
THE GRAPHIC NOVEL & SOCIAL JUSTICE

This is an interdisciplinary course on the graphic novel as a vehicle for social justice. Through team teaching and interdisciplinary collaboration, this course will teach students to access the graphic novel, a genre generally dismissed as non-literary, at multiple levels: the textual, the visual, and the contextual. Students will develop and enhance skills at interpretation through these multiple literacies to value the political and cultural statements that can be made through the comic form. Students will also learn how to manipulate these various literacies to make commentaries upon issues of social justice important to them.

Creative Expression and Engagement: Creation is the result of the highest form of thinking, and an exploration of the liberal arts requires a consideration of how humans create: how they express themselves by appealing to the emotions and senses of others. Aesthetic, performative, and literary expression enable us to engage with one another creatively and artistically and reveal how artistic practices are both a reflection of and act as an agent on the world around us. By exploring how different forms of expression have developed, or by learning how to communicate in a creatively expressive way, you will embrace a critical component of liberal education.

By the end of this course, students will be able to meet the following outcomes:

- To employ the language of comic design in analysis;
- To interpret comic works at the textual level;
- To interpret comic works at the visual level;
- To interpret comic works at the socio-historical level;
- To recognize the way comic works can comment upon social justice issues;
- To make a statement about a social justice issue through the creation of a comic work.

In fulfillment of X-Core's Creative Expression and Engagement component, this course will help you work towards the following learning outcomes and goals:

- Students will be able to interpret and evaluate diverse forms of human expression.

WHAT YOU NEED FOR THIS COURSE

PRIMARY TEXTS (PRINT OR EBOOK)

Except for the McCloud book, other versions of the texts are acceptable, as long as they include all the same content. Please be sure to purchase the most recent edition of the McCloud book.

- Spiegelman, *Maus*, Vol. I (ISBN: 9780394747231)
- Spiegelman, *Maus*, Vol. II (ISBN: 9780679729778)
- McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (ISBN: 9780060976255)
- Satrapi, *Persepolis* (ISBN: 9780375714573)
- Satrapi, *Persepolis 2* (ISBN: 9780375714665)
- Walker, Brown, & Greene, *Bitter Root*, Vol. 1 (ISBN: 9781534312128)
- Walker, Brown, & Greene, *Bitter Root*, Vol. 2 (ISBN: 9781534316607)
- Walker, Brown, & Greene, *Bitter Root*, Vol. 3 (ISBN: 9781534319172)
- Coates & Stelfreeze, *Black Panther: A Nation Under Our Feet*, Book 1 (ISBN: 9781302900533)
- Coates & Sprouse, *Black Panther: A Nation Under Our Feet*, Book 2 (ISBN: 9781302900540)
- Coates, Sprouse, & Stelfreeze, *Black Panther: A Nation Under Our Feet*, Book 3 (ISBN: 9781302901912)

MATERIALS

The following materials will be used for in-class application assignments and other projects. You can purchase these at most art supply stores.

- Standard No. 2 pencils (or better)
- Strathmore 200 Series Bristol Pad, 24 sheets, 11"x17" (\$17.99)
- Prismacolor premier illustration markers, black set of 4 (\$14.98)
- Color pencils (\$12.00 - \$15.00)
- 12" or 18" ruler (\$3.99 - \$5.99)

TECHNOLOGY

You will need access to a computer and the internet to complete and submit assignments and to keep track of your grades. *Please see one of us if you anticipate any difficulties with this.*

HOW YOUR LEARNING WILL BE ASSESSED

- **Classwork, 20%:** Throughout the semester, you will complete reading quizzes, video quizzes, in-class applications, and other small assignments.
- **Integration essays, 20%:** After reading and discussing each of our four graphic novels, you will write a 2-3 page essay that analyzes the text and demonstrates your ability to integrate visual, textual, and contextual analysis.
- **Final project, 20%:** Over the course of the semester, you will work on a project that allows you as an individual to explore the central ideas of this course. This may take the form of a creative project or a more traditional scholarly project.
- **Midterm exam, 20%:** On March 9, you will take an in-class comprehensive examination of all the material covered up to that point. The exam will include definitions of key terms, identification of critical concepts, and analysis of comic art.
- **Final exam, 20%:** On May 5, you will take an in-class comprehensive examination of all the material covered up to that point. The exam will include definitions of key terms, identification of critical concepts, and analysis of comic art.

HOW YOUR LEARNING WILL BE GRADED

You must successfully complete all assignments described below to pass this class. Unless otherwise noted, work written outside of class and submitted for a grade must conform to professional standards. Assignments should be cleanly typed and free of spelling, mechanical, and grammatical errors. Work suffering from excessive problems will be returned without a grade.

Excellent		A = 93-100%	A- = 90-92%
Good	B+ = 87-89%	B = 83-86%	B- = 80-82%
Adequate	C+ = 77-79%	C = 73-76%	C- = 70-72%
Poor	D+ = 67-69%	D = 63-66%	D- = 60-62%
Unacceptable		F = 0-59%	

Please note that simply meeting the basic requirements for any assignment will never earn you better than an adequate grade. Good and excellent work go well beyond the expectations.

Midterm grades will be posted to Banner by **March 11** and calculated using the following percentages:

- Classwork (33%) + Essays (33%) + Midterm Exam (34%)

Final grades will be posted to Banner by **May 6** and calculated using the following percentages:

- Classwork (20%) + Essays (20%) + Final Project (20%) + Midterm Exam (20%) + Final Exam (20%)

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY

If class is ever cancelled, please check your email and Brightspace for updates. *It is your responsibility to keep aware of any changes to our course schedule.*

In the event of a campus closure or evacuation, we will use Brightspace to continue this class. Once you are safe and secure, log into to Brightspace for updates. The extent to which we use Brightspace will depend on the expected duration of the emergency: if only one class session is missed, we will most likely incorporate those materials and topics into future classes; however, *if more than one class is to be missed, we will do our best to continue the class as detailed in this syllabus, but in a fully online format.*

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This section is intended to help you understand how and why we have designed this class as we have.

HOW WE APPROACH TEACHING IN THIS CLASS

This class has been designed to be highly active. This is not a lecture class. You will read or watch material outside of class so that during class, we can work through it together. We see ourselves as more of learning mentors than as instructors. We will work through these texts and concepts together, learning from each other. *This class will work best if each student brings in their own unique knowledge and understanding to every class discussion.* If you put as much effort as you are capable into this class, you will learn more than you could ever learn from a bunch of lectures, and you will, in the process, be teaching me and your classmates.

This class is also highly collaborative. In addition to a large out-of-class project for which you will work with two other students for a large portion of the semester, we will do a considerable amount of formal and informal group work in this class. This group work is designed to help you learn the material and concepts critical to this class, as well as to help you improve your teamwork skills. Groups will often be assigned, and all members of the group will be expected to contribute to the full extent of their abilities.

HOW YOU SHOULD APPROACH LEARNING IN THIS CLASS

- **Preparation.** This is a reading and writing intensive course. Every week you will have a substantial amount of reading to do and you will often have at least one writing assignment to work on. There will be few, if any, formal lectures in class. *We will use class time to discuss and explore the complex issues raised by our reading, making class meetings a time for wonder and discovery.*
- **Workload.** As with any college course, for every hour you spend in the classroom, *you should expect to spend 2 to 3 hours studying outside this classroom*, even when you do not have a major assignment due. As this is an upper-level 3 credit class, you should plan to have about 9 hours of work outside of class every week.
- **Attendance.** As this is an active, student-centered class, it is essential that you attend every meeting. Please contact me immediately if you know you can not make a meeting. Please also note the Class Engagement grade described above, which can have a noticeable impact upon your course grade.
- **Engagement.** *Your active engagement in this class is critical to its success and your learning.* By participating, rather than simply listening, you add to what the class as a whole learns as you

enhance your own learning. You should always come to class having read the assigned materials, completed any assigned work, and prepared to share your opinion, listen to the opinions of others, and ask questions relevant to the topic of class.

- **Late Work.** Work is due as assigned. If you are experiencing a hardship that is interfering with your school work, please come see me outside of class. *You should never presume to turn in work late.*

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

As students of Xavier University, you are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Behavior that violates the standards described on page 15 of the University Catalog is not acceptable and shall be grounds for disciplinary action. Plagiarizing and cheating will not be tolerated. See the College of Arts and Sciences Academic Integrity Policy and the English Department Plagiarism Statement on Blackboard for details. All written work will be checked using TurnItIn, an originality checking system. *The consequences for plagiarism will be determined on a case by case basis but will range from the student having to rewrite the assignment to the student receiving a 0 for the assignment.* All violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT OF US

While the last few pages have explained what we expect of you for this class, you have a right to expect the following from us as your professors:

- To serve as a mentor and guide to help you learn as best you can;
- To challenge you to excel as a student and a scholar;
- To facilitate learning in an interesting and compelling way;
- To be open to questions and discussion in and out of class;
- To provide useful and timely grades and feedback on all coursework; and
- To provide you with a safe and accommodating learning environment.

We have an opportunity in this class to hear from people with different viewpoints and to open some lines of communication about difficult topics.

- All opinions are welcome, as long as they are grounded in evidence and presented respectfully. We reserve the right to manage, intercede, side-line, or stop a conversation if it is leading us too far off track or if it is disrespectful to others.
- While we have tried to make sure our readings include a plurality of voices, we acknowledge the likelihood that there may be both overt and covert biases in the material due to the lens with which it was written. Integrating a diverse set of experiences is important for a more comprehensive understanding of the world. Please contact us with or submit anonymously any suggestions to improve the quality of the course.

Furthermore, we want to create a learning environment for our students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences while honoring your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) To help accomplish this, please consider the following:

- If you have a name or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official Xavier records, please let us know, and we will do our best to make sure your preferences are honored.

- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with us. We want to be a resource for you. Remember that you can also submit anonymous feedback. If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, Dr. Florastina Payton-Stewart, Faculty Administrative Fellow for Diversity and Inclusion, would be an excellent resource.
- We (like many people) are still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something is said in class (by anyone) that makes you feel uncomfortable, please talk to us about it (again, anonymous feedback is always an option).

SOME TIPS FOR SUCCESS

This part of the syllabus is intended to provide you with information that may help you over the course of the semester, both within this class and at this university.

OFFICE HOURS

Please feel free to contact us whenever you have a question or concern. We try to respond to emails as soon as we receive them, but when that's not possible, we will do our best to respond within 24 hours. *During scheduled office hours, we are available to meet with any student who wishes to meet with us. We encourage you to come speak with us about any concern or question you have about this class or your other classes.* We do our best not to allow other commitments, such as committee meetings, to interfere with office hours. If meeting in person, for whatever reason, is not possible for you, please email us and we will respond as soon as we can.

Augustus Jenkins, Instructor of Art
Contact: ajenkins@xula.edu / 504-520-7556
Office: Art Village Bldg. 39 104
Office Hours: MW 11-1:30 / F 11-2

Jason Todd, Associate Professor of English
Contact: jtodd1@xula.edu / 504-520-7207
Office: Admin Bldg 320-E & [Zoom](#)
Office Hours: MR 10-11 / TW 11-12

WRITING ASSISTANCE

We strongly encourage you to make use of the free services provided by the Writing Resource Center, where peer tutors and professional instructors offer individual assistance on a full range of writing strategies and concepts. The Writing Resource Center is located in Room 106 of the St. Joseph Student Academic and Health Center. *I may refer students whose writing demonstrates particular problems to the Writing Resource Center.*

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

Students requiring special assistance or consideration in order to meet academic requirements should advise the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to the nature of their disability upon admission to Xavier or as soon as the need for assistance is known to exist. Students should also contact the Office of Disability Services to arrange access to services available.

BASIC NEEDS SECURITY

Any student who faces challenges securing food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in this or any course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may have at my disposal.

TITLE IX & MANDATORY REPORTING

In compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Xavier University of Louisiana does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its educational programs, activities, or employment. The university is committed to providing a safe environment for all of its members and therefore prohibits sexual misconduct as defined in this policy. As faculty members, we are considered responsible employees. *Responsible employees are mandated reporters of all types of sexual violence, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and stalking.*

While our goal is for you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, we want to be transparent that *as Responsible Employees we are required to report disclosures of sexual violence, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and stalking.* If you would like to speak with someone confidentially, Violence Prevention Education and Advocacy (520-7503), Counseling and Wellness Center (520-7315), Student Health Services (520-7396), or Campus Ministry (520-7593) are all confidential resources.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please be sure to put the following dates in your calendar.

- Jan. 12, Last Day to Change Course/Section
- Jan. 17, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
- Jan. 28, Last Day to Drop a Course
- Feb. 15, Black History Convocation
- Feb. 18, Last Day to Remove "I"
- Feb. 28- Mar.4, Mardi Gras Holidays (Spring Break)
- Mar. 11, Mid-Semester Evaluations Due
- Mar. 12, Senior Comprehensive Exams
- Apr. 1, Last Day to Petition a "W"
- Apr. 14-15, Easter Holidays
- Apr. 20, Last Day to Withdraw from Xavier
- Apr. 26, Quiet Day/Senior Grades Due
- May 6, Final Grades Due/Baccalaureate
- May 7, Commencement

This schedule describes the required workload for this course and essential due dates. This schedule is liable to change. Please check Brightspace for updates. Please also note the following:

- All integration essays are due in Brightspace before class begins on the assigned due date.
 - ◆ Integration Essay 1 (*Persepolis*) is due before class on **Wednesday 09 February**.
 - ◆ Integration Essay 2 (*Maus*) is due before class on **Wednesday 23 February**.
 - ◆ Integration Essay 3 (*Bitter Root*) is due before class on **Wednesday 30 March**.
 - ◆ Integration Essay 4 (*Black Panther*) is due before class on **Wednesday 20 April**.
- You have four major reading assignments for this class, each has been split up over two or three weeks. While the schedule below notes when you should have completed those readings, you need to pace yourself based on your needs and abilities.
 - ◆ You should be finished reading *Persepolis, Vol. 1* by **Monday 31 January**.
 - ◆ You should be finished reading *Persepolis, Vol. 2* by **Monday 07 February**.
 - ◆ You should be finished reading *Maus, Vol. 1* by **Monday 14 February**.
 - ◆ You should be finished reading *Maus, Vol. 2* by **Monday 21 February**.
 - ◆ You should be finished reading *Bitter Root, Vol. 1* by **Monday 14 March**.
 - ◆ You should be finished reading *Bitter Root, Vol. 2* by **Monday 21 March**.
 - ◆ You should be finished reading *Bitter Root, Vol. 3* by **Monday 28 March**.
 - ◆ You should be finished reading *Black Panther, Vol. 1* by **Monday 04 April**.
 - ◆ You should be finished reading *Black Panther, Vol. 2* by **Monday 11 April**.
 - ◆ You should be finished reading *Black Panther, Vol. 3* by **Monday 18 April**.
- Our exams will take place on the following days:
 - ◆ The Midterm Exam will take place in class on **Monday 07 March**.
 - ◆ The Final Exam will take place on **Wednesday 08 April**.

This schedule is an approximation and subject to change as needed.

	WHAT YOU WILL DO BEFORE CLASS	WHAT WE WILL DO DURING CLASS
Mon 10 Jan		Introductions
Wed 12 Jan	Read: McCloud, Ch 1-2 / Watch: Lit Crit Lecture 1 Submit: Entry Ticket 1	McCloud Application #1; Lit Crit Application #1
Mon 17 Jan	MLK HOLIDAY	
Wed 19 Jan	Read: McCloud, Ch 3-4 / Watch: Lit Crit Lecture 2 Submit: Entry Ticket 2	McCloud Application #2; Lit Crit Application #2
Mon 24 Jan	Read: McCloud, Ch 5-6 / Watch: Lit Crit Lecture 3 Submit: Entry Ticket 3	McCloud Application #3; Lit Crit Application #3
Wed 26 Jan	Read: McCloud, Ch 7&9 / Watch: Lit Crit Lecture 4 Submit Entry Ticket 4	McCloud Application #4; Lit Crit Application #4
Mon 31 Jan	Read: Persepolis, Book 1 / Watch: Persepolis Context Lecture Submit: Entry Ticket 5	Persepolis discussion
Wed 02 Feb	Submit: Persepolis discussion posts	Persepolis discussion
Mon 07 Feb	Read: Persepolis, Book 2	Persepolis discussion
Wed 09 Feb	Submit: Integration essay 1 (Persepolis)	Project work
Mon 14 Feb	Read: Maus, Book 1 / Watch: Maus Context Lecture Submit: Entry Ticket 6	Maus discussion
Wed 16 Feb	Submit: Maus discussion posts	Maus discussion
Mon 21 Feb	Read: Maus, Book 2	Maus discussion
Wed 23 Feb	Submit: Integration essay 2 (Maus)	Project work
Mon 28 Feb	MARDI GRAS HOLIDAYS	
Wed 02 Mar	MARDI GRAS HOLIDAYS	
Mon 07 Mar		MIDTERM EXAM
Wed 09 Mar	Submit Project Proposal	Project work
Mon 14 Mar	Read: Bitter Root, Book 1 / Watch: Bitter Root Context Lecture Submit: Entry Ticket 7	Bitter Root discussion
Wed 16 Mar	Submit: Bitter Root discussion posts	Bitter Root discussion
Mon 21 Mar	Read: Bitter Root, Book 2	Bitter Root discussion
Wed 23 Mar	Submit: Bitter Root discussion posts Submit: Project Sketches or Bibliography	Bitter Root discussion
Mon 28 Mar	Read: Bitter Root, Book 3	Bitter Root discussion
Wed 30 Mar	Submit: Integration essay 3 (Bitter Root)	Project work
Mon 04 Apr	Read: Black Panther, Book 1 / Watch: Black Panther Lecture Submit: Entry Ticket 8	Black Panther discussion
Wed 06 Apr	Submit: Black Panther discussion posts Submit: Project Script or Outline	Black Panther discussion
Mon 11 Apr	Read: Black Panther, Book 2	Black Panther discussion
Wed 13 Apr	Submit: Black Panther discussion posts	Black Panther discussion

Mon 18 Apr	Read: Black Panther, Book 3	Black Panther discussion
Wed 20 Apr	Submit: Integration essay 4 (Black Panther)	Project work
Mon 25 Apr	Submit: Final project materials	Final Project Showcase
Wed 08 Dec	FINAL EXAM	