

# FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR

## Introduction to Wordless and Graphic Novels

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### Course Description

**Introduction to Wordless and Graphic Novels** will be a new one credit course (A-E) that provides students an introduction to wordless and graphic novels. Students will learn to read graphic narratives and will also be introduced to ways to interpret, think about, and write graphic fiction. Students will gain fluency in the elements of visual narrative and modes of critical thinking. Texts will range from cartoons and film, graphic novels, and essays to blogs and multimedia. Students will learn to identify cultural and representational trends within these sources and to generate texts showcasing their own perceptions. All students will be expected to engage actively in class. Students will be encouraged in a supportive environment to have fun.

### ***INTRO: The Graphic Novel – Precursors and Historical Context***

#### **CLASS 1.1**

Lecture will focus on woodcut or “wordless” novels, specifically Frans Masereel’s woodcut novels, with reference to Lynd Ward’s *Prelude to a Million Years* (1933) and *Song Without Words* (1936). Reference books will be placed on reserve at the 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue Library for interested students. Introductory film (Woodcut Process): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLIFCUSECNI> (A Brief Introduction to Relief Printmaking with Thomas Shahan).

**HW:** View and write a 1-2 paragraph response to one (or more) of the following film clips. See select short film clips based on Frans Masereel’s woodcut and Lynd Ward’s linocut techniques below. Prepare to share your observations next class.

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWQfsA4lw0o> (Foundation Frans Masereel; 25 July 2012)
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpwY6bthp74> (The Sun, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 1926; VISUALLY STRIKING 1926 FRANS MASEREEL BOOK of 63 WOODCUTS)
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLinZKJij-4> (1928 Frans Masereel First Edition "Das Werk")
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi9NqBjWj5E> (Frans Masereel\_L`Oeuvre\_Das Werk\_1928\_60 Holzschnitte\_FMS)
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03ZH9L60TbY> (Frans Masereel\_Ein Traumerlebnis\_aventure de reve\_dream adventure\_FMS)

6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XPp8W13fY> (Frans Masereel\_Joies de la vie\_1961\_12 Holzschnitte\_FMS)
7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRmDX77NU0Y> (Frans Masereel\_Un fait divers\_1920\_FMS)
8. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTnoOfmIBFQ> (Radiohead)
9. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k07jVnP1qoU> (Frans Masereel\_1889-1972\_Paris la nuit\_Twenties\_Les années vingt)
10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbnEOzutTKI> (FABRIANO tutorial - Xilografia (woodcut) con Umberto Giovannini)
11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiQPOlwObrQ> (Linocuts Tutorial – The Virtual Instructor)

## CLASS 1.2

A brief lecture on how to “storyboard” will preface the viewing of Berthold Bartosch’s film adaptation of the Frans Masereel novel, The Idea (1932). Students will learn about the concepts of “synchronous” versus “asynchronous” storytelling from the Instructor’s sequence of 12 screen captures that tells the entire story of the Academy Award-winning silent film, “The Artist” (2012).

**HW:** Use the Bartosch film adaptation at URL:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joioYX\\_73jl&list=PLjEP4uyiVHZ4uALNEVYg2rx83ZsBKxSxe&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joioYX_73jl&list=PLjEP4uyiVHZ4uALNEVYg2rx83ZsBKxSxe&index=3) as a basis to create your own screen capture adaptation for next class. Bring computers to class and prepare to share your adaptations in small groups. See model adaptation by Nicole Maher (.PPT).

## CLASS 2.1

Brief lecture will focus on “storyboard” techniques and how to interpret the animated film short. Students will see short film in class:

***The Arrival - Motion Graphics (Book by Shaun Tan)***

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lPp-MlcvVM>

***THE ALCHEMIST: A Graphic Novel by Paulo Coelho***

URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjULTzHxQEY>

***The Mom Song - Charlie Chaplin***

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvvgeG-rIDE>

**HW:** Students will read an abbreviated introduction to Bob McCloud’s Understanding Comics authored with original illustration by Matthew Reggie (Ohio State University, English alum).

## **CLASS 2.2**

Students will watch the Academy Award-winning animated film short based on Shaun Tan's graphic novel, "The Lost Thing."

**HW:** Students will write a 2 pp. thematic analysis based on the short film. (What does the film mean?) Upload the essay to Carmen (dropbox) by the start of next class. Bring copy next class for a small group activity.

### ***MAJOR PROJECT (Due the last week of class.)***

#### ***Literary Adaptation***

Shaun Tan, The Arrival (2007). Students will work on image storyboards for a final project based on a literary adaptation of Shaun Tan's wordless, graphic novel.

## ***Political, Historical, & Documentary Graphic Narrative***

### **CLASS 3.1**

Part I. Introduction to political graphic narrative. Giacomo Patri's wordless graphic novel, White Collar (1940). [Bio: Illustrator, painter, instructor; San Francisco, CA, b. 1898, Italy; d. 1978. Emigrated to the United States from Italy in 1916. Studied at The California School of Fine Arts and published a "Novel in Block Prints," a story of workers during the Depression.]

**HW:** Giacomo Patri, **WHITE COLLAR** (*online; see Assignment overview*).

<http://digital-collections.library.sfsu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16737coll1/id/386>

**ASSIGNMENT:** Read Giacomo Patri's White Collar (online reproduction, URL above) and write literary analysis or original stor(ies) based on two separate pictures in the woodblock novel. Students also have the option to write a single narrative that encompasses two pictures. Model interpretation and stories will be available on Carmen. Upload the assignment to dropbox by start of class on 4.1.

## CLASS 3.2

Part II. Introduction to historical and documentary graphic novels.

- Art Spiegelman's *METAMAUS* and Marjane Satrapi's *PERSEPOLIS* (film).
- *30 years of Darkness*, Documentary Graphic Novel  
URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rcx62R5hz1k>

**HW:** Read "Pixar's 22 Rules of Story" (not really Pixar's; available in Carmen). Reference texts in the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue Library: Matt Madden's 99 Ways to Tell a Story (Exercises in Style; 2005); Miller/Eisner: Interview conducted by Charles Brownstein (2005).

### **RECOMMENDED:**

**Watch the Video:** "Khaled Hosseini: The Kite Runner Graphic Novel" (Author's talk).  
URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6Wz33eaTl4>

**Bonus Credit:** Visit the website [goComics.com](http://goComics.com) and identify at least one comic strip you have never seen before. Write a brief abstract of the story and analyze the strip. In particular, identify what stood out about this particular strip that made you want to select it for this assignment. Please include a copy of the original comic if possible.

## "Memoir" Graphic Novels/Student Author Project

### CLASS 4.1

Introduction to memoir graphic novels. Lecture will include Tom Batiuk and Chuck Ayers's Roses in December: A Story of Love and Alzheimers (2015) and Alison Bechdel's Fun Home (2006) and Are You My Mother? (2012).

**Take-home Viewing:** Students will view two animated film shorts available on < [drm.osu.edu](http://drm.osu.edu) >. Si Lewen's *THE PARADE* (1957; 2007) and Raymond Briggs's *THE SNOWMAN* (1978).

**HW:** Students will write a 2 pp. literary analysis based on one of the short films. Upload the essay to Carmen (dropbox) by the start of next class.

### CLASS 4.2

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Ohio State University, English alum, Terry Eisele. Eisele partnered with artist Jonathan Riddle to self-publish a three book memoir from his student Anna, With Only Five Plums (2013).

**HW:** Students will create a short 1+ page graphic memoir (open topic) based on real life or imagination. **NOTE:** This memoir may take the form of comic, art (illustration), multimedia, visual arts (e.g., scrapbooking), musical composition, puppetry, 3-D animation, buzz feed, historical documentary, film, blog, etc. Upload to Carmen by 5.2.

**Recommended:**

- **Napoli COMICON 2012** (May 18, 2012, “Short Italian love affair” URL: <http://fabioandgabriel.blogspot.com>)



**Select reference texts** (available at the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue Library):

- Allison Bechdel, [Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic](#) (2006)
- Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean, [Mr. Punch](#) (1994)
- Gabriel Bá and Fábio Moon, [Daytripper](#) (1999)  
(Other titles available; by permission of Instructor.)

**Upcoming Field Trip:** Next week students will visit the *Billy Ireland Cartoon Library*.

## ***Introduction to Comics — Curator’s Talk: Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum (Tour)***

### **CLASS 5.1**

Introduction to Interpreting comics. “**How to Read, Write, and Think About Comics**,” Caitlin McGurk, *Billy Ireland Cartoon Library*.

**HW:** “Making My Graphic Novel” (online; short video). URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLZQwRnDEWs>

## **Graphic Storytelling/Literary Adaptation**

### **CLASS 5.2**

Graphic storytelling with mixed media. Students will share and peer review their “memoir” projects in class.

**HW:** Shaun Tan, Tales From Outer Suburbia, “Distant Rain” (2009) and Lost and Found (2011). Excerpts will be available on Carmen. Both books will be available for reference at the 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue Library.

**BONUS CREDIT** (Quiz) based on the Neil Gaiman’s *Commencement Address* (University of the Arts, 17 May 2012). URL:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmlOu9qyvFE>

### **CLASS 6.1, 6.2**

Writing Workshop. Student-Instructor conferences.

**HW:** Students will start the literary adaptation presentations next week (final project).

### **CLASS 7.1, 7.2**

**Student Open House (End-term Projects).** Student-facilitated conversations and poster session based on screening of literary adaptations (student-authored graphic narratives).

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**NOTE TO STUDENTS:** *Every student participating in this Freshman Seminar will receive a high final grade in the course given daily attendance and solid performance (including discussion, presentations, actively participating in class and engaging in group activities, and turning in assignments on time).*

*Please contact the Course Instructor to discuss any special circumstances, questions, or problems via email [ryan.3@osu.edu](mailto:ryan.3@osu.edu) (or in person). Thank you. CR*