalism, who are you?*
> Exercise: index cards, introductions
> Slide talk: Brief history of comics/illustrated journalism
> Slide talk: Overview of the types of comics/multimedia/illustrated journalism we'll be studying

Lunch
> *Discuss: Why drawings? How do Comics work?*
> Video: George Butler on the experience of illustrated reportage
> http://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/george-butler-tim-brown-afghanistan
> Exercise: anatomy of a comic
> Video: Ira Glass, adapted by Daniel Sax, "The Gap," https://vimeo.com/85040589

For Next Class
Read:
- Jessica Abel, *Out on the Wire,* pp 1 – 76
- Richard Johnson, "Why We Draw," *Washington Post,* http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/drawing-dc-together/wp/2014/12/31/why-we-draw/
- Dan Archer, "An introduction to comics journalism, in the form of comics journalism," *Poynter*, http://www.poynter.org/news/mediawire/143253/an-introduction-to-comics-journalism-in-the-form-of-comics-journalism/

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* This is a new special topics course, so the course schedule and readings are subject to change to accommodate the needs of the students and course schedule.

- Society of Professional Journalists, "SPJ Code of Ethics," http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp

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Class 2, Tuesday, Oct. 27: Following Your Curiosity to a Research Question
> Discuss: Curiosity and the nonfiction motive, the SPJ Code of Ethics
> Slide talk: Wendy McNaughton & others, observation/curiosity/finding things out
> Exercise: topic generation
> Video: Joe Sacco and his nonfiction motive
> Exercise: McCloud's Six Transitions

For Next Class
Due:
- 3 – 5 possible research topics for your Capstone project—you will need these for the library research session
- Write down any general research questions you have for librarian Jennifer Rouse.
Read:
- Scott McCloud, *Making Comics,* pp 1 – 36
- Julia Wertz, "The Great Pinball Prohibition," *New Yorker,* http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-n-y-c-mystery-history-hour
- Andy Warner, "The Snakes that Ate Florida," https://thenib.com/the-snakes-that-ate-florida-e7a52ea72aab#.8mdfimdft
- Tom Huang, "6 questions journalists should be able to answer before pitching a story," *Poynter,* http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/writing/185746/6-questions-journalists-should-be-able-to-answer-before-pitching-a-story/
- Susie Cagle, "San Francisco's Class War by the Numbers," *The Nib,* https://thenib.com/san-franciscos-class-war-by-the-numbers-700c51a43a4#.2j864y9r9

Class 3, Wednesday Oct. 28: Researching your Project Topics with Jennifer Rouse
> 9:00 – 9:50 Meet in the classroom.
> Discuss: Out on the Wire on following your curiosity and constructing a pitch,
> X+Y=story, source expectations for the Capstone Project
> Assign: **Capstone Project Part A (due Mon. 11/2)**
> 10:00 Cole Library Room 212 for a class research session. Bring your pitch topics/research Qs!

Lunch
> Discuss: Scripting: format, content, clarity.

For Next Class
Write:
- XY and Soren Wheeler statements for three of your project topics
Read:
- Scott McCloud, *Making Comics*, pp 37 – 53.

- Errol Morris, *Believing is Seeing,* Chapter 4, "The Case of the Inappropriate Alarm Clock," pp. 123 – 185, (Moodle PDF, __ Kb).
- Overview of Next Media Animation, http://multiplejournalism.org/case/next-media-animation

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Class 4, Thursday, Oct. 29: Truth

Assign: **Project 1, Adaptation (due <u>tomorrow</u>, Fri. 10/30)**

For Next Class
Submit:
- **Project 1 Adaptation** via Moodle

Read:
- John Lowe, *Foundations of Comic Book Art*, Intro and Chapter 1, "Anyone can draw," pp. xi – 7.
- Emi Gennis, "Baseline Blvd," self-published minicomic, http://www.emigennis.com/baseline-blvd-part-1/
- Ron Wimberly, "Lighten Up," *The Nib,* https://thenib.com/lighten-up-4f7f96ca8a7e#.jrvttswdi
- Emily Carroll "Face All Red," http://emcarroll.com/comics/faceallred/01.html

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Class 5, Friday, Oct. 30: Pitch Workshop, Designing Clear Storytelling
Due: Project 1: Adaptation
Discuss: Elements of a strong pitch
Activity: Pitch workshop
Lunch
Slide Talk: Clarity in Visual storytelling
Exercise: How-To Mini-Minicomic

For Next Class
Read:
- Jessica Abel, *Out on the Wire,* Chapter 3 "Keep or Kill: Story Structure," pp. 107 – 144.
- Andy Warner, "Tales from the Crypt," https://thenib.com/tales-from-the-crypt-fcf66f5da6eb#.z43x4v4sb
- Susie Cagle, "After Water," *Longreads*, http://blog.longreads.com/2015/06/02/after-water/

Week 2
Class 6, Monday, November 2: Narrative Structure

Due: Capstone Project Part A
>Assign: **Project 2, Analysis Paper (due Thurs. 11/5)**
>Discuss: Out on the Wire, concerns moving forward with Capstone
>Exercise: Story Beats, text

Lunch
>Introduce/assign *The Photographer*
>Revisit McCloud's six transitions
>Exercise: reductive story beats- visual

For Next Class
Read:
- Jess Ruliffson, "RPG," *The Nib*, https://thenib.com/rpg-9d45eda73160#.zcfhvaoyn
- Darryl Holiday and Jamie Hibdon, "Compartment 13," CityLab, http://www.citylab.com/housing/2014/10/illustrated-journalism-drawing-attention-to-chicagos-anti-homeless-measures-with-compartment-13/381954/
- Josh Kramer, "Sikh Americans," *The Wilson Quarterly,* http://www.joshkramercomics.com/index/#/sikh/
- Emi Gennis, "What is a Juggalo?" *Symbolia,* http://www.symboliamag.com/what-is-a-juggalo/

Class 7, Tuesday, November 3: The Interview
>Discuss: Interviewing subjects
>Exercise: Peer Interview Comic
>Assign: **Capstone Project Part B (due Mon. 11/9)**

For Next Class
Submit: 4 questions for Josh Kramer on Moodle by Midnight tonight.
Read:
- Josh Kramer, "A Day in the Life of a Milk & Cookie Food Truck," *Washington City Paper*, http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/articles/44038/a-day-in-the-life-of-a-milk-and-cookies/
- Josh Kramer, "Tundra Green," *The Atlantic,* http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/12/an-illustrated-history-of-marijuana-in-alaska/383530/
- Josh Kramer, "Tony Burns's Long Way Home," *Wilson Quarterly,* http://wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/spring-2015-american-fissures/tony-burnss-long-way-home/
- Josh Kramer, "Two Years Without Plastic Bags," *Washington City Paper,* http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/blogs/citydesk/2012/01/31/two-years-without-plastic-bags/
- Any other stories you're drawn to on his portfolio site: http://www.joshkramercomics.com/index/

- Mike Rhode, "Meet a Local Cartoonist: A Chat with Josh Kramer," http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/blogs/artsdesk/visual-arts/2013/06/20/meet-a-local-cartoonist-a-chat-with-josh-kramer/

Class 8, Wednesday, November 4: Skype Guest Josh Kramer, The Camera, Layouts
> Slide Talk: Drawing Thumbnails and Layouts
> Special Guest via Skype, **Josh Kramer**, comics journalist, publisher, *The Cartoon Picayune,* 10:00.

Lunch
> Slide Talk: Camera Placement for Clear and Effective Storytelling
> Exercise: Shot Choices

For Next Class
Read:
- Andy Warner, "Fool's Gold," *The Nib,* https://thenib.com/fools-gold-ac3ef276127e#.qr2cxgqk7
- Susie Cagle, "Down in Smoke," *Cartoon Movement,* http://www.cartoonmovement.com/icomic/44
- John Branch, "Snow Fall: the Avalanche at Tunnel Creek," NY *Times,* http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/#/?part=tunnel-creek
- NPR's SkunkBear, "Lonesome George, (A Musical Memorial)," http://www.npr.org/2015/01/06/375481820/a-musical-memorial-for-the-face-of-extinction
- Julia Severiens, "Berlins Favela," *Cartoon Movement,* http://www.cartoonmovement.com/icomic/61
- Lilli Carré, "The Bloody Footprint," NY *Times,* http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/02/05/opinion/private-lives-the-bloody-footprint.html?smid=fb-share&_r=2
- Watch:
  Javier Barboza, "El Coyote" https://vimeo.com/85998522

Class 9, Thursday, November 5: Multimedia and Digital-Native Storytelling
Due: Project 2, Analysis Paper
> Slide talk: Digital-Native and Cross-Platform Storytelling
> Discuss format, animated, and interactive elements
> - Name Le, Matt Huynh, SBS, "The Boat," http://www.sbs.com.au/theboat/
> - Firestorm, *The Guardian,* http://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2013/may/26/firestorm-bushfire-dunalley-holmes-family
> - Syrian Journey: Choose Your Own Escape Route, *BBC*: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32057601

For Next Class
Bring your in-progress work
Read:
- Emmanuel Gilbert, Dider Lefevre, Frederic Lemercier, *The Photographer,* (I don't expect you to finish it, just read as much as you can.)

Class 10, Friday, November 6: Visual Data and Work in Class/Progress Check-Ins
Work in class day: Bring whatever you need to work on your capstone project, and I'll be meeting with you individually.

For Next Class
Bring a pencil, eraser, and straight edge.
Read:
- John Lowe, *Foundations in Comic Book Art,* Chapter 3, "Perspective Basics," pp. 22 – 44.
- Wendy McNaughton
- Emi Gennis, "How to Pack for Certain Death," *The Nib,* https://thenib.com/what-to-pack-for-certain-death-11cc8f343f31#.2kiimy4q5
- Richard Johnson, Bonnie Berkowitz, and Lazaro Gamio, "Scaling Everest," Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/scaling-everest/

Week 3
TBA, special guest Emi Gennis via Skype

Class 11, Monday, November 9: Perspective as a Storytelling Tool
Due: Capstone Project Part B
> Assign: **Capstone Project Part C (due Weds. 11/18)**
> Slide Talk: Intro to Perspective for Constructive Drawing: Cubes
> Exercise: Cubes
> Slide Talk: Build, Don't Copy: Using Photo Reference for Constrictive Drawing
> Exercise: Working Inside the Cube

Lunch
> Slide Talk: Intro to perspective 2: The Grid and Shot Choice
> Exercise: The Grid

For Next Class
Read:
- Jessica Abel, *Out on the Wire,* Chapter 5, "Your Baby's Ugly: The Edit," pp.169 – 202.
- Carrie Ching, illustrated by Marina Luz, "Level 14: Inside One of California's Most Dangerous Juvenile Homes," *ProPublica,* https://www.propublica.org/article/video-inside-one-of-californias-most-dangerous-juvenile-homes

- Amanda Zamora, "Investigative Journalism, Illustrated: A Q&A With Level 14 Creators," *ProPublica*, https://www.propublica.org/article/investigative-journalism-illustrated-a-qa-with-level-14-creators

Class 12, Tuesday, November 10: The Edit and the German Forest
  Slide talk: The difference the edit makes, with case study, Emi Gennis
  Discuss *Out on the Wire* chapter 5 and how it applies to your project.
For next class
Read
- Scott McCloud, *Making Comics*, Chapter 4: World Building, pp 158 – 179.
- Richard Johnson, "Four Stories of the Heart," *Washington Post,* http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/national/2015/10/05/four-stories-of-the-heart/#

Class 13, Wednesday, November 11: New Media
Discuss
- Readings, integration of multimedia elements, navigation, illustrations as a tool to use with sensitive subjects, anonymity.
- Kitchen Ghosts, food cinemagraphs: http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/these-delicious-cooking-gifs-are-infinite-food-porn
- Dan Archer, Knight Fellowship talk, http://www.empatheticmedia.com/

Activity
  Class walk-through: Choose-your-own adventure, Syrian Journey, BBC News: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32057601

Read:
- Kyle Chayka, "What Will We Do With Virtual Reality?" *Pacific Standard,* http://www.psmag.com/nature-and-technology/what-will-we-do-with-virtual-reality
- Dan Archer, "How Can Journalists Use Virtual Reality to Tell News Stories?" https://medium.com/@archcomix/how-can-journalists-use-virtual-reality-to-tell-news-stories-fae0274573af
- Dan Archer, "The Nisoor Square Shootings," *Cartoon Movement*, http://www.cartoonmovement.com/icomic/11
- Dan Archer, "Ferguson Firsthand," Empathetic Media and the Reynolds Journalism Institute, via Fusion, http://fusion.net/story/31200/ferguson-vr/
- Methodology: How Dan Archer Made His Ferguson Virtual-Reality Experience," *Fusion,* http://fusion.net/story/31157/ferguson-vr-methodology/

Class 14, Thursday, November 12
  Discuss VR and AR possibilities for telling true stories. What are the limitations?
  Slide Talk: VR, AR, and Games as mediums for graphic journalism.

Read:
- Michael Keller and Josh Neufeld, "Terms of Service," Al-Jazeera America (48pp PDF, Moodle)

Class 15, Friday, November 13: Work in Class/Progress Check-Ins
Work in class day: Bring whatever you need to work on your capstone project, and I'll be meeting with you individually.

For Next Class
Read:

- Noah Davis, "If you Don't Click on This Story, I Won't Get Paid," *The Awl,* http://www.theawl.com/2015/09/dox-dox-dox-ii-the-doxxing
- Jeff Goins, "Designing Your Own Apprenticeship," blog post, http://goinswriter.com/apprenticeship/
- Resource: Kate Lane's Work Made for Hire site: http://www.workmadeforhire.net/

Week 4

Class 16, Monday, November 16
> Discuss and slide talk: The market for comics journalism, freelancing for writers and illustrators, learning on the job, and what comes next.
> Discuss where you're headed next.
> Reminder: Fill out your Cornell course evaluation.

Class 17, Tuesday November 17: Final Work Day
Work day: Work in class at our regular time, or work wherever you need to be: the library, a computer lab, etc.
Submit your final Capstone Project to Moodle.

Class 18, Wednesday November 18 (Morning session only): That's a Wrap—Show Your Work!
Due: Capstone Project Part C
> Share your final project with the class, pointing any recent changes to made to improve your story.
> Discuss: Final thoughts, course outcomes.