

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG**  
**ENGL-1004-003**  
**Introduction to Reading Culture: Comics Studies**

Term: Winter 2020  
Time: Tues & Thurs 2:30-3:45pm  
Room: 2M67

Professor: Dr. Candida Rifkind  
Office: 2A38  
Email: [c.rifkind@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:c.rifkind@uwinnipeg.ca)  
**\*do not use Nexus email**

**Office Hours:** I am always available to discuss any aspect of the course and your assignments (at any stage) on Tues & Thurs 10-11:00am & Wed 3:30-4:45pm. Use this app to book, cancel, & reschedule appointments, get reminders, & see my weekly schedule (link in Nexus toolbar): <https://candidarifkind.youcanbook.me>

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### **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT**

The University of Winnipeg is in Treaty One territory and is located on the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. The English Department recognizes the role of the English language and English as an academic discipline in contributing to the historical and present formations of settler colonialism and imperialism in Canada and around the world. In giving expression to our Land Acknowledgement, we commit ourselves to engaging with, questioning, and challenging these formations in ways that support the decolonizing work being done by Indigenous peoples in Manitoba and elsewhere.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces students to the diverse and vibrant storytelling worlds of alternative comics and graphic novels. We will read a range of literary genres, including coming-of-age fiction, auto/biography, and speculative fiction, all in the form of comics and graphic narratives. Lectures and discussions will teach students the specific terminology and foundational theories of comics studies, an interdisciplinary field that draws on literary studies, cultural studies, media and communication studies, art history, and film studies. We will also pay attention to the similarities and differences between comics, literature, photography, and film.

Assignments include a sequence analysis (close reading), a research essay portfolio leading up to the research essay, in-class work, and a final exam. Students need no prior exposure to comics or graphic novels, just a willingness to treat them seriously as literary and cultural objects, and a curiosity about how to analyze their unique features. Students should be prepared to discuss serious historical, political, and cultural subjects in a popular form that is also often visually pleasurable.

NOTE: The prerequisite for upper-level English courses is 6 credit hours of First-Year English, including either ENGL-1001(6) or ENGL-1000(3). There are two ways to fulfill this requirement: by taking 1001(6), or by taking 1000(3) plus 3 other credit hours of English at the first-year level. Students planning to continue in English should take English 1A (ENGL-1000) in addition to this course.

## REQUIRED TEXTS (in order of reading)

Students must bring required readings to class (see the Course Schedule on p.6). Some additional short readings will be posted under Nexus>Readings.

1. Kukkonen, Karin. *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2014. (Library e-book)
2. Chast, Roz, Ed. *The Best American Comics 2016*. Houghton Mifflin, 2016.
3. Spiegelman, Art. *The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. Pantheon Books, 1997.
4. Satrapi, Marjane. *The Complete Persepolis*. Pantheon Books, 2007.
5. Robertson, David A., GMB Chomichuk, et al. *Will I See?* HighWater, 2016.
6. Walden, Tillie. *On a Sunbeam*. First Second, 2019.

## RECOMMENDED TEXTS

There are many websites dedicated to writing and research skills but not all of them are appropriate for academic writing. I have posted links to the ones you should consult for this course at Nexus>Writing and Research Resources.

## ASSIGNMENTS

- More information will be provided in class & posted to Nexus prior to each assignment.
- All assignments must be saved as a Word (.doc or .docx) file and uploaded to Nexus.
- See p. 5 for the Late Assignment Policy and Life Happens Clause.

### 1. In-Class Diagnostic Essay (Jan. 16, 5 short paragraphs) 10%

Open book assignment: students will need *The Best American Comics 2016*.

### 2. Sequence Analysis (1000 words due by 5pm on Feb. 4 to Nexus) 15%

A close reading of any two-page sequence from the assigned readings in Chast.

### 3. Research Essay Portfolio 40%

Students may write on *Maus*, *Persepolis*, or *Will I See?*

#### Portfolio Grade Breakdown

<b>A. Pre-Essay Critical Reflection + In-Class Research Exercise (Mar. 5)</b>	<b>5%</b>
300-word reflection prepared for class + in-class work	
<b>B. Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (Due by 5pm on Mar. 12 to Nexus)</b>	<b>10%</b>
300-word Proposal & Five Annotated Bibliography entries (three must be peer-reviewed sources). A list of peer-reviewed articles students may use will be posted to Nexus.	
<b>C. Peer Review Workshop (in class Mar. 31<sup>st</sup>)</b>	
Bring a final draft of your research essay to class to exchange with another student.	
<i>Students who do not bring a complete final draft, or who miss the class without providing medical or other documentation, will have 10% automatically deducted off the grade of their research essay.</i>	
<b>D. Research Essay (1500-1700 words due by 5pm on Apr. 2 to Nexus)</b>	<b>25%</b>
An argumentative essay that combines scholarly research and close analysis of sequences in <i>Maus</i> , <i>Persepolis</i> , or <i>The Arrival</i> .	

**4. Final Exam****25%**

Closed book, three-hour exam scheduled from 1:30-4:30pm on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> in 2M67.  
 Format: five definitions, two short answers, one five paragraph essay.

**5. Participation & In-Class Work (see rubric below)****10%****PARTICIPATION RUBRIC**

<b>POOR</b> 0-2%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not participate in class discussion or small group exercises</li> <li>• does not ask questions</li> <li>• does not listen to others, or interrupts and dominates discussion</li> <li>• has side conversations during class discussion or is distracted by social media</li> <li>• does not complete assigned readings</li> </ul>
<b>FAIR</b> 3-5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participates occasionally and responds minimally to direct questions</li> <li>• expects other students to do majority of small group work</li> <li>• has completed assigned readings but not prepared for discussion (eg. has not flagged sequences or pages to discuss, thought of comments or questions for discussion)</li> <li>• does not always listen to others, sometimes interrupts or dominates discussion</li> <li>• occasionally distracted by side conversations or social media</li> </ul>
<b>GOOD</b> 6-8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well prepared, comes to class with examples, questions, comments</li> <li>• listens to others and responds, supports, or challenges others' opinions respectfully</li> <li>• consistent engagement with discussion, not distracted in class</li> <li>• participates effectively in small group work and contributes to collaborative learning environment by respecting peers</li> <li>• volunteers to answer questions or read passages regularly</li> </ul>
<b>EXCELLENT</b> 9-10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very well prepared, relates assigned readings to broader course concepts, terminology, or other course readings</li> <li>• listens to others and advances discussion by synthesizing, extending, or challenging others' opinions respectfully</li> <li>• offers new and insightful approaches or analyses</li> <li>• always willing to respond to questions or read passages</li> </ul>

**GRADING SCALE**

A+	90 - 100%	GPA 4.50	C+	65 - 69%	GPA 2.5
A	85 - 89%	GPA 4.25	C	60 - 64%	GPA 2.0
A-	80 - 84%	GPA 4.0	D	50 - 59%	GPA 1.0
B+	75 - 79%	GPA 3.5	F	Below 50%	GPA 0
B	70 - 74%	GPA 3.0			

## ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NOTES

1. This course outline should be considered a guideline only. Time constraints and other unforeseen factors may require that some of the above topics be omitted or covered in less detail than indicated.
2. When it is necessary to cancel a class due to exceptional circumstances, instructors will make every effort to inform students via uwinnipeg email (and/or using the preferred form of communication, as designated in this outline), as well as the Departmental Assistant and Chair/Dean so that class cancellation forms can be posted outside classrooms. **Follow the English Department on Twitter (@UofWEnglish) for last minute class cancellation announcements.**
3. Students are reminded that they have a responsibility to regularly check their uwinnipeg e-mail addresses to ensure timely receipt of correspondence from the university and/or their course instructors.
4. Work submitted for evaluation must be either typed or text processed, **and uploaded to the appropriate Nexus folder in a Word file.**
5. Cellular phones and other electronic devices **MUST** be turned off during classes. **See Instructor's Notes below.**
6. It is the student's responsibility to retain a photocopy or digitized copy of ALL assignments submitted for grading; in the event of loss or theft, a duplicate copy is required.
7. Students are advised to read the pertinent pages of the current course calendar for the rules regarding Registration, Voluntary Withdrawals, Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals. Concerning plagiarism, please note that as a general rule, an F in the course will be the penalty recommended by the English Departmental Review Committee to the Senate Committee on Academic Misconduct, for plagiarism on major assignments in English Department courses.
8. **Avoiding Academic Misconduct.** Uploading essays and other assignments to essay vendor or trader sites (filesharing sites that are known providers of essays for use by others who submit them to instructors as their own work) involves "aiding and abetting" plagiarism. Students who do this can be charged with Academic Misconduct.
9. **Avoiding Copyright Violation.** Course materials are owned by the instructor who developed them. Examples of such materials are course outlines, assignment descriptions, lecture notes, test questions, and presentation slides. Students who upload these materials to file-sharing sites, or in any other way share these materials with others outside the class without prior permission of the instructor/presenter, are in violation of copyright law and University policy. Students must also seek prior permission of the instructor /presenter before photographing or recording slides, presentations, lectures, and notes on the board.
10. **Accessibility Services:** Students with documented disabilities, temporary or chronic medical conditions, requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams (e.g., private space) or during lectures/laboratories (e.g., access to volunteer note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 786-9771 or email [accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca) to discuss appropriate options. Specific information about AS is available on-line at

<http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential.

11. The University of Winnipeg promotes a scent-free environment. Please be respectful of the needs of fellow classmates and the instructor by avoiding the use of scented products while attending lectures. Exposures to perfumes and other scented products (such as lotion) can trigger serious health reactions in persons with asthma, allergies, migraines or chemical sensitivities.
12. Students facing a charge of academic or non-academic misconduct may choose to contact the University of Winnipeg Students' Association (UWSA) where a student advocate will be available to answer any questions about the process, help with building a case, and ensuring students have access to support. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit our website at [www.theuwsa.ca/academic-advocacy](http://www.theuwsa.ca/academic-advocacy) or call 204-786-9780.
13. Please note that registering in this course commits you to the date and time of the course final examination. If you are aware of possible conflicts with that date, please see me immediately during the first week of the course, in case you need to register in another course to accommodate the conflict. For appeals for deferred exams, please see the Calendar.
14. March 13, 2020 is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses that begin in January 2020 and end April 2020 in the 2020 Winter term. Please note that withdrawing before the VW date does not necessarily result in a fee refund.

#### 15. Late Assignment Policy

- I encourage you to **speak with me** (in person, not over email) in advance if you anticipate handing an assignment in late due to extenuating circumstances, such as illness or a personal/family emergency.
  - Note that having a lot of work to do for your other courses is **not a reasonable excuse** for a late assignment in this course.
  - Unless prior arrangements have been made or you present a medical/legal note explaining why your assignment has been handed in late, the penalty for a late assignment is **10% off immediately when it is not submitted on the due date and 2% off each extra weekday it is late.**
  - **Life Happens Clause:** Once in the course, each student may invoke this clause to submit one assignment up to 5 days late with no explanation and no penalty. Upload the assignment to the appropriate Nexus folder and write "Life Happens Clause" in the comments. If you have a lot of life happening this term, and need to use this clause more than once, please come and speak with me.
16. The English Department wishes to ensure your right to privacy regarding handing in and getting back assignments is protected. **All assignments must be uploaded to the appropriate Nexus Assignment folder as Word files.**
  17. Students may be asked for identification when writing a test or examination.
  18. No unauthorized material or equipment may be brought with you to the final exam.

19. Students registered for this course are expected to demonstrate competency in English appropriate to the first-year level. Students needing additional assistance may contact the Writing Centre at [http://rhetoric.uwinnipeg.ca/Tutoring\\_Centre/index.html](http://rhetoric.uwinnipeg.ca/Tutoring_Centre/index.html) for writing resources and tutoring services, or contact the English Language Program at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/elp-information> for classes in English as an Additional Language and related services.
20. Students are advised that the UW Bookstore may run out of textbooks early in the term. Also, the bookstore always ships textbooks back to the publisher if they are not purchased within the first few weeks of term. Students are responsible for communicating directly with the bookstore if they need to order texts or ask for texts to be held for them.
21. Students who plan to conduct research interviews, focus groups, surveys, or any other method of collecting data from any person, even a family member, must obtain the approval of the UHREB before commencing data collection. Exceptions are research activities in class as a learning exercise. See <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/research/human-ethics.html> for submission requirements and deadlines.
22. All students, faculty and staff have the right to participate, learn and work in an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination. The UW Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy may be found online at [www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect)
23. Students may choose not to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religion, but they must notify their instructors at least two weeks in advance. Instructors will then provide opportunity for students to make up work examinations without penalty. A list of religious holidays can be found at <http://uwinnipeg.ca/academics/calendar/docs/important-notes.pdf>
- 24. Important Calendar Dates:**
- |                   |                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| FEB 17, 2020      | Louis Riel Day – University Closed |
| FEB 18 – 21, 2020 | Reading Week                       |
| APR 10, 2020      | Good Friday – University Closed    |
| APR 9 – 23, 2020  | Winter-term evaluation period      |
25. For more information regarding the English Department, please refer to our website at [www.uwinnipeg.ca/english](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/english)

## INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES

1. **TIME SLOT:** Class starts promptly at 2:30pm and ends at 3:45pm. Students who arrive late or start packing up their things early disrupt the class and make it hard for the rest of us to stay focused. If you have a legitimate reason for arriving late or leaving early on specific days, I would appreciate you letting me know in advance.
2. **EMAIL:** I only respond to students' emails during regular work hours (Mon.-Fri. 9am-5pm) and I may take up to 24 hours to respond. Due to the high volume of junk mail I receive, I can only respond to emails sent from UW accounts. Please do not email me through Nexus as I cannot reply directly. Please observe professional email etiquette and do not add me or your classmates to any mailing lists.

**3. MOBILE DEVICES AND LAPTOPS:** You may use your devices and computers as you wish, but please turn off the sound/vibrate and be considerate of those sitting around you. You may not record or take photos in class without permission.

**4. CHILDCARE EMERGENCIES:** If you have a childcare emergency, and you can provide your child(ren) with activities to do quietly in the back of the room or next to you, I'd rather have you attend with them for as long as possible than miss the class.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

- Subject to changes announced in class and posted to Nexus.
- All readings must be completed before class and students must have access to readings in class (print or online).

Date	Required Reading (complete before class)	Assignments
Jan. 7	Introductions	
Jan. 9	How to Read Comics (lecture)	
Jan. 14	Ch. 1 of Kukkonen, <i>Studying Comics and Graphic Novels</i> Short Comic 1: Anne Emond, "The Swim" (Chast 63-66)	
Jan. 16	Bring Chast to class	<b>In-class diagnostic essay (10%)</b>
Jan. 21	Ch. 2 of Kukkonen, <i>Studying Comics and Graphic Novels</i> Short Comic 2: Gilbert Hernandez, excerpt from <i>Bumps in the Night</i> (Chast 338-356)	
Jan. 23	Short Comic 3: Adrian Tomine, "Killing and Dying" (Chast 1-23)	
Jan. 28	Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i> (vol. I) Ch. 3 of Kukkonen, <i>Studying Comics and Graphic Novels</i>	
Jan. 30	Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i> (all)	
Feb. 4	Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i>	<b>Sequence Analysis Due (15%)</b>
Feb 6	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i> (vol. I)	
Feb. 11	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i> (all)	
Feb. 13	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i> (all)	

	Winter Reading Week – No Classes	
Feb. 25	<b>Guest Lecturer: GMB Chomichuk (Writer-in-Residence)</b> Reading TBA & posted to Nexus	
Feb. 27	David A. Robinson, GMB Chomichuk, et al., <i>Will I See?</i> (all)	
Mar. 3	David A. Robinson, GMB Chomichuk, et al., <i>Will I See?</i> (all)	
Mar. 5	Bring your <b>pre-essay critical reflection</b> to use in class and then hand in	<b>In-Class Research Exercise (5%)</b>
Mar. 10	<b>Working with scholarly sources</b> Nabizadeh, Golnar. "Visual melancholy in Shaun Tan's <i>The Arrival</i> ." <i>Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics</i> , vol. 5, no. 3, 2014, pp. 366-379. (Nexus>Readings)	Read article before class & bring in print or online
Mar. 12	Short comic 4: <i>El Deafo</i> excerpt (Chast 138-171)	<b>Proposal &amp; Annotated Bibliography Due (10%)</b>
Mar. 17	Tillie Walden, <i>On a Sunbeam</i> (pp.1-42)	
Mar. 19	<i>Tillie Walden, On a Sunbeam</i> (all)	
Mar. 24	<i>Tillie Walden, On a Sunbeam</i> (all)	
Mar. 26	Gallery 1C03 tour of Alookook Ipellie exhibit	
Mar. 31	<b>Peer Review Workshop</b>	
Apr. 2	Wrap Up and Exam Review	<b>Research Essay Due (25%)</b>
<b>Saturday Apr. 18</b>	<b>Final Exam (25%) from 1:30-4:30pm in 2M67</b>	