

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG
ENGL-3980-051

Topics in Comics & Graphic Narratives: Autobiographical Comics

Term: Winter 2020
Time: Wednesday 6-9pm
Room: 3M65

Professor: Dr. Candida Rifkind
Office: 2A38
Email: 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>

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

Autobiographical comics, or graphic life narratives, have become the dominant genre of North American alternative comics (as opposed to serial, mass market, or super hero comics). This course will focus on alternative graphic life narratives that depict the self in relation to others so that we can explore the blurred lines between auto/biography. This will allow us to think about the relationships between memory and history, child and parent, individual and community, self and other, documentary and creativity, subjectivity and objectivity. Students should expect to study serious topics (war, genocide, trauma, family dysfunction) in a seemingly lightweight medium. We will investigate the tensions between such serious topics and the visual pleasures of the comics page. Students will learn how to study comics as a distinct form and how to draw on literary studies, cultural studies, screen studies, art history, media and communications, and other disciplines to write about visual-verbal texts.

REQUIRED TEXTS (in order of reading)

1. Spiegelman, Art. *The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. Pantheon, 1996.
2. Satrapi, Marjane. *The Complete Persepolis*. Pantheon, 2007.
3. Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. Mariner, 2007.
4. Barry, Lynda. *One Hundred Demons*. Sasquatch, 2005.
5. Seagle, Steven T. and Teddy Kristiansen. *It's a Bird*. Vertigo, 2017.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

I have posted links to research and writing websites you should consult for this course at Nexus>Writing and Research Resources. Additional books are on UW Library Reserve for this course.

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. 4 for the Late Assignment Policy and Life Happens Clause.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Essay on <i>Maus</i> due 5pm Feb. 12 th (1500 words) | 20% |
| 2. Zine Project due in class Apr. 1 (group mark) | 25% |
| 3. Group Presentation (20 minutes; dates vary)
See p.7 for schedule and readings. | 15% |
| 4. Take Home Exam (2000 words) | 30% |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed & posted to Nexus April 1st. • Due to Nexus by 5pm on April 20th. | |
| 5. Participation (see rubric below) | 10% |

Participation Grade Rubric

POOR 0-2%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ does not participate in class discussion or small group exercises ▪ does not ask questions ▪ does not listen to others, or interrupts and dominates discussion ▪ has side conversations during class discussion or is distracted by social media ▪ does not complete assigned readings
FAIR 3-5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ participates occasionally and responds minimally to direct questions ▪ expects other students to do majority of small group work ▪ 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) ▪ does not always listen to others, sometimes interrupts or dominates discussion ▪ occasionally distracted by side conversations or social media
GOOD 6-8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ well prepared, comes to class with examples, questions, comments ▪ listens to others and responds, supports, or challenges others' opinions respectfully ▪ consistent engagement with discussion, not distracted in class ▪ participates effectively in small group work and contributes to collaborative learning environment by respecting peers ▪ volunteers to answer questions or read passages regularly

EXCELLENT 9-10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very well prepared, relates assigned readings to broader course concepts, terminology, or other course readings ▪ listens to others and advances discussion by synthesizing, extending, or challenging others' opinions respectfully ▪ offers new and insightful approaches or analyses ▪ always willing to respond to questions or read passages
----------------------------	--

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. **See Instructor's Notes on phone & computer use 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 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 or call 204-786-9780.
13. **This course has a Take Home Exam.**
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 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 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

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

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES

1. TIME SLOT; Class starts promptly at 6pm and ends on or a bit before 9:00pm, with a 20-minute break around 7:15pm. To accommodate students who come straight from work or other classes, you may eat your dinner quietly in the first 15 minutes of class, during which time we will do warm up exercises and have general discussion. Around 6:15, you will be asked to clear away your food and give 100% of your focus to the work of the class. More generally, 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	Reading	Assignment
Jan. 8	Introductions & Exercises in Style	
Jan. 15	Reading Comics & Auto/biography (go to Nexus>Readings) 1. Excerpt from <i>Experiencing Comics</i> by Rachel Cruz 2. Excerpt from <i>Autobiographical Comics</i> by Andrew Kunka	
Jan. 22	<i>Maus</i> by Art Spiegelman	
Jan. 29	<i>Maus</i> & essay writing workshop	
Feb. 5	<i>Persepolis</i> by Marjane Satrapi	
Feb. 12	<i>Persepolis</i> film adaptation & discussion of zines major project	Short Essay Due
	Winter Reading Week	
Feb. 26	<i>Fun Home</i> by Alison Bechdel	

Mar. 4	<i>One Hundred Demons</i> by Lynda Barry	
Mar. 11	Zine project workshop	
Mar. 18	<i>It's a Bird</i> by Steven T. Seagle & Teddy Kristiansen	
Mar. 25	Webcomics by MariNaomi at <i>The Rumpus</i> (<i>Smoke in Your Eyes</i> 2011-13) Nexus>Readings	
Apr. 1	Zine Fair & Wrap Up	Take Home distributed

GROUP PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

Each group's reading is available through the UW Library databases (See Nexus>Presentations)

Jan. 22	Hirsch, Marianne. "Family Pictures: <i>Maus</i> , Mourning, and Post-Memory." <i>Discourse</i> , vol. 15, no. 2, 1992, pp. 3-29. <i>JSTOR</i> .	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Jan. 29	Elmwood, Victoria A. "'Happy, Happy, Ever After': The Transformation of Trauma between the Generations in Art Spiegelman's <i>Maus: A Survivor's Tale</i> ." <i>Biography</i> , vol. 27 no. 4, 2004, pp. 691-720. <i>Project MUSE</i> .	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Feb. 5	Nabizadeh, Golnar. "Vision and Precarity in Marjane Satrapi's <i>Persepolis</i> ." <i>WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly</i> , vol. 44 no. 1, 2016, pp. 152-167. <i>Project MUSE</i> .	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Feb. 26	Cvetkovich, Ann. "Drawing the Archive in Alison Bechdel's <i>Fun Home</i> ." <i>Women's Studies Quarterly</i> , Vol. 36, No. 1-2, 2008), pp. 111-128. <i>Project Muse</i> .	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Mar. 4	Tensuan, Theresa. M. "Comic Visions and Revisions in the work of Lynda Barry and Marjane Satrapi." <i>MFS Modern Fiction Studies</i> , vol. 52 no. 4, 2006, pp. 947-964. <i>Project Muse</i> .	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Mar. 18	Jacobs, Dale: "Design, Arthrology and Transtextuality in Seagle's and Kristiansen's <i>It's a Bird</i> ." <i>Studies in Comics</i> 5.2 (2014), pp. 355-371.	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____