

**MAP-UA.711**

**✿ Expressive Cultures: The Graphic Novel ✿  
Spring 2013**

**MW 2:00-3:15**  
**Silver 408**

**Prof. Eliot Borenstein**  
**19 University Place, 210**

**Office Hours:**  
**(in person and on Skype chat)**  
**Wednesday 12:30-1:30**  
**Thursday 2-3**

**(212) 998-8676**  
**eb7@nyu.edu**  
**Skype: eliotb2002**

**Preceptors**

**Michiel Bot**  
**mtb250@nyu.edu**

**Daniel Lukes**  
**daniel.lukes@nyu.edu**

**Course Description:** This course examines the interplay between words and images in the graphic novel (comics), a hybrid medium with a system of communication reminiscent of prose fiction, animation, and film. What is the connection between text and art? How are internal psychology, time, and action conveyed in a static series of words and pictures? What can the graphic novel convey that other media cannot?

**NYU Classes and the Internet.** NYU Classes, which is accessible through the "Academics" tab of NYU Home, is an important part of the course, facilitating announcements and the distribution of course materials.

Please keep in mind that, by default, NYU Classes uses your NYU email account. Many of you may have other email accounts that you use. If so, it is a quite simple matter to arrange for your email from one account to be forwarded automatically to the other. I strongly urge you to do so. It is **your responsibility** to make sure that you are receiving official email sent to your NYU account.

**Course requirements:** No knowledge of any foreign language is expected, as all works will be read and discussed in English. It is essential that you keep up with the reading assignments and come to class prepared. Lecture attendance is, of course, mandatory. Sleeping in class is punishable by dismemberment.

**Recitation Sections.** In addition to the lectures, all students must enrol in a discussion section led by one of the preceptors assigned to this course. This will be an opportunity for you to become actively engaged in the material, as well as simply to ask clarifying questions.

These recitations sections are an integral part of the course and are the **basis of your participation grade. More than three absences from recitation will cause you to fail this course.**

**Assignments:** Throughout the semester, you will be given **short assignments during your recitation sessions**. At times these assignments will consist of **preparing questions for class discussion, giving a presentation on one of the books, writing brief (2-3 page) essays** in advance; on other occasions, there will be **short quizzes**.

You will also have to write two papers (4-6 pages). The first short paper is due on **March 6**, while the second is due on **May 8**. There will be an **in-class midterm exam on March 13** and a **final exam on Monday, May 20, from 2:00-3:50**.

**Electronic submission of written assignments.** You must submit both hard copies and digital copies of your written assignments. Please send your assignments to your preceptor by email, as attachments. The preferred format is any version of Word (97 or above, any platform)--such documents usually take the ".doc" extension. Failing that, .rtf files (which can be generated by most word processing programs) are also fine. We can open most other formats as well, including Word Perfect (.wpd), but this requires some extra effort on my part. Please feel free to consult with me about file format questions.

When you submit a paper electronically, please give it a descriptive filename. I have dozens of students, and if all of you send me files called "Comics Assignment" or "Spiegelman Paper," this will be confusing and frustrating. After the first time you make this mistake, I will not accept another paper with an unidentifiable file name.

The preferred (but not required) format for file names is <Student last name> <Type of assignment> <Assignment number> <Topic >. Examples: if Bonnie Tyler has written a second short paper on Alison Bechdel, the file should be something like "Tyler Short Paper 2 (Bechdel).doc". If Eric Roberts has written a midterm paper on Chris Ware then the file should be something like "Roberts Midterm (Ware).doc". A final paper on Charles Burns by Scott Baio would be "Baio Final (Burns).doc".

**Lecture Outlines** will be made available on NYU Classes prior to the class meeting.

**Office Hours.** I have set aside office hours to meet with students either in person or on Skype (by chat, not as a voice call). In-person conversations take precedence over Skype chats. If you want to contact me by Skype, you'll need to add me as a contact.

**Final Grade.** Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Participation:	25%
First Writing Assignment	20%
Second Writing Assignment:	20%
Midterm Exam:	15%
Final Exam:	20%

### **Useful Reference Material:**

For writing papers and citation formats (you may choose any citation format so long as you use it consistently):

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

\*\* This site reproduces much of the information located in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* . 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.

Strunk, William & White, E.B. *The Elements of Style*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon, 2000)

Williams, Joseph. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed.

**Required Texts, Part One**  
**(NYU Book Store)**

- Barry, Lynda. *One! Hundred! Demons!* Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2005.
- Bechdel, Allison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. New York: Mariner Books, 2007.
- Burns, Charles. *Black Hole*. New York: Pantheon, 2008.
- Clowes, Daniel. *David Boring*. New York: Pantheon, 2002.
- Eisner, Will. *The Best of the Spirit*. New York: DC Comics, 2005.
- Gaiman, et. al. *The Sandman v.5: A Game of You*. New York: Vertigo, 2011.
- Gregory, Roberta. *Life's a Bitch: The Bitchy Bitch Chronicles*. New York: Fantagraphics, 2005.
- Hernandez, Gilbert. *Heartbreak Soup (Love and Rockets)*. Seattle: Fantagraphics, 2007/
- Mazzucchelli, David. *Asterios Polyp*. New York: Pantheon, 2009.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. New York: William Morrow, 1994.
- Miller, Frank. *The Dark Knight Returns*. New York: DC Comics, 1997.
- Moore, Alan and David Lloyd. *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics, 1994.
- Morrison, Grant and Frank Quitely, *We3*. New York: Vertigo, 2011.
- Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale (Volumes I & II combined)*. New York: Penguin, 2003.
- Ware, Chris. *Jimmy Corrigan, The Smartest Kid on Earth*. New York: Pantheon, 2000.

**Required Texts, Part Two**  
**(NYU Clases)**

- Gerber, Steve, et al. *Howard the Duck*. *Howard the Duck* (Volume 1). Marvel Comics. Issues 1-7 published bi-monthly (January 1976-December 1976). Issues 8-27 published monthly (January 1977-September 1978). *Howard the Duck Annual 1*. Marvel Comics (1977).

These files contain Gerber's complete Howard the Duck comics. You're encouraged to read the entire thing, of course, but here's what you have to read for the purposes of our class:

*Howard the Duck* 5-15, 17-19, 24-27

If you do want to read all of *Howard*, this is the best reading order:

Start with HTD 1-7, and then the Treasury Edition. Then read HTD 8-14, followed by HTD Annual 1. Then read HTD 15. HTD 16 is a weird, text-based fill-in issue. Then go on to HTD 19-27.

Otomo, Katsushiro. *Akira* (Volume 1)

Milligan, Peter and Duncan Fegredo. *Enigma* 1-8. Vertigo Comics (DC). March - October 1993.

Steacy, Ken and Dean Motter. *The Sacred and the Profane*. This story was originally serialized over several issues of *Star\*Reach* in black and white in the 1970s, and then redrawn in color for *Epic Illustrated* in the 1980s.

Black-and-white: *Star & Reach* 9-13 Star\*Reach Productions. Issues 9-12 published quarterly (June 1977-March 1978). Issue 13 published in August, 1978.

Color: *Epic Illustrated* 20-26. Marvel Comics. Published bimonthly (October 1983-October 1984).

Please read the black and white version, but I am putting both on NYU Classes. Also, *Star\*Reach* followed the story up with a "coda," in full color. I'm including that as well, but not as required reading.

"Coda." *Star\*Reach* 14. Star\*Reach Productions, October 1978.

Wagner, Matt. *Grendel: Devil by the Deed*. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics, 1993.

#### "Hero's Journey" readings

(February 6)

Action Comics Volume 1, #1. DC Comics. June 1938.

Detective Comics Volume 1, #27. DC Comics. May 1939.

Fantastic Four Volume 1, #48-50. Marvel Comics. March-May 1966.

Amazing Spider-Man Volume 1, #33. Marvel Comics. February 1966

Green Lantern Volume 2, #76. DC Comics. April 1970.

Amazing Spider-Man Volume 1, #96-97. Marvel Comics May-June 1971.

Strange Tales Volume 1, #178-179. Marvel Comics February-April 1975.

Doctor Strange Volume 2, #4. Marvel Comics October 1974.

#### "Women in Refrigerators" readings

(April 3)

*Wonder Woman* Volume 1, #1. DC Comics. Summer 1942

*Wonder Woman* Volume 2, #1. DC Comics. February 1987

*Wonder Woman* Volume 2, #170. DC Comics. July 2001.

*Amazing Spider-Man* Volume 1, #121. Marvel Comics. June 1973.

*Green Lantern* Volume 3, #54. DC Comics August 1994.

To read these files, you'll need to download some software. A good program for Mac OS X is Comic Book Lover:

<http://www.bitcartel.com/comicbooklover/>

For Windows, there is ComicRack:

<http://comicrack.cyolito.com/>

Or you can read them in any jpg or pdf readers.

## Comic Strips

Adams, Scott. *Dilbert* (April 4-April 8, 2011)

### Prose

Carrier, David. "Chapter Four: Words and Pictures Bound Together; or, Experiencing the Unity of Comics." *The Aesthetics of Comics*. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000. 61-75

Exhibit 33 from the transcripts of the 1954 Senate Subcommittee Hearings into Juvenile Delinquency with a Special Focus on Comics.  
<http://www.thecomicbooks.com/1954senatetranscripts.html> Last accessed March 3, 2008.

Harvey, Robert C. "Comedy at the Juncture of Word and Image: The Emergence of the Modern Magazine Gag Cartoon Reveals the Vital Blend." Varnum, Robin and Christina T. Gibbons (eds.) *The Language of Comics: Word and Image*. Jackson: The University Press of Mississippi, 2001. 75-96.

Wolk, Douglas. *Reading Comics. How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean*. New York: Da Capo Press, 2007. 3-28, 60-88.

All of these prose readings are also available as ebooks, in epub format (for virtually every ereading device and/or program besides the Kindle) and mobi format (for the Kindle). "Exhibit 33" can be found in these formats in the "Exhibit 33" folder on NYU Classes. Carrier, Harvey, and Wolf are found in the "Readings in ebook formats" folder on NYU Classes, amalgamated into single files called "Graphic Novels (2013).epub" and "Graphic Novels (2013).mobi".

## CLASS SCHEDULE

**January 28 (M) Introduction**

**January 30 (W) How to**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read McCloud, *Understanding Comics*

**February 4 (M) Paper Movies**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read Eisner, *The Best of the Spirit*

**February 6 (W) The Hero's Journey**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read Wolk (3-28)  
 ✪ Read *Action Comics* 1  
 ✪ Read *Detective Comics* 27  
 ✪ Read *Fantastic Four* 48-50  
 ✪ Read *Amazing Spider-Man* 33, 96-97  
 ✪ Read *Strange Tales* 178-179  
 ✪ Read *Doctor Strange* 4

**February 11 (M) Funny Animals (1)**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read Gerber, et al, *Howard the Duck* (5-15, 17-19, 24-27)

**February 13 (W) The Sacred and the Profane**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read Steacy & Motter, *The Sacred and the Profane* (see description under "Required Texts, Part Two")

**February 18 (M) NO CLASS**  
 ▼ Fake holiday

**February 20 (W) The Grim and the Gritty**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read Miller, *The Dark Knight Returns*

**February 25 (M) Who Was that Masked Man?**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read Milligan and Fegredo, *Engima*

**February 27 (W) No Class**

**March 4 (W) Raw Sharks**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read *Watchmen*

**March 6 (W) The Comic Strip**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read Adams, *Dilbert* (4/4-4/8/11)  
 ✪ Read Carrier, "Words and Pictures"  
 ✪ Read Harvey, "Comedy"  
**First Paper Due**

**March 11 (M) Ruben Bolling**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read TBA

**March 13 (W) MIDTERM EXAM**

**March 18 & 20 (M) SPRING BREAK**

**March 25 (M) First Seder**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ NO CLASS

**March 27 (W) Bleeding History**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read Spiegelman, *Maus*

**April 1 (M) Goth Tragedy**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read Gaiman, et al. *A Game of You*

**April 3 (W) Women in Refrigerators**  
 ✪ Read Wolk (60-87)  
 ✪ Read Exhibit 33  
 ✪ Read *Wonder Woman* v1 001  
 ✪ Read *Wonder Woman* v2 001  
 ✪ Read *Wonder Woman* v2 170  
 ✪ Read *Amazing Spider-Man* 121  
 ✪ Read *Green Lantern* v3 56

**April 8 (M) Pretty Ugly**  
 ▼ For Today:  
 ✪ Read Barry, *One! Hundred! Demons!*

**April 10 (W) Funny Animals (2)**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Morrison & Quitely, *We3*

**April 15 (M) Human Diastrophism**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Hernandez, *Heartbreak Soup*

**April 17 (W) Family Portraits**  
✪ Read Bechdel, *Fun Home*

**April 22 (M) Female Complaints**  
✪ Read Gregory, *Life's a Bitch*

**April 24 (W) Art Objects**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Read Ware, *Jimmy Corrigan*

**April 29 (M) Children of the Bomb:  
Manga's Post-Nuclear Worlds**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ *Akira* (Volume 1)

**May 1 (W) Indy Anomie**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Clowes, *David Boring*

**May 6 (M) Awkward Ages**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Burns, *Black Hole*

**May 8 (W) Deco-Dence**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Read Wagner, *Grendel: Devil by the Deed*  
**Second Paper Due**

**May 13 (M) Design Flaws**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Mazzucchelli, *Asterios Polyp*

**May 20 (M) FINAL EXAM**  
**2:00-3:50**