

**Carleton University
Fall 2015
Department of English**

**ENGL 2100A: *Topics in Popular Culture:*
Canadian Comic Books**
Prerequisite: second-year standing

Mondays & Wednesdays, 8:35-9:55 a.m.
Location: TB 340
(Please confirm on Carleton Central)

Instructor: Christopher Doody
Email: christopher_doody@carleton.ca
Office: 1905 Dunton Tower
Office Hours: Mondays 10:30 – 12:00 a.m.
Or by appointment

This course introduces students to Canadian comic books published between WWII and the present. The course will offer a history of comic books in Canada, while focusing on iconic texts from this history. The chosen comic books represent a number of different genres. Through reading, writing, and discussion, the class will explore the ways in which these comics articulate notions of the nation-state, geopolitics, heroism, and Canadian identity.

The course will also explore questions surrounding the materiality of comic books. As such, the course will ask students to consider the creation, publication, and reception of comic books. How are comic books different from other media? What role do comic books play in popular culture? Why are so many of these Canadian comics published in the United States? Are the terms “comic book” and “graphic novel” synonymous? Does it matter? By exploring the conditions under which comics are produced and disseminated, this course will explore the cultural role played by comic books in Canada.

Required Reading List

Books in Print:

(Books can be bought at the Comic Book Shoppe, 228 Bank St.)

- Bachle, Leo. *Johnny Canuck*. Ed. Rachel Richey. Toronto: Comic Syrup Press, 2015. Print.
- Comely, Richard and George Freeman. *Captain Canuck Compendium*. Toronto: Chapter House Comics, 2015. Print.
- Lemire, Jeff. *The Complete Essex County*. Marietta, GA: Top Shelf, 2009. Print.
- Seth. *The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists*. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly. 2011. Print.

Books to be bought digitally:

Bryne, John. *Alpha Flight Classic*. Vol. 1. Marvel, 2014. [Available digitally as a Kindle edition: <http://amzn.to/1abxRzQ>]

Shainblum, Mark and Gabriel Morrissette. *Northguard: New Triumph*. Issues 1-5 **and** *Northguard: The ManDes Conclusion*. Issues 1-3. [Bought digitally here: <http://bit.ly/1PoX1YE>]

Vaughan, Brian K. and Steve Skroce. *We Stand on Guard*. Issues 1-4. [Bought digitally here: <http://bit.ly/1HSfrfL>]

On Reserve at Library:

Dingle, Adrian. *Nelvana of the Northern Lights*. Ed. Hope Nicholson and Rachel Richey. San Diego, CA: IDW, 2014. Print.

Pak, Greg, Fred Van Lente, et al. *Alpha Flight: The Complete Series*. New York: Marvel, 2012. Print.

[All other required readings will be posted on ARES.]

Grading

Attendance: 5%

Quizzes: 10%

Personal Reflection: 15% **[Due on September 30]**

Essay 1: 30% **[Due on November 4]**

Final Essay **or** Final Exam: 40% **[Final essay due on December 7/Final exam during exam period]**

Attendance: 5%

Students are expected to attend all lectures and to participate in class discussions. If a student misses a class, it is their responsibility to find out what went on in their absence.

Quizzes: 10%

Throughout the semester, students will periodically be asked to complete a quiz at the beginning of class. These quizzes are meant to ensure that students have read the required readings. As such, the quizzes will test students on basic information from the required texts. Each quiz will have five questions, which will be either multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank format. Quizzes will be completed at the beginning of class. Students are encouraged to arrive to class on time, to ensure that they do not miss any quizzes; students who miss a quiz due to absence or tardiness will receive a zero unless there is a valid excuse with proper documentation.

Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted as **physical copies at the beginning of class** on the day in which they are due. Do not use CULearn or e-mail for submitting course work. Students should ensure that they save a copy of their assignments in the unlikely event that it is lost after they submit it. Students might also be asked to submit their assignments electronically, at the discretion of the professor.

Response Paper (2-3 pages): 15%

This assignment requires students to purchase a comic book from a comic book store and to read it. After, students will write a personal reflection on the experience, 2-3 pages in length. In the response paper, students will be able to write on any aspect of the experience—their experience at the comic book store, their decision on which comic to buy, the experience of reading the comic book, etc. Although the reflections may be more personal than a formal essay, students are expected to have an argument that is supported throughout the reflection. A more detailed explanation of this assignment will be made available in class and on CU Learn well before the deadline. Correct adherence to MLA format and correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation are required.

Essay 1 (3-4 pages): 30%

The goal of the essay is to have students think critically about one of the texts read during the semester. Essay topics, and a more detailed explanation of the assignment, will be made available in class and on CULearn. The essay should have a tightly-focused argument, supported with specific examples from the primary text, and demonstrate the student's ability to analyze and think critically about the text. The essay will be 3-4 pages in length. Correct adherence to MLA format and correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation are required.

Final Essay **OR** Final Exam: 40%

Please note: I understand that some students prefer writing final essays, while other students prefer writing final exams. I want every student to be tested in the manner in which they are the most comfortable. As a result, for the final assignment, students can choose to either write a final essay **OR** to write a final exam. (Students cannot do both.) Students do not need to formally tell the professor which assignment they have chosen. Final essays are due on the final day of class (December 7). If a student does not submit an essay in class on this day, it will automatically be assumed that they are writing the exam. **NO late assignments will be accepted for the final essay.**

Final Essay (6-8 pages)

The goal of the essay is to have students think critically about several of the texts read during the semester. Essay topics, and a more detailed explanation of the assignment, will be made

available in class and on CU Learn. The essay should have a tightly-focused argument, supported with specific examples from the primary texts, and demonstrate the student's ability to analyze and think critically about the texts. Secondary sources are not required, but may be used. The essay will be 6-8 pages in length. Correct adherence to MLA format and correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation are required.

Final Exam

The final exam will take place during the scheduled exam period. The goal of the final exam is to have students think critically about the texts read during the semester and will test students' knowledge of all assigned readings. The format will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay.

Late marks & Extensions

If a student thinks that they will require an extension, they should notify the professor as far in advance as possible, and bring any relevant documentation. Extensions are granted at the discretion of the professor.

Late assignments may be handed in up to five days late with a penalty of 2% per day (this includes the day on which they are due if they are submitted after class). Late assignments should be dropped off in the essay drop box outside the English Department Office on the 18th floor of Dunton Tower. Do not place assignments under my office door.

September 2: First Day of Class/Introduction

September 4: Introduction (Monday Schedule)

September 7: NO CLASS (Labour Day)

September 9: Introduction to Comics

Required Reading:

- Grist, Paul. Editorial. *Mud Man* #1 (Nov. 2011), IDW: 1. Print.
- Talon, Durwin S. "Appendix: Anatomy of a Page, Glossary of Terms, and Framing Heights." *Panel Discussions: Design in Sequential Art Storytelling*. Raleigh, NC: TwoMorrows Publishing, 2007. Print.

September 14: Canadian Whites, Class 1

Required Reading:

- *Nelvana of the Northern Lights*

Optional Reading:

- "Guardians of the North: Comic Books in Canada." [Podcast.] *Library and Archives Canada* [<http://bit.ly/1Mm0kjr>]

September 16: Canadian Whites, Class 2

Required Reading:

- Marston, William Moulton. "Wonder Woman: Dr. Poison." *Wonder Woman Archives*. Illus. Harry G. Peter. Vol. 1. New York: DC Comics, 1998. 31-44. Print.
- ---. "Wonder Woman: Summons to Paradise." *Wonder Woman Archives*. Illus. Harry G. Peter. Vol. 1. New York: DC Comics, 1998. 87-100. Print.
- ---. "Wonder Woman: Department Store Perfidy." *Wonder Woman Archives*. Illus. Harry G. Peter. Vol. 1. New York: DC Comics, 1998. 115-28. Print.

September 21: Canadian Whites, Class 3

Required Reading:

- *Johnny Canuck*

September 23: Canadian Whites, Class 4

Required Reading:

- Simon, Joe and Jack Kirby. "Captain America and the Riddle of the Red Skull." *Marvel Masterworks Presents Golden Age Captain America Comics*. Vol. 1. New York: Marvel Comics, 2005. 36-49. Print.
- ---. "Trapped in the Nazi Stronghold." *Marvel Masterworks Presents Golden Age Captain America Comics*. Vol. 1. New York: Marvel Comics, 2005. 85-99. Print.
- ---. "The Hunchback of Hollywood and the Movie Murder." *Marvel Masterworks Presents Golden Age Captain America Comics*. Vol. 1. New York: Marvel Comics, 2005. 153-69. Print.

September 28: Canadian Whites, Class 5

Required Reading:

- Legault, E. T. "Dixon of the Mounted." *Active Comics* #1 n.d. [Feb. 1942]. Toronto: Bell Features. 1-14. Print.
- Brookwood, Frank and René L. Kulbach. "Tang: The Story of a Colt." *Triumph Adventure Comics* #1 n.d. [Aug. 1941]. Toronto: Hillborough Studios. 51-62. Print.
- Kelly, Fred. "A Betty Burd Adventure: The Devil-Man." *Dime Comics* #26 n.d. [Oct./Nov. 1945]. Toronto: Bell Features. 45-48. Print.
- Mendes, Ross. "Polka-Dot Pirate." *Commando Comics* #20 n.d. [Nov./Dec. 1945]. Toronto: Bell Features. 22-25. Print.

Optional Reading:

- Polka Dot Pirate
 - Mendes, Ross. "Polka-Dot Pirate: Bullion Buccaneers." *Dime Comics* #25 n.d. [Aug./Sept. 1945]. Toronto: Bell Features. 23-26. Print.
 - ---. "Polka-Dot Pirate." *Dime Comics* #26 n.d. [Oct./Nov. 1945]. Toronto: Bell Features. 23-26. Print.
 - ---. "Polka-Dot Pirate." *Commando Comics* #22 n.d. [Mar./Apr. 1946]. Toronto: Bell Features. 43-47. Print.
- Betty Burd
 - Kelly, Fred. "White Man's Voodoo." *Active Comics* #22 n.d. [Apr./May 1945]. Toronto: Bell Features. 44-47. Print.
 - ---. "A Betty Burd Adventure: Black Ivory." *Joke Comics* #20 n.d. [June/July 1945]. Toronto: Bell Features. 48-51. Print.
 - ---. "A Betty Burd Adventure: Perils of the Jungle." *Triumph Comics* #26 n.d. [Aug./Sep. 1945]. Toronto: Bell Features. 31-34. Print.
 - ---. "A Betty Burd Adventure: Guns of Greed." *Dime Comics* #25 n.d. [Aug./Sept. 1945]. Toronto: Bell Features. 43-47. Print.
 - ---. "Betty Burd." *Dime Comics* #27 n.d. [Dec./Nov. 1945]. Toronto: Bell Features. 37-40. Print.
 - ---. "A Betty Burd Adventure: The Mountain of Mystery." *Dime Comics* #28 n.d. [Feb./Mar. 1946]. Toronto: Bell Features. 19-24. Print.

September 30: The Comic Book Store

Assignment: Personal Reflection due.

Required Reading:

- Swafford, Brian. "Critical Ethnography: The Comics Shop as Cultural Clubhouse." *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*. Ed. Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan. New York: Routledge, 2011. 291-302. Print.

Optional Reading:

- Duncan, Randy, Matthew J. Smith, and Paul Levitz. "The Business of Comic Books." *The Power of Comics: History, Form, and Culture*. 2nd ed. London: Bloomsbury, 2015. 265-95. Print.

October 5: Captain Canuck, Class 1

Required Reading:

- *Captain Canuck Compendium*

Optional Reading:

- Dittmer, Jason. "Introducing Nationalist Superheroes." *Captain America and the Nationalist Superhero*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2013. 1-23. Print.

October 7: Captain Canuck, Class 2

Required Reading:

- [None]

October 12:

NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

October 14: Captain Canuck, Class 3

Required Reading:

- *Captain Canuck Summer Special 2014* [Found online at: <http://bit.ly/1Fy4ao2>]

October 19: Northguard

Required Reading:

- *Northguard: New Triumph* and *Northguard: The ManDes Conclusion*.

October 21: Lost Heroes

Required Reading:

- [None]

October 26-30: NO CLASS (Reading Week)

November 2: G.N.B. Double C, Class 1

Required Reading:

- *The Great Northern Brotherhood of Canadian Cartoonists*

November 4: G.N.B. Double C, Class 2

Assignment: Essay 1 due.

Required Reading:

- [None]

November 9: Alpha Flight, Class 1

Required Reading:

- *Alpha Flight Classic*
- Byrne, John. "A Stranger In My Mirror." *Alpha Flight* #9 (Apr. 1984), Marvel: 15-22. Print.

- ---. "Family Ties." *Alpha Flight* #10 (May 1984), Marvel: 18-22. Print.
- ---. "Unleash the Beast." *Alpha Flight* #11 (June 1984), Marvel: 13-21. Print.

Optional Reading:

- Byrne, John. "Alpha Waves." *Alpha Flight* #1 (Aug. 1983), Marvel: n. pag. Print.

November 11: Alpha Flight, Class 2

Required Reading:

- [None]

Optional Reading:

- Lobdell, Scott, Mark Parcella and Dan Panosian. *Alpha Flight* #106 (Mar. 1992), Marvel. Print. [Can be bought online: <http://bit.ly/1hIbDbX>]

November 16: Alpha Flight, Class 3

Required Reading:

- *Alpha Flight: The Complete Series*.

November 18: Indigenous Comics

Required Reading:

- King, C. Richard. "Alter/native Heroes: Native Americans, Comic Books, and the Struggle for Self-Definition." *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies* 9.2 (2009): 214-23. Print.
- Selections from *Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection* (To be determined)
- Selections from *True Patriot* (To be determined)

November 23: Essex County, Class 1

Required Reading:

- *The Complete Essex County*.

November 25: Essex Country, Class 2

Required Reading:

- [None]

November 30: Essex County, Class 3

Required Reading:

- [None]

December 2: We Stand on Guard

Required Reading:

- *We Stand on Guard* Issues 1-4.
- Selections from *True Patriot* (To be determined)

Optional Reading:

- *We Stand on Guard* Issues 5-6.

December 7: Final Class/Exam Prep

Assignment: Final essay due (unless student choose to do the final exam instead).

Required Reading:

- [None]

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation.

If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable).

After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.”

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course. For more information please go to: <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>