

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

ENGL-7811/03

**Course Title: Topics in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Cultures:
GRAPHIC WITNESS**

Term: W 2010
Time and Time Slot: 6:00-9:00pm
Room: 3C33

Professor: Dr. Candida Rifkind
Office: 2A38
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(see note 9)

Office Hours: TR 2:30-3:30 or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course studies graphic narratives from the early 1900s to the present to explore how a diversity of artists has used the medium of sequential visual images to witness political conflict. The focus of the course is on the medium itself as we pay attention to both the aesthetic and formal concerns of comics/comix/wordless novels/graphic narratives (part of our work is to understand debates in terminology), but we also explore the particular social, cultural, political, and economic contexts of each individual text. The majority of texts are auto/biographies, but we also study other non-fiction and life writing (travel writing, journalism) and at least one fictional text, such that the very divide between fiction and non-fiction becomes part of the exploration of the course.

The course begins in the 1920s with novels in woodcuts and ends in the 2000s with graphic novels to situate the current boom in graphic narratives, and their increasing academic respectability, within broader historical, cultural and theoretical contexts such as modernism, postmodernism, postcolonialism, and globalization. Although the texts are quite diverse in style and content, they are unified by the politics of witness and the practices of sequential graphic representation, both of which are the threads unifying the course from week to week. We also pay attention to print cultures and book histories of graphic narratives and to culturally-specific conditions of material production, technological innovation, and circulation.

REQUIRED TEXTS in order of reading (ordered through Mondragon)

Graphic Witness: Four Wordless Graphic Novels by Frans Masereel, Lynd Ward, Giacomo Patri and Laurence Hyde. Ed. George A. Walker. New York: Firefly, 2007.

Nakazawa, Keiji. *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima*, Vol. 1. San Francisco: Last Gasp, 2001.

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus I & II*. Paperback Boxed Set. New York: Pantheon, 1993.*

---. *In the Shadow of No Towers*. New York: Pantheon, 2004.

Satrapa, Marjane. *Persepolis Boxed Set*. New York: Pantheon, 2005.*

Delisle, Guy. *Shenzhen: A Travelogue from China*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2006.

Sacco, Joe. *Palestine Collection*. Seattle: Fantagraphics, 2001.

Modan, Rutu. *Exit Wounds*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2007.

Please note that required secondary readings have been placed on e-reserve and/or are available through the UW Library electronic resources. See attached reading schedule.

*Please purchase the boxed set editions of these narratives, rather than the complete editions, as our attention to manuscript and print culture includes consideration of the delayed release of the second volumes.

ASSIGNMENTS (more information will be provided well in advance of due dates)

Short essay (7-8 pages) due February 22 nd	20%
Research project (18-20 pages) due April 5 th	40%
Seminar Presentation (guided discussion for 45 mins)	20%
Participation (contribution to workshops, roundtables, and weekly discussions)	20%

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			

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. Work submitted for evaluation must be either typed or text processed.
3. Cellular phones **MUST** be turned off during classes.
4. 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.
5. Students are advised to consult the 2009/2010 Calendar for the rules regarding Academic Misconduct, including plagiarism and Appeals. **Concerning plagiarism, please note** that as a general rule, an F in the course will be the penalty, in line with recommendations by the English Departmental Review Committee to the Senate Committee on Academic Misconduct, for plagiarism on major assignments in English Department courses. Please note that in the graduate program a Voluntary Withdrawal from a course by a full-time student potentially involves withdrawal from the program unless provisions are made to make up a course within the time designated for completion of the program. If students want to withdraw from a course they need to provide the Departmental Graduate Program Committee with a written letter of permission from their advisor outlining the revised plan for completing their program.
6. Services for Students with Disabilities:

Students with documented disabilities 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 Andrea Johnston, Coordinator of Disability Services (DS) at 786-9771 or a.johnston@uwinnipeg.ca, to discuss appropriate options. Specific information about DS is available on-line at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/services-disability>. All information about disability is confidential.

7. Late Assignment Penalties: I encourage you to speak with me 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 day it is late. No unexplained late assignment will be accepted after it is 7 days late.** All requests for extensions should be made in person or, if you are unable to attend class or office hours, by phone. Email requests for extensions will not be acknowledged.
8. The English Department wishes to ensure that your right to privacy regarding handing in and getting back assignments is protected. Most assignments will be handed in and handed back in class or at the Instructor's office. If assignments are to be handled in another way and you are concerned about others having access to your work, you should attach to your assignment a self-addressed envelope that can be sealed. If this is not done, it is assumed that you have waived your concerns in this area.
9. **IMPORTANT NOTE ON EMAIL:** I only respond to students' emails during regular work hours (M-F 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 student accounts (iam.uwinnipeg). Do not email me from hotmail, yahoo, gmail, or other non-UW accounts. Please observe professional email etiquette and do not add me to any mailing lists.

Reading and Presentation Schedule

(Readings that have not been placed on reserve are available in print or electronically through the UW library)

January 11 Introductions

January 18 Studying Comics: Practical Workshop

Workshop component: Every student should bring a newspaper or web comic strip (3-4 panels) to class that they can use to explicate the comics theory this week.

McCloud, Scott. Chapter 3, "Blood in the Gutter." in *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. (reserve)

Groensteen, Thierry. Introduction and Chapter 1, "The Spatio-Topical System" in *The System of Comics*. (reserve)

Hatfield, Charles. Chapter 2, "An Art of Tensions: The Otherness of Comics Reading" in *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2005. (reserve)

January 25 Precursors: Wordless Novels

Graphic Witness: Four Wordless Graphic Novels by Frans Masereel, Lynd Ward, Giacomo Patri and Laurence Hyde. Ed. George A. Walker. New York: Firefly, 2007.

Beronä, David A. "Breaking Taboos: Sexuality in the Work of Will Eisner and the Early Wordless Novels." *International Journal of Comic Art* 1.1 (1999): 90-103.

February 1 Precursors: Barefoot Gen

Keiji Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen* _____

Rommens, Aarnoud "Manga story-telling/showing." *Image & Narrative* 1.1 (2000)
<<http://www.imageandnarrative.be/narratology/aarnoudrommens.htm>>

Hong, Christine. "Flashforward Democracy: American Exceptionalism and the Atomic Bomb in *Barefoot Gen*." *Comparative Literature Studies* 46.1 (2009): 125-55.

February 8 Writing the Self and Other: Theory Workshop

Workshop component: This week is dedicated to the development of key critical terms for the rest of the course: trauma, autobiography, and witness. Students should come prepared with key concepts and questions raised by the articles.

Caruth, Cathy. "Introduction." *American Imago* 48.1 (1991):1-12.

Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson. "The Trouble with Autobiography: Cautionary Notes for Narrative Theorists." *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Eds. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008. 356-71.

Hatfield, Charles. Chapter 4, "The Problem of Authenticity in Autobiographical Comics." *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2005. 108-27. (on reserve)

Strejilevich, Nora. "Testimony: Beyond the Language of Truth." *Human Rights Quarterly* 28.3 (2006): 701-13.

Ellis, John. "Mundane Witness." *Media Witnessing: Testimony in the Age of Mass Communication*. Eds. Paul Frosh and Amit Pinchevski. London: Palgrave, 2008.

February 22 Centripetal Force: *Maus I and II*

Art Spiegelman, *Maus I and Maus II* _____

Couch, Chris. "The Publication and Formats of Comics, Graphic Novels, and Tankobon." *Image & Narrative* Dec. 2000
<<http://www.imageandnarrative.be/narratology/chrisacouch.htm>>

March 1 Roundtable: Critical Approaches to *Maus*

Students will each select a critical article on *Maus* and have 10 minutes to present its main points in the roundtable. The selection of articles will be determined and circulated the week of February 8th.

March 8 In the shadow of *Maus*: *In the Shadow of No Towers*

Art Spiegelman, *In the Shadow of No Towers* _____

Versluys, Kristiaan. "Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers*: 9/11 and the Representation of Trauma." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 52.4 (2006): 980-1002.

Orbán, Katalin. "Trauma and Visuality: Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and *In the Shadow of No Towers*." *Representations* 97 (2007): 57-89.

March 15 Feminism and Auto/biography: *Persepolis*

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* _____

Naghibi, Nima and Andrew O'Malley. "Estranging the Familiar: 'East' and 'West' in Satrapi's *Persepolis*." *ESC English Studies in Canada* 31.2-3 (2005): 223-48.
(Project Muse)

Chute, Hillary. "The Texture of Retracing in Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 36.1-2 (2008): 92-110.

March 22 Travel writing: *Shenzhen* (and research project roundtable)

Students will be given 10 minutes each to present the preliminary findings of their research projects and to exchange ideas, resources, and feedback.

Guy Delisle, *Shenzhen* _____

Clifford, James. "Traveling Cultures." *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP: 17-46. (on reserve)

Lisle, Debbie. "Between fact and fiction: the generic boundaries of travel writing." *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 27-67.

Read the overview of *The Adventures of Tintin: The Blue Lotus* at
<http://www.tintinologist.org/guides/books/05bluelotus.html>

March 29 Documentary: *Palestine*

Joe Sacco, *Palestine* _____

Sontag, Susan. From *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003. Read chapters 2, 3, 5, & 6. (on reserve)

Ashuri, Tamar and Amit Pinchevski. "Witnessing as a Field." *Media Witnessing: Testimony in the Age of Mass Communication*. Eds. Paul Frosh and Amit Pinchevski. London: Palgrave, 2008.

April 5 Inconclusions: *Exit Wounds*

Rutu Modan, *Exit Wounds*

Screening: *Waltz with Bashir*, dir. Ari Folman (2008)