Spring 2017

**Hero Project Guidelines**

**Evaluation:** 20% in total

Oral Presentation: 10%

Written Component: 10%

**Assignment:**

Each group must choose a comic book superhero (or superhero group) from the course and create a two-part project that encompasses a presentation and written piece. However, if your group would like to explore a hero / text that is not on this course, it must obtain my approval well in advance. I will provide specific prompts / topics for this project, but each group should address and analyze two key aspects:

1. Formal element
2. Hero/character of choice (or villain)

**Preparation:**

Periodically, I will give you time in class to work with your group, but the majority of work must be organized and completed outside of class time.

**Oral Presentation: Pecha-Kucha**

In groups of 4 or 5 members, you must give a presentation on which you introduce a topic and make an argument following the conventions of the Pecha-Kucha presentation style (20 images x 20 seconds) for which you must choose one title / or character (superhero) for your analysis and provide evidence to support your analysis through an interpretation of the formal elements of comic writing. I would encourage you to hone in on one or two formal elements.

* Please see additional instructions and guidelines on Pecha-Kuchas below.

**Written Component:**

Each group must also provide a written portion to accompany their presentation. The purpose of the written portion is to build your presentation argument into a coherent analysis. The written portion must adhere to the following formatting guidelines:

1. 3 pages, double spaced (no more, no less)
2. 12-point font, Times New Roman
3. Insert page numbers on the top right hand corner
4. NO separate title page—Instead, include the following info at the top left-hand corner of the first page: first & last name; student ID #; course number; instructor’s name; date (See example below).
5. This assignment must be structured in essay format therefore it requires an introduction, thesis, body paragraphs, and conclusion (No point-form).
6. You may use headings, but still needs to include the parts of an essay.

**Content & Claim / Thesis:**

Your group is expected to formulate and support a specific claim about your hero of choice (see below for an example on claim versus statement).

Statement (non-debatable): Superman is the greatest American superhero of all time.

Claim: Grant Morrison’s *All-Star Superman* humanizes Superman and casts him as a secular god. In doing so, Morrison questions humanity’s overreliance on one savior figure.

Statement (non-debatable): Wonder woman is one of the most sexualized heroines in the superhero genre.

Claim: The mythos of Wonder Woman shows a heroine who is complexly figured as both an object of male sexual desire and a representation of feminist empowerment.

**Possible Topics**: I have listed a few topics and questions below that will help generate ideas and links to texts and title characters, and provide parameters for your analysis—this is a starting list—I will provide more prompts or you are welcome to come and talk to me about an ideas:

* Discuss the interplay between the “real” world and the metaphysical world in *Promethea*.
* Discuss the construction of masculinity or femininity in any of the texts.
* Consider the key myths surrounding the hero and the superhero storyline.
* Consider the artistic evolution of the title character (i.e., Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman); how has it reflected or impacted comic book culture?
* Discuss the use of costume and how they have effected reader’s responses to the superhero(ine).
* How have identity politics of race and multiculturalism transformed the comic book superhero or comic book culture?
* The relationship between being human and hero in any text.
* Vigilante justice in *Watchmen*, *TDKR*, or *Spiderman*.
* Consider the socio-cultural and political context and relevance (i.e. what are the social or political issues at the time? And why are they so important now?)
* Consider the hero’s personal relationships (familial and/or romantic)
* Consider the hero’s relationship to society
* What are the implications of the hero’s actions?
* What do we learn from them?
* What are the key themes or critical issues surrounding your hero and his/her story?
* How do they evolve over time? What is the significance of the shifts in the representations of your hero (i.e., historical transformation)?
* In relation to the above, does the hero change for better or worse? Why? If there is no change, is that good or bad for the hero or his/her society?

**Note on Genre:**

* Use specific examples from the story/series/film and specific references to illustrate your key points.
* Focus on the key text from the course (you may draw upon and reference other texts relevant to the hero but stay focused on the key text).

**Secondary Sources:**

Each group must use 3-5 secondary sources (could either be directly about your superhero/ine, the superhero genre, and/or about the topic (vigilantism or female sexuality, etc).

**ALL SOURCES** (including films, television series, comics books, etc.) should be cited in a bibliography at the end of your written essay (bibliography not counted as part of the page requirements). Please use MLA guidelines for citation, but I will also provide a sample bibliography.

**Grading:**

You will be graded as a group, and all group members are expected to contribute at each stage of the process to the completion of the project. I will be checking on the progress of each project. The failure of an individual group member to contribute to any stage of the project will result in a penalty to that student’s final project grade of a partial or whole letter grade for the student’s failure to participate. (i.e., if the group receives a B+, the member will receive either a B, B-, or C+, depending on the lack of engagement).

**Note**: A rubric will be provided for both the presentation and written component.

***Pecha Kucha* Presentation Guidelines**

**What is a Pecha-Kucha?**

Pecha-Kucha 20x20 is a global presentation phenomenon. It is a simple presentation format where you show 20 images (powerpoint), each for 20 seconds. The images advance automatically and you talk or narrate along to the images.

**Why this presentation format for this project?**

A Pecha-Kucha forces the presenters and creators to be incredibly focused, specific, and economical with language. In other words, it prevents speakers from droning on about a topic. Instead, it forces you to make your points quickly and powerfully.

**What are the characteristics of a Pecha-Kucha?**

* Short, concise
* 20 seconds x 20 images (presentation is approx. 6 mins and 40 secs long)
* The auto-forward function—means that each slide is timed to advance in 20 seconds. There’s no “next slide” or “go back one, please” with PechaKucha presentations.
* Most slides feature an image or short phrase
* Most of the 20 slides are unique—that is, they appear only once in the presentation
* The spoken part of the presentation—the narration—is recorded and recorded and closely linked to the visual component of the presentation. Even though the speaker / narrator may not make direct reference to the image or slide, the connection between the words and images must still be very clear.

**Pecha-Kucha delivery:**

* To present your Pecha-Kucha you should use a presentation software that produces a Microsoft Powerpoint compatible presentation. The software must be able to record voices and advance the slides automatically. Thus, your technology should have a built-in recording device or microphone. If you have any issues with the technology, please see me as early as possible.
* You will play your Pecha-Kucha to the class on the respective presentation date—se signup sheet for text choices & dates.
* You will be evaluated on delivery skills so rehearse your presentation prior to recording it. It must be timed well, with smooth transitions between images and a clear relationship between oral and visual.

**Audience:**

The key to a successful presentation is to know your audience. Your audience is your classmates who have a basic understanding of superheroes. Determine the level of background information needed for your project.

**Sources for Pecha-Kucha:**

You must cite all the images and sources use to complete your Pecha-Kucha presentation on a final slide at the end of your slideshow (slide 21). Entitle this page, “Works Cited.”