Spring 1-15-2012

ENG 4300-4390-003-097: With or Without Words: Graphic Novels, Memoirs, and Wordless Books

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In this course, students will analyze and discuss fiction and nonfiction books that use images and words or images alone to convey a story.

If literature is typically based in language - the written word - how are we to read graphic novels, memoirs, and wordless books as literature? In an effort to engage this question and other questions Hillary Chute raises in her article, “Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narratives,” students will read several graphic novels, memoirs, and wordless books, as well as Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, *The Invisible Art*, a comic theory book in comic book form.

Requirements: vigorous class discussion, weekly responses to readings, an exam, and a research paper.

**Required Texts** (in the order we will read them):


Chute, Hillary. “Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narratives.” *MLA* (on WebCT)


**Grades:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Responses</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1000</td>
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</tbody>
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**Be Prepared for Class**

To prepare for each class, please do the following:

1. Bring your textbook and notebook with you to class
2. Read the assigned material **before** class
3. Respond to the assigned reading in your notebook **before** class

**Weekly Responses**

Weekly responses to the readings will be shared during class. Each response is worth around **25 points** and should be comprised of a List of Ten, which means ten of anything about the reading.
such as confusing words or passages, images you found interesting, panels you had questions about, or ideas connected to the reading that you are considering for your research paper. ANYTHING GOES. Write page and paragraph numbers so the class can follow along with you during discussion.

Midterm Exam
This will be an open-book essay exam taken during class and will address some or all of the reading covered through week seven. You will receive prompts a week before the exam, and one or more of those prompts will be selected for the exam.

Research Paper
This paper will engage questions or ideas raised in Hillary Chute’s essay, “Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narratives.” It will be 10–12 pages long (2,500-3,000 words) and address at least two graphic books from class and include at least two (2) outside sources from peer-reviewed journals in addition to Chute’s essay. For Honors students, the paper must be 14–16 pages (3,500–4,000 words) and address at least two graphic books from class and include at least three (3) outside sources from peer-reviewed journals in addition to Chute’s essay. This is a formal paper and should follow all MLA formatting guidelines.

Attendance
I do not keep attendance, but rather, give points toward Weekly Responses if you attend class and have a written response that you read out loud. If you are not present, if you do not have a response, or if you do not read it out loud, you will not receive points for that day’s Response. Exceptions will be made only for documented emergencies and documented school team sport activities.

Extra Credit
There will be a few opportunities for extra credit in this course. If you attend any of the Lions in Winter events January 11th, 19th, and 25th (see English Department Website), you may write a 500-word response (for each separate event) to receive 10 points extra credit (for each). Please send extra credit responses to me as an email with “Extra Credit” in the subject line within one week of attending. As I find out about other events on campus, I will let you know.

Academic Honesty
Please note the English Department’s statement on plagiarism (that is, the intentional or unintentional use of another writer’s intellectual property without proper acknowledgment):
Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – “The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s own original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Students with Documented Disabilities
If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodation, you must make arrangements through the Office of Disability Services; you should contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
Tentative Schedule

Week One
Tuesday, 1/10: Introduction & Overview
Thursday, 1/12: Understanding Comics Chapters 1 & 2

Week Two
Tuesday, 1/17: Understanding Comics Chapters 3 & 4
Thursday, 1/19: Understanding Comics Chapters 5, 6, & 7

Week Three
Tuesday, 1/24: “Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narratives.” (on WebCT)
Thursday, 1/26: The Arrival (including the Artist’s Note)

Week Four
Tuesday, 1/31: Graphic Witness: Introduction 15–31 and The Passion of a Man 33–60
Thursday, 2/2: Graphic Witness: Wild Pilgrimage 61–162

Week Five:
Tuesday, 2/7: Graphic Witness: White Collar 163–289
Thursday, 2/9: Graphic Witness: Southern Cross 293–412

Week Six:
Tuesday, 2/14: Nat Turner, Preface, Sections I & II: 6–105
Thursday, 2/16: Nat Turner, Sections III & IV, Bibliography and Notes: 106–207

Week Seven
Tuesday, 2/21: American Born Chinese, 7–130
Thursday, 2/23: American Born Chinese, 133-233

Week Eight
Tuesday, 2/28: Prep for Midterm
Thursday, 3/1: Mid Term Exam

Week Nine
Tuesday, 3/6: Discuss Exam and Research Paper
Thursday, 3/8: Fun Home: Chapter 1: 1–24

Week Ten: SPRING BREAK

Week Eleven
Tuesday, 3/20: Fun Home: Chapters 2 & 3: 25–86

Week Twelve
Tuesday, 3/27: Fun Home: Chapters 6 & 7: 151–232
Thursday, 3/29: Persepolis: 1–86

ENG 4300 Wordless Books, page 3
Week Thirteen
Tuesday, 4/3: *Persepolis*: 87–153
Thursday, 4/5: *Maus I*: Chapters 1 & 2: 5–40

Week Fourteen
Tuesday, 4/10: *Maus I*: Chapters 3 & 4: 41–93
Thursday, 4/12: *Maus I*: Chapters 5 & 6: 95–159

Week Fifteen
Tuesday, 4/17: *Maus II*: Chapter 1: 5–37
Thursday, 4/19: *Maus II*: Chapters 2 & 3: 39–100

Week Sixteen
Thursday, 4/26: Discuss Research Paper

Final Exam: DUE: Monday, 4/30 at noon: Research Paper