

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

Department of ENGLISH

Title of Course:	Course Number:	ENG 316
ENGLISH 316: COMICS AND GRAPHIC NARRATIVE	Class Hours per Week:	3
	Lab Hours:	0
	Credits:	3

A. Description

This course examines the unique syntax, grammar and conventions of this literary art form. It traces graphic narrative's history from the 19th Century, as a working-class commodity in print newspapers, to the mid-20th Century, when it reconfigured itself as a medium of rebellion and mode of autobiography, up to today. Through regular writing assignments, students will critically engage with the art form and recent scholarship, developing their own arguments about how certain comics communicate specific subjectivities.

B. Prerequisites and/or Corequisites

English 201 or English 121

C. Student Outcomes

Students will

- Discuss course content in a range of critical contexts.
- Demonstrate knowledge of themes and genres of course texts.
- Critique the complexities and differences among course texts.

D. Required Texts and/or Supplementary Materials

Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels by Roger Sabin
Understanding Comics by Scott McCloud
The Complete Maus by Art Spiegelman
Persepolis I by Marjane Satrapi
Fun Home by Alison Bechdel
Love & Rockets: No. 1 by The Hernandez Brothers
The Boondocks by Aaron McGruder
Y: The Last Man, Vol. 1: Unmanned, by Brian K. Vaughan

E. Evaluation and Requirements of Students

Students are expected to watch the full-length films shown during the class periods and to join in discussions of them. They will also do reading and writing assignments, which may include a research paper, and take a midterm and final examination. Grades will be assigned on the basis of students' total work in the class, which includes participation in discussion and group work as well as written assignments, quizzes, and examinations.

College Attendance Policy

At BMCC, the maximum number of absences is limited to one more hour than the number of hours a class meets in one week. For example, you may be enrolled in a three-hour class. In that class, you would be allowed 4 hours of absence (not 4 days). In the case of excessive absences, the instructor has the option to lower the grade or assign an F or WU grade.

Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments for this course must contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. BMCC is committed to providing equal access to all programs and curricula to all students.

BMCC Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Statement

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one's own creation. Using the idea or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism.

Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The library has guides designed to help students to appropriately identify a cited work. The full policy can be found on BMCC's web site, www.bmcc.cuny.edu. For further information on integrity and behavior, please consult the college bulletin (also available online).

F. Outline of Topics

Week 1

- What is Comics?
- Comics as visual literature

Week 2

- Comics imagery: iconicity, abstraction, and style

Weeks 3-4

- Breakdown, narrative elision, and closure in comics
- Introduction to resources in comics study

Timing, pacing, and layout in comics

Week 5

Image-text relationships in comics

Week 6

Comic book history in the United States, from the 1930s through the 1950s
Public backlash and the adoption of the Comics Code, c. 1947-1954

Week 7

Comic book history, from the 1960s to now
Underground “comix” as blow against the Code
Social content in comics, e.g., antiwar politics, sexism and sexual license, and racist imagery
How comix transformed the comic book

Week 8

The alternative comics movement, from the 1980s to now
The rise of autobiographical comix

Week 9

Further discussion of alternative comics

Week 10

Contemporary readings: biography, history, travel narrative, and reportage in comics

Week 11

Contemporary readings: trauma, memory, and witness in comics

Week 12

Contemporary readings, continued

Week 13

Contemporary readings, continued

Week 14

The comix avant-garde
Contemporary comix anthologies

Week 15

Japanese manga as tradition
Manga as industry and import commodity