

INFO 5415: Graphic Novels and Comics

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Instructor Information

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Course Description, Structure, and Objectives

Course Description

History and development of comic books, graphic novels, their subgenres as literature. Role in western and international societies and cultures. Issues of youth/adult readership and literacy. Race, gender, politics, violent content issues. Presence in popular culture, the Internet, art forms, and translation into movies. Selection tools, policies, collection development, and censorship. Comics and graphic novels programming in libraries and schools. Warning: Some material required in the course may be considered by some to be controversial.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Structure

This course is taught exclusively online, through Canvas, and it is the student's responsibility to be able to access, and appropriately use, online materials and complete course requirements as assigned in the course schedule. Materials for this course are organized into daily modules starting December 18th and ending January 12th. You will have a break from class on from December 24th through January 1st. Assignments will be identified in the appropriate module with due dates given and linked from the module with instructions. You should expect to devote between 6 and 8 hours per class day to the work for this course. Many of you have full-time commitments outside of your educational pursuit (job, families, etc.). Please plan and prepare accordingly.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Knowledgably discuss the history and development of comic books, graphic novels, their subgenres as literature to read and collect for educational and recreational purposes.
2. Evaluate literature presented in comic medium for the purposes of making collection decisions, composing professional reviews, and advising potential readers.
3. Engage with professional colleagues to improve resources related to comics and graphic novels.
4. Design a graphic novels and comics collection for a specific audience.
5. Plan programming or curriculum using graphic novels and comics for a specific audience.
6. Communicate the value of the comic medium to library stakeholders.

NOTE: Federal regulations state that students may apply only 3 fully-online semester credit hours (SCH) to the hours required for full-time status for [F-1 Visa \(PDF\)](#) holders. Full-time status for F-1 Visa students is 12 hours for undergraduates and 9 hours for graduate students.

How to Succeed in this Course

Instructor Office Hours: Course contact will be online. Please email within the Canvas course. Online office hours will be posted within the course website.

Communication Expectations

If you have questions about the course, the best place to go is the General Questions forum of the discussion board. Think of it as raising your hand to ask a clarifying question in the classroom. Your colleagues likely had the same question! We check this forum regularly, so you will get a response from myself or the teaching assistant. Also, be sure to check the course announcements regularly.

If you need to ask a personal question, first reach out via the Canvas inbox and I will do my best to respond within 24 hours. **Canvas is the preferred method of communication.** If for some reason you use email, I receive many messages, so I request that you include the following information in the subject line:

Course Number Students Last Name: Topic of the Email

You may also leave a message on my office phone number (940-369-8102) and I will respond within 48 hours. In urgent situations, you may use my mobile phone number (206-409-9573) for text messages or calls, but please use this sparingly.

In addition to office hours, I am also available by appointment for in person meetings, telephone calls, or video chats. My goal is to support you in your journey to the library profession, so please reach out as needed.

Teaching Philosophy

Great teaching comes with a commitment to learn, especially as students join in the spirit of co-learning. I believe the most effective teachers will always be those who want to motivate and guide students to recognize their own knowledge and skills and plan ways of expanding that knowledge. The activities in this course are designed to bring you into the librarian community of practice through the deliberation of relevant issues and the creation of practical products. As a teacher, I strive to create with you all a course experience that is **relational, respectful, real, reflective, and responsive.**

ADA Accommodation

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Academic Support Resources

UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment, so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can be successful at UNT, go to unt.edu/success and

explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. In my courses, I ask that we each strive to follow the [Principles of Engagement](#), created by our previous UNT Division of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access.

UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation so we will work as a class to collaborate in ways that encourage inclusivity.

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
- Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people’s ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
- Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as “YELLING!”
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Avoid using “text-talk” unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

See these [Online Communication Tips](https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) (<https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips>) for more information.

Required/Recommended Materials

Materials for this course include required texts and supplementary materials, both required and optional, located in each module in the Canvas course. Additionally, you will be reading many books this semester which you will self-select, guided by our texts and other reader’s advisory tools. Remember, you do not have to BUY all the books – check out what is available at your local libraries!

The required and recommended texts are available for purchase from the [UNT bookstore](https://unt.bnccollege.com/shop/unt/home) (<https://unt.bnccollege.com/shop/unt/home>).

Required Texts (in order of use)

- Goldsmith, F. (2017). *The readers' advisory guide to graphic novels* (Second ed., ALA readers' advisory series). Chicago: ALA Editions, an imprint of the American Library Association. ISBN: 9780838915097.
- McCloud, S. (1994). *Understanding comics: The invisible art*. New York: HarperPerennial. ISBN: 9780060976255.
- Watterson, B. (2002). *The essential Calvin and Hobbes*. London: Warner. ISBN: 9780751512748
- Moore, Alan. (2014). *Watchmen*. Turtleback Books. ISBN: 9780606357425.
- Spiegelman, A. (2011). *The Complete maus: A survivor's tale* (25th anniversary ed.). New York: Pantheon Books. ISBN: 9780679406419.
- Flowers, E. (2019). *Hot comb*. Drawn & Quarterly. ISBN: 9781770463486.
- Chast, R. (2016). *Can't we talk about something more pleasant?* Bloomsbury USA. ISBN: 9781632861016.
- Telgemeier, R. (2010). *Smile*. New York, New York: Graphix. ISBN: 9780545132060.
- Yang, G., & Pien, Lark. (2006). *American born Chinese*. New York: First Second. ISBN; 9780312384487.
- Lewis, J., Aydin, A., & Powell, N. (2013). *March: Book One*. Top Shelf Productions. ISBN: 9781603093002
- Kishimoto, M. (2011). *Naruto*, volume 1-2-3. San Francisco, CA: Viz. ISBN: 9781421539898
- Takaya, N. (2016). *Fruits basket* (Collector's edition; First Yen Press ed., Fruits basket ; 1). New York, NY: Yen Press. ISBN: 9780316360166.
- Hergé, Lonsdale-Cooper, L., Turner, M. R., & Tett, S. (2013). *The crab with the golden claws*. London: Egmont. ISBN: 9780316358330
- Guarnido, J., & Díaz, C. J. (2010). *Blacksad*. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Books. ISBN: 9781595823939
- Sacco, J. (2018). *Journalism*. Jonathan Cape, LTD. ISBN: 9781787331303
- Ha, R. (2016). *Cook Korean! Ten Speed Press*. ISBN: 9781607748878

Technology Materials

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System and speakers or headphones, microphone, webcam, and Microsoft Office Suite. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere \(https://online.unt.edu/learn\)](https://online.unt.edu/learn).

Course Requirements/Schedule

Calendar of Modules and Assignments

- Unless otherwise stated, all course work is due by 11:59pm CST on the following day.
 - For example, discussions and assignments from Day 1 (Monday) are due at 11:59pm CST on Day 2 (Tuesday).
- **Initial Canvas discussion and Flip posts must be made by 11:59pm on the due date. Your responses to two classmates are due two days later by 11:59pm.**
 - For example, your initial posts to Topic Discussion #2 (RA Guide Ch 2 & 3) and Book Discussion Understanding Comics Intro through Ch 4 are due at 11:59pm on Day 3 (Wednesday). Your responses to two classmates are due Day 5 (Friday) at 11:59pm.
- RA Guide refers to Goldsmith, F. (2017). *The readers' advisory guide to graphic novels* (Second ed., ALA readers' advisory series). Chicago: ALA Editions, an imprint of the American Library Association. ISBN: 9780838915097.
- Additional required and optional readings indicated on module pages in Canvas course site.

Day	Date	Module	Topic	Topic Discussion	Book Discussion	Activities
1	12/18 (Las Posadas)	Course Introduction	Avengers Assemble!	Self-Introduction; <i>RA Guide</i> Chapter 1 & Appendix		Pre-Course Reflection
2	12/19 (Las Posadas)	Historical Sequential Art	A Tour through Time and Space	<i>RA Guide</i> Chapter 2 & 3	<i>Understanding Comics</i> Intro thru Ch 4	Comic Creation with App
3	12/20	Cartoons and Comic Strips	Serial Distribution	<i>RA Guide</i> Chapter 10	<i>The Essential Calvin and Hobbes</i>	Log Title Check #1
4	12/21	Superhero Comics	Gold, Silver, and Bronze	<i>RA Guide</i> Chapter 5	<i>Understanding Comics</i> Ch 5 thru Ch 9	Reader Interview #1
5	12/22	Superhero Comics	The Modern (Movie) Age	<i>RA Guide</i> Chapter 9 (pp 101-132)	<i>Watchmen</i>	Log Title Check #2
6	12/23	Independent Comics	Underground to Alternative	<i>RA Guide</i> Chapter 9 (pp 133-156)	<i>Maus</i>	Reader Interview #2
12/24 – 1/1		WINTER BREAK				
7	1/2	Independent Comics	Rise of the Graphic Novel	<i>RA Guide</i> Chapters 4 & 6	<i>Hot Comb</i>	Log Title Check #3
8	1/3	Practical Librarianship	Getting (and Keeping) Comics	<i>RA Guide</i> Chapter 11	<i>Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?</i>	Reader Interview #3
9	1/4	Practical Librarianship	Playing and Learning	<i>RA Guide</i> Chapters 7 & 8	<i>Smile; American Born Chinese; March, Book 1</i>	Short Book Review
10	1/5	East Asian Comics	Manga	Peer Review – SBR	<i>Naruto</i>	Medium Book Review
11	1/6	East Asian Comics	Manhwa, Manhua, and More	Peer Review – MBR	<i>Fruits Basket</i>	Long Book Review
1/7		TAKE A BREATH				
12	1/8	French Comics	Beyond Tin-Tin	Peer Review – LBR	<i>The Crab with the Golden Claws</i>	Response with Resources to Request for Reconsideration
13	1/9	Spanish and Portuguese Comics	Spain, Mexico, and Brazil	Peer Review – RRRR	<i>Blacksad</i>	Patron Collection with Program or Curriculum

14	1/10	Comics Everywhere	Around the World Again	Peer Review – PC with P/C	<i>Journalism</i>	Book Talk vs. Book Trailer
15	1/11	Comics Everywhere	Web Comics	Peer Review – BT v BT	<i>Cook Korean!</i>	Personal Reading Log
16	1/12	Wrap-Up	Titans Go!	Well-Wishing		Post-Course Reflection; Extra Credit

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TURNED IN BY 11:59 PM ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 13TH

There are no examinations in this course.

Course Lectures

In this course, I will be preparing video lectures for most modules. Some of these will be given during my optional Office Hours' time slots, and you are invited to join and ask questions live. I always enjoy a chance to talk with my students!

After the lecture, a link to the recording with closed captioning will be added to the Canvas shell on the Module page. Mostly in these lectures, I will be talking over some of the module topics we will be covering and discussing some specific books of value and other content. I am not planning to share the slides I use as a decorative backdrop, but I will cover the content fully. However, if you have a question about any of the book titles mentioned or need more information (such as the spelling of a foreign title, etc...) after reviewing the lecture and/or transcription, please feel free to ask about it in the General Questions discussion board.

Also, please be aware that this course contains some copyrighted material, (images of book covers, generally and other content) the use of which has not been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. I have determined this to be "fair use" of the copyrighted material as referenced and provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. If you wish to use any copyrighted material from this document for purposes of your own that go beyond fair use, you must obtain express permission from the copyright owner.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, the calendar is subject to change, as described in the [Emergency Notifications and Procedures Policy \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049).

Assessing Your Work

Assignments Overview

Assignment	Points Possible	Percentage of Final Grade
Comic Creation with App	20 points	2.0%
Log Title Checks – 3 @ 2 points each	6 points	0.6%
Reader Interviews – 3 @ 8 points each	24 points	2.4%
Discussions	370 points	37%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical – 16 discussions @ 10 points each = 160 • Book – 14 discussions @ 15 points each = 210 		
Book Reviews	105 points	10.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short – 25 points • Medium – 35 points • Long – 45 points 		

Response with Resources to Request for Reconsideration	55 points	5.5%
Patron Collection with Program or Curriculum	65 points	6.5%
Book Talk vs. Book Trailer Videos	75 points	7.5%
Personal Reading Log 16 items @ 15 points each	240 points	24%
Personal Reflection	40 points	4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Course – 20 points • Post-Course – 20 points 		
Total Points Possible	1000 points	100%

Final Grade Scale

A = 900-1000

B = 800-899

C = 700-799

D = 600-699

F = 500-599

Extra Credit

There are opportunities to collect extra credit during the course. For more information, see the assignment titled **Extra Credit** in the Canvas course.

Late Work

I understand that there will occasionally be extenuating circumstances that impact your ability to turn in an assignment on time. **I do accept late work up to the last day of instruction. Assignments not turned in at the time of grading will receive zero points. Your assignment score will be updated after you are able to submit.** Remember that keeping pace with the course will create the best learning experience for yourself and your classmates.

Instructor Responsibilities and Assignment Feedback

As your instructor, it is my responsibility to:

- Help you grow and learn as an information professional
- Provide clear instructions for projects and assignments
- Answer questions about assignments in a timely manner
- Identify additional resources as necessary
- Provide grading rubrics
- Review and update course content
- Ensure assignment feedback in a timely manner

For assignments turned in on-time, we strive to provide feedback within three days through Canvas. If the assignment is late, you will receive feedback at our convenience. Feedback on your work may take the form of an overall narrative comment, specific comments on particular areas of your work, both, or some other form. Grading rubrics, when used, will be provided with the assignment so that students may use them to assess their own work in advance of submission. If you are unsatisfied with your grade on an assignment, you may submit a

revised version within a week of receiving feedback. **All assignments, revised or original, must be turned in by 11:59pm on the last day of class to receive credit.**

Assignment Policy

Assignments are due by 11:59pm Central Time by the date listed in the syllabus. You will submit all assignments through Canvas. Do not email assignments unless instructed otherwise.

All assignments are expected to conform to basic standards for scholarly writing. In this course, you are expected to follow American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition manual of style in all of your reference and citation formatting for this course. Proper documentation of sources is the best defense against plagiarism. When citing references (books, journal articles, and websites) in any assignment, you must adhere to the APA citation guidelines.

Every student in my class can improve by doing their own work and trying their hardest with access to appropriate resources. Students who use other people's work without citations will be violating UNT's Academic Integrity Policy. Please read and follow this important set of [guidelines for your academic success](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). If you have questions about this, or any UNT policy, please email me or come discuss this with me during my office hours.

Attendance and Participation

Students are required to log into the course through Canvas daily to view class announcements, check grades, and complete assignments. Because this course involves collaboration, participation is essential to learning. Our project-based activities require you to be actively engaged in discussions and group work. It is important that you communicate with me, the instructor, prior to being absent from the course, so you and I can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform me if you are unable to attend to course activities because you are ill.

Syllabus Change Policy

As the instructor, I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus if needed. Notices will be posted in the course announcement section in advance of changes being made.

Copyright Notice

Some or all of the materials on this course website may be protected by copyright. Federal copyright law prohibits the reproduction, distribution, public performance, or public display of copyrighted materials without the expressed and written permission of the copyright owner, unless fair use or another exemption under copyright law applies.

The materials on this site are provided solely for the use of students enrolled in this course, and for purposes associated with this course; except for material that is unambiguously and unarguably in the public domain, these materials may not be retained or further disseminated.

Any students who use university equipment or services to access, copy, display, perform, or distribute copyrighted works (except as permitted under copyright law or specific license) will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the university as well as to those civil and criminal penalties provided by federal law.

UNT Policies

UNT keeps up-to-date policies, procedures, and services that guide and support you and your learning. You can access these policies on the [Student Support Services & Policies](https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies) page (<https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies>)