

Exhibit A

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Comic Injustice: Teaching Social Issues Through the Graphic Novel Spring 2015 (Mondays 6:30-9:15)

Course Description

In “Comic Injustice,” we will study various tales of oppression and social injustice through the graphic novel medium in a college-level English class. Throughout this journey, we will show not only that graphic novels are a legitimate literary tool and teaching device, but that they can convey the same themes and generate the same discussions found in traditional texts, as well as have a similar, profound effect on readers. All of these texts cover different areas of the world, races and ethnicities, but all tie together the inherent themes of overcoming oppression, racial tension and socioeconomic disparities through a variety of lenses.

Learning Goals

- You will learn how to dissect a graphic novel and understand the format.
- You will understand the importance of visual literacy and the graphic novel’s place in contemporary literature.
- You will become a more aware reader as well as a more precise writer.
- To push yourself as a writer.

Required Reading

Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative (Will Eisner)

A Contract with God (Eisner)

American Born Chinese (Gene Luen Yang)

X-Men: God Loves, Man Kills (Chris Claremont)

Maus (Art Spiegelman)

Persepolis (Marjane Satrapi)

Recommended Additional Reading: *Incognegro* (Mat Johnson); *Nat Turner* (Kyle Baker); *Fun Home* (Alison Bechdel)

Assignments

50% Final Project (using Comic Life 3 software)

25% Response Papers (2-3 pages in length)

15% Participation

10% Storyboard Exercises

Final Project

The final project is to serve as both a culmination of all the material reviewed throughout the course and an opportunity to do a piece of personal writing.

Each student in the class will take an event in their life where he or she (could be a friend or family member as well) felt unfairly criticized, discriminated against, etc., and write a fictional graphic novel using that experience as the basis. There is no central theme or type of social injustice that needs to be the focus, as all students have their own unique life experiences. It will be fiction and the author can take whatever liberties they'd like with the characters (they can be animals like in *Maus*), setting and outcome, as long as it's based on a real-life situation.

Since most writers are not skilled illustrators, each student is urged to purchase Comic Life 3 (\$29.99 at the Apple Store), the latest version of the comic book software that will allow you to bring your story to life. The software is very user-friendly and allows you to import photos that you can edit any way you like – to give it that comic book feel. This way, even if you cannot draw, you can still create a graphic novel through photos.

In a situation where a student does have an affinity for drawing or cannot make the necessary accommodations to purchase Comic Life, the instructor can provide alternative software or the student can draw the final project/assignments, pending teacher approval.

When handing in the final assignment, students will write a paper detailing the reasons for their creative choices as well. Extensive workshop/peer evaluations will occur throughout the semester before handing in final copies.

Course Outline

1/26: Introduction and course overview

2/2: Discussion of Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative. Find one comic strip/book that you would consider “good”.

2/9: Read *Contract with God*. First Response Paper due.

2/16: Discussion on Eisner. Comic Life assignment on structure due.

2/23: Read *American Born Chinese*. Second Response Paper due.

3/2: Comic Life exercises in class. Read *God Loves, Man Kills*.

3/9: X-Men discussion. Third Response Paper due on *GLMK*.

3/16: No Classes – Spring Break

3/23: Brainstorming Final Project ideas in class. Read *Maus*.

3/30: Fourth Response Paper Due on *Maus*. Class discussion. Read *Persepolis* for next class.

4/6: Fifth and final response paper due on *Persepolis*. Watch movie in class.

4/13: *Persepolis* discussion. Learning about historical events through graphic novels, tying in *Maus* as well.

4/20: Final project workshop part 1.

4/27: Final project workshop part 2.

5/4: Last class. Final Projects Due.



Magneto vowing to avenge slain mutant children in *God Loves, Man Kills*.