

**Carleton University\***  
**Winter 2019**  
**Department of English**

**ENGL 1400: Literature, Art and Culture**

**Precludes Additional Credit for ENGL 1000, 1009, 1100, 1200, 1300, and FYSM 1004.**

**Time: Wed./Fri.: 10:00-11:30**  
**Location: TBD**

**Instructor: Brenda Vellino**  
**Email: [brenda\\_vellino@carleton.ca](mailto:brenda_vellino@carleton.ca)**  
**Office: 1815 DT**  
**Office Hours: Wed. 12:30, Fri. 12:30**

\*Located on the unceded traditional territories of the Algonquin Anishnaabe Peoples

**ENGL1400 Topic: Stories Behind the Headlines: From Graphic Memoir to Graphic Journalism to Superhero Comic**

Comics as a medium have been surprisingly resilient for more than a hundred years from their beginnings in newspaper comic strips offering political satire or daily life laughs, to superhero comics with a huge fandom still growing today, to underground comics like Art Spiegelman's *Maus* that birthed the genre known as the graphic novel. This hybrid form takes shape at the intersection of visual art and narrative and asks its readers for both visual and literary engagement. This course will explore several popular spin-off subgenres of the graphic novel: the graphic memoir and graphic journalism. New forms of graphic narrative have demonstrated an unexpected capacity to take up serious political, historical, and social issues such as genocide, human rights violations, marginalized sexual identities, Indigenous realities, refugee and migrant experience, and climate change. We will close the course with a look at a next generation Marvel superhero comic that immerses us in the adventures of Ms. Marvel, a young Muslim American woman who not only kick's ass in superhero battles, but contends with racism and being a second generation migrant. This course will offer us just the briefest sampling of a few of the innovative contemporary graphic narratives and comics that invite us to step behind the headlines and to connect with the lives of others who may be unlike us.

**Course Texts: Available at Haven Books\*:** (prices are approximate)

\*With the exception of the online Refugee Graphic Narratives, you must purchase and have your books in class weekly.

Art Spiegelman. *Maus I*. \$19.84

Joe Sacco. *Palestine* (2009). \$26.03

Alison Bechdel. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomedy* (2007). \$20.76

Willow Wilson. *Ms. Marvel. Vol. 1: No Normal* (2014). \$17.99

Patti Laboucane Benson. *Outside Circle* (2015). \$19.95

Patrick McCurdy. *The Beast* (2018). \$15.00

**Course Objectives:**

- Develop appreciation for graphic storytelling as a cultural and artistic practice.
- Analyze the ways comics artfully combine words and images in a meaningful sequence.
- Identify and apply core graphic storytelling terms & techniques
- Understand the ways the comics interface with other mediums & projects such as the family memoir, the coming of age story, investigative journalism, and historical and social narratives.
- Discover how women and minorities have innovated in the comics' tradition.
- Understand connections between individual texts & broader cultural, social, political, historical contexts.
- Develop ability to work collaboratively with group members.
- Develop ability to analyse literary and visual texts in the context of practicing critical thinking, speaking, and writing skills.

**Assignments**

- **Attendance & Participation\*: 10%**

\*Note: Students who miss 50% or more classes will fail the course. You will also be marked absent if you do not have your book in each class.

- **2 Working Group Assignments: 1000 words, 15% each: 30%**
- **4 Graphic Novel Bi-Weekly Page Responses: 750 words, 5% each: 20%**
- **Take Home Final Exam: two short answer (250 words each) and one essay question (750 words): 40%**

**Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean**

## Weekly Reading & Assignment Schedule

### Week 1: Intro to Reading Graphic Narrative

- **Jan. 9:** Intro: Comics History and Comics Vocabulary
- **Jan. 11: Intro to Graphic Memoir:** When Life Bleeds History: Art Spiegelman, *Maus*

### Week 2: Graphic Memoir

- **Jan. 16:** *Maus*
  - **Group A: Page Response 1**
- **Jan. 18:** *Maus*

### Week 3: From Graphic Memoir to Graphic Journalism

- **Jan. 23:** *Maus*
- **Jan. 25: Intro to Graphic Journalism:** Joe Sacco, *Palestine*
  - **Group B: Page Response 1**

### Week 4: Graphic Journalism

- **Jan. 30:** *Palestine*
  - **Working Group Assignment 1**
- **Feb. 1:** *Palestine*

### Week 5: Graphic Journalism

- **Feb. 6:** *Palestine*
- **Feb. 8** Syrian Refugee Narratives: Lindsey Pollock, Wael Toubaji,
  - *A Perilous Journey: Hasko's Story:* <http://whycomics.org/a-perilous-journey-hasko#>
  - *A Perilous Journey: Mohammad's Story:* <http://whycomics.org/a-perilous-journey-mohammad#>
  - *A Perilous Journey: Khalid's Story:* <http://whycomics.org/a-perilous-journey-khalid>

### Group A: Page Response 2

**Resource:** Jordan Hewson, "The Refugee Crisis Told Through Syrian Artists," Huffington Post, Dec. 2017: [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jordan-hewson/syrian-refugee-art\\_b\\_9673096.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jordan-hewson/syrian-refugee-art_b_9673096.html)

## **Week 6: Graphic Journalism**

**Feb. 13:** Women Survivors of Sex Trafficking:

- Benjamin Dix, Gabi Froden, *Abike's Story*: <http://whycomics.org/abike#>
- Women Migrant Workers: *Almaz's Story*: <http://whycomics.org/almaz>

**Group B: Page Response 2**

**Feb. 15:** Deseparacido in Columbia: Enrique's Shadow: <http://whycomics.org/enriques-shadow#>

**Winter Break Week: Feb. 18-22**

## **Week 7: Women and the Graphic Memoir**

**Feb. 27:** Alison Bechdel: *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomedy*

**Working Group Assignment 2**

**March 1:** Fun Home

## **Week 8: Women's Graphic Memoir**

**March 6:** Fun Home

**March 8:** Class Cancelled: Prof. at conference

## **Week 9: Women in Comics**

**March 13:** Willow Wilson: *Ms. Marvel*, Vol.1

Group A: Page Response 3

**March 15:** *Ms. Marvel*

## **Week 10: Indigenous Graphic Storywork**

**March 20:** Patti Laboucane Benson, *Outside Circle*

Group B: Page Response 3

**March 22:** *Outside Circle*

Group A: Page Response 4

## **Week 11: Climate Change Graphic Journalism**

**March 27:** *Outside Circle*

**March 29:** Patrick McCurdy, *The Beast*

Group B: Page Response 4

## **Week 12: Climate Change Graphic Journalism**

**April 3:** The Beast

**April 5:** Exam Review and Brainstorm for Take-home Exam Questions

### **4 Graphic Novel Bi-Weekly Page Response (5 marks each): 750 words**

About every second week, students from the assigned response groups of A or B will select 1-2 arresting pages whose panels illustrate a key issue, character development moment, or theme from the graphic novel we are reading for that date. They will then develop a three-four paragraph analysis (750 words) which applies several graphic novel terms to the discussion of a key issue or theme. Typed responses are due in the assigned class. The writing is intended to be exploratory and will be graded based on the student's abilities to look closely at what's on the page and to explain why the artistic/narrative choices matter to our understanding of the work as a whole. This is one way I check in with you on how carefully you have completed and understood the weekly readings.

### **Working Group Discussion Papers (15 marks each): 1000 words**

This small group work assignment requires out of class preparation and invites students to develop their close reading and analysis skills while benefiting from the insights of their peers. Early in the term, I will divide students into 4 working groups. I will post working group topics on aspects of the text under discussion for each group on CU-Learn one week before they are due and announce them in class.

**\*\*Note: You must be in class on each assigned group meeting date to meet in your group to get credit for this assignment unless you have a medical or other emergency**

**Step-1:** For each of the two working group classes, you will prepare two questions that you believe are central to understanding the graphic narrative. Questions should address issues, problems raised in the text in connection with attention to one or two key pages of panels. Please address the artful construction of the panels as part of your question. For each of your questions, you will prepare a two - three paragraph answer. These answers will be in short essay form with a topic sentence and detailed discussion of specific passages in the text (using direct quotation). **The average length of this assignment should be 3-4 pages, double-spaced, and typed (750-1000 words).**

**\*\*Note: If you consult any external resources, including from the Internet, including Wikipedia, you **\*\*MUST\*\*** be meticulous in citing them on a Works Cited and Consulted page.**

**Step-2:** For your in-class small group discussion, **bring your Questions and Discussion Papers to class.** You will meet with your working group to discuss your questions and insights. Each member of the group should take turns asking one of his, her, or their questions, getting feedback from the group and taking notes on new ideas from group members. When the discussion winds down, move onto the next person and their question. Make sure everyone in the group has a chance to present at least one question. The discussion should be as free and creative as possible, allowing room for tangents and respectful differences of opinion. Each student will take notes on the discussion; one student should be prepared to report group insights to the larger class if time permits. **Discussion Papers must be submitted with your class notes at the end of each working group class.**

### **Take-Home Final Exam**

- The exam will consist of answering two short answer questions on a visual panel from among four choices and one essay question from among three choices.
- The goal of the essay exam question will be to make connections between a minimum of three separate works on the course, using **specific examples** from the text.
- You may not use the same examples or identical material in any of your answers.
- The take home essay exam answer should be in typed and edited format with a clear introduction which presents a thesis or connecting thread for the three works to be discussed.
- The body paragraphs of the essay exam should be well organized and use specific supporting examples and direct quotation as is the case with any strong essay.
- The grading priorities will focus on how well you establish comparison and contrasts between your three example texts, on the strength and validity of your insights and analysis, and on how well you support your points with specific examples. We will mark mostly for substance and content. However, writing quality will count as well, so please edit and proofread carefully.

### **Course Policies**

**Attendance and Participation:** Class works when you do. Active participation is essential. Your class participation grade is based on evidence that you have completed scheduled readings before class (**preparation**), your physical and mental **presence** in class, and **respectful engagement** with fellow students and the professor. Please **bring the daily reading to class** and come prepared to speak not just with me, but also your fellow students about issues arising from the readings. To engage actively with reading and class lectures/discussions, underline key passages in pencil and write notes in the margins of your books or on sticky notes.

**Device Free Classroom: No laptops, Cell phones, Tablets, or e-readers:** In this class, we will give ourselves the gift of being distraction free so we can focus on the readings and discussion. I know this will be an adjustment for many of you, but we all know that most of what is on screens

in the classroom is not related to coursework (you all know what I'm talking about). This means that all devices will stay in your school bags and off your desktops.

**Exceptions:** The three classes where we look at refugee focused journalism. Otherwise, the only students who may use devices will be those with permission for note-taking purposes.

**Regarding Multiple Absences:** absences of **more than four per term** will negatively affect your participation grade. Life is unpredictable, so if you do have a difficulty of any kind, please keep me in the loop and let me know how I may be of help. Students sometimes make the mistake of not talking to professors when issues come up.

**Students missing more than 50% of classes without documentation will be advised to withdraw from the course or risk failure.**

**Late Assignment Policy:** Extensions must be arranged with me (for difficult circumstances only) in advance of the due date. Assignments handed in late without prior arrangement will not receive any comments. Assignments handed in more than one week late without prior notification may not be accepted.

**Handing in Assignments:** Assignments are due in class on the dates indicated. They may be handed in without a penalty until 8:30 a.m. the day after the due date via the English Dept.'s drop box (18<sup>th</sup> floor Dunton Tower). Do not slip any assignments under my door. Emailed assignments will not be accepted except in rare and unusual circumstances. Keep a back-up copy of every assignment you submit. If one of your assignments gets lost, it is your responsibility to submit another copy.

## Plagiarism

**Please ensure that all sources (including biographical and internet) you use in any of your work are properly credited. Also note that secondary sources are NOT required, but if you do Google it and use it, provide a proper Works Cited and use Parenthetical Citation.** If I suspect that an essay or portion of an essay has been plagiarized, I am required to submit the essay to the Associate Dean of the Faculty.

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.

More information on the university's Academic Integrity Policy can be found here:

<https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

### **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**

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

#### **Religious obligation**

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

#### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

[carleton.ca/pmc](https://carleton.ca/pmc)

#### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For



more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>