

**The Graphic Novel (GNOV)
CTY Course Syllabus**

Day One	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Introduction to course. Pre-assessment	Read course overview. Ice-breaker activities (three-person interview). Pre-assessment test as supplied by CTY. [What makes a comic book good? Essay assignment-45 mins]	
Afternoon	Discuss the history and developments of comic books as a medium.	Students build timeline of comic books using handout and images from course texts. Discussion of key developments in history of medium.	
Evening	Discuss the history and developments of comic books as a medium. Understand the formal elements specific to the medium of comics.	Read <i>Understanding Comics</i> , answer questions in writing, review answers as a class.	McCloud, <i>Understanding Comics</i> , chap. 1

Day Two	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Discuss the history and developments of comic books as a medium. Explain the process involved in reading a comic book or graphic novel.	Students analyze the Bayeux Tapestry (sequential art from 11 th century). Students construct their own abridged version of tapestry (by close-reading sections and re-assembling).	Bayeux Tapestry. Complete, interactive electronic copy available at http://panograph.free.fr/BayeuxTapestry.html
Afternoon	Discuss the history and developments of comic books as a medium. Evaluate the formal elements that comics share with other media.	Students read early examples of comics and evaluate their literary and artistic merit. Students consider why early comics were dismissed as juvenile ephemera.	Siegel and Shuster, <i>Action Comics</i> #1. Eisner, "The Killer," in <i>The Best of the Spirit</i> .
Evening	Discuss the formal elements specific to the medium of comics.	Read about and discuss the concept of "closure" and "panel transitions". Write journal entry.	McCloud, chap. 3. Molotiu's glossary of comic book terms, available online at http://www.teachingcomics.org/syllabi/19.pdf

Day Three	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Plan and design original pieces of sequential art, using the conventions and techniques discussed in class.	Create tableaux comics (i.e. create a sequence of frozen tableaux scenes). These will be photographed to be made into fumetti comics (photo comics) later on.	Students skim <i>The Marvel Fumetti Book</i> for inspiration.
Afternoon	Understand and articulate the meaning of course texts by reference to the conventions of literature and conventions specific to comics.	Take introductory notes on <i>Watchmen</i> , re: historical context, questions raised by the text, Nietzschean concept of <i>ubermensch</i> . Begin reading as a class, answering and discussing study questions.	<i>Watchmen</i> , chaps. 1-4.
Evening	Discuss the formal elements specific to the medium of comics.	Read about how the passage of time is expressed in comics (use of dialogue, pan sequences, etc.)	McCloud, chap. 4

Day Four	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Understand and articulate the meaning of course texts by reference to the conventions of literature and conventions specific to comics.	Continue reading <i>Watchmen</i> in small groups, using directed reading strategies (predictions, questions, connections to other texts). Note on “comic-within-a-comic” and on characters.	<i>Watchmen</i> , chaps. 5-7
Afternoon	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations.	Create your own supercharacter.	
Evening	Understand and articulate the meaning of course texts by reference to the conventions of literature and conventions specific to comics.	Continue reading <i>Watchmen</i> . Write journal entry.	<i>Watchmen</i> , chaps. 8-9

Day Five	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Understand and articulate the meaning of course texts by reference to the conventions of literature and conventions specific to comics.	Finish reading <i>Watchmen</i> . Take notes on elements of fiction (esp. theme). “Four corners” activity (wherein students choose one of four themes and argue for its centrality in the text).	<i>Watchmen</i> , chaps. 10-12
Afternoon	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations. Reflect and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.	Discussion: what is a good essay question, developing your own essay topics. Brainstorm interpretative questions regarding <i>Watchmen</i> . Workshop questions and topics. Develop tentative thesis and gather evidence.	Excerpts from Griffith, <i>Writing Essays About Literature</i> (Chap. 8, “Choosing Topics”)
Sunday Study Hall	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations. Plan and design original pieces of sequential art, using the conventions and techniques discussed in class	Complete “Create Your Own Supercharacter” assignment and present. Work on photograph/print version of tableaux comics.	

Day Six	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations.	Discuss essay structure. Read sample student essay, critique, and evaluate revisions. Write essay outline. Workshop outline in groups.	Excerpts from Griffith, Chapter 10, “Revising and Editing”
Afternoon	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations.	MLA format, how to cite passages from comics. Drafting essay.	
Evening	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations.	Peer review. Continue drafting.	

<i>Day Seven</i>	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations.	Continue drafting and submit draft.	
Afternoon	Understand and articulate the meaning of course texts by reference to the conventions of literature and conventions specific to comics.	Take introductory notes to <i>American Born Chinese</i> (re: stereotypes of Asian-Americans in film and comics). Begin reading <i>American Born Chinese</i> .	<i>American Born Chinese</i> , pgs.1-106 (N.B. Students have been reading this piece whenever they have finished work early, and most have read much of already, facilitating brisk re-reading. This may not work with a different group.)
Evening	Reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others (including both essay writing and sequential art pieces)	Receive comments on <i>Watchmen</i> first draft. Revise and resubmit.	

<i>Day Eight</i>	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Understand and articulate the meaning of course texts by reference to the conventions of literature and conventions specific to comics.	Finish reading <i>American Born Chinese</i> .	<i>American Born Chinese</i> , pgs. 109-233.
Afternoon	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations.	Repeat pre-writing and drafting process from first essay writing cycle. Peer review material before end of afternoon session.	
Evening	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations.	Work on draft of essay #2	

Day Nine	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations.	Complete and submit draft of essay #2.	
Afternoon	Plan and design original pieces of sequential art, using the conventions and techniques discussed in class.	Generate ideas for graphic story. Discuss genre, message, situation, characters, and literary messages.	
Evening	Plan and design original pieces of sequential art, using the conventions and techniques discussed in class.	Character development and design.	

Day Ten	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Plan and design original pieces of sequential art, using the conventions and techniques discussed in class.	Discuss plot structure and types of conflict. Students complete a story planner (i.e. plot diagram of their own story). Read sample script. Introduce script template and begin writing script.	Script and corresponding illustrated pages from “The Big Con,” in <i>The Idiot’s Guide to Making Graphic Novels</i> .
Afternoon	Plan and design original pieces of sequential art, using the conventions and techniques discussed in class.	Continue working on scripts.	
Sunday Study Hall	Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations.	Begin revisions on essay #2	

Day Eleven	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Plan and design original pieces of sequential art, using the conventions and techniques discussed in class. Reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.	Finish script and peer review. Instructor and T.A. read scripts as well and provide feedback.	
Afternoon	Plan and design original pieces of sequential art, using the conventions and techniques discussed in class. Reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others	Discuss visual character design. Students sketch out character design for main character. Introduce storyboards, example, and storyboard template students will use to create stories.	McCloud, <i>Making Comics</i> , pgs. 70-77, 83-87, 96, 109 (photocopied packets)
Evening	See above.	Continue work on storyboards.	

Day Twelve	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Plan and design original pieces of sequential art, using the conventions and techniques discussed in class. Reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.	Complete storyboards and peer review.	
Afternoon	See above.	Discuss lettering and other details for final, completed pages (margins, etc.) Begin final product.	Chinn, <i>Writing and Illustrating the Graphic Novel</i> , pg. 110, McCloud, <i>Making Comics</i> , pg. 147.
Evening	See above.	Discussion: adding variety to your pages (esp. dialogue sequences). Cont. final pages.	

<i>Day Thirteen</i>	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Plan and design original pieces of sequential art, using the conventions and techniques discussed in class. Reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.	Complete final pages.	
Afternoon	See above.	Creating word balloons and captions. Assemble pages, script, storyboard, place in two pocket folder, and submit.	
Evening	Discuss the history and developments of comic books as a medium	Watch excerpts of documentary history of comics.	Film: <i>Comic Book Confidential</i>

<i>Day Fourteen</i>	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	Wrapping-up work for the course. Understand and articulate the meaning of course texts by reference to the conventions of literature and conventions specific to comics.	Complete any essay or comic work outstanding. Complete tableaux comics, and refine border. Read <i>Dropsie Avenue</i> and identify plot and comic conventions. Plan a story about your own neighbourhood.	Eisner, <i>Dropsie Avenue</i>
Afternoon (long session: 12:40-4:15)	SPEs and classroom clean-up Complete post-assessment. Respond to graphic novels in written and oral presentations (journal, critical essay, etc.)	Write SPEs; remove assignments from the walls, packing supply inventory boxes. Students write post-assessment. Group presentation: what makes a good comic book?	

<i>Day Fifteen</i>	What (Goals, Skills, Knowledge)	How (Activities and Assignments)	Readings
Morning	<p>Reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others</p> <p>Our final goal is fun (the syntactical ambiguity here is intentional).</p>	<p>Sharing session: students present their essays and creative work to the class. Consider how you would extend your essays or graphic stories: how would you develop them into longer pieces?</p> <p>Watch film, eat popcorn, have a laugh.</p>	<p>Class anthology, featuring selections from students' graphic short stories.</p> <p>Film: <i>The Lives of Altar Boys</i>.</p>